IRAN IN MOTION

MOBILITY, SPACE, AND THE TRANS-IRANIAN RAILWAY

MIKIYA KOYAGI

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For my parents

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Acknowledgments

This project began more than a decade ago, when I was researching physical education in early Pahlavi Iran. In the process of reading hundreds of interwar Persian newspaper and journal articles, I found dozens of articles about the Trans-Iranian Railway project. As a former employee of a Japanese railway company, I wanted to know more about the Trans-Iranian Railway that the Iranian press covered with so much enthusiasm. I soon found out that there was no extensive study of the railway project and that I would have to write it myself. Since then, I have been fortunate to have met many new friends and colleagues. This book could not have been completed without their support.

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Note on Translation and Transliteration

Unless otherwise noted, all translations are my own. This book's transliteration system is based on the *Iranian Studies* guidelines. The diphthongs are transliterated -ey and -ow, and the *ezafeh* is transliterated -e or -ye. Diacritical marks have been omitted for proper nouns that have standard English spellings (Ali instead of ʻAli).

MAP 1 Iran's railway network, 1945.

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Introduction

AT 4:30 P.M., ON AUGUST 26, 1938, a train adorned with a lion-and-sun emblem arrived at Sefid Cheshmeh Station in the Iranian province of Lorestan, a southwestern tribal region in the Zagros Mountains.[1] This small station located in the wilderness had been decorated for a special event, and its platform was filled with prominent invitees from Tehran. When the train stopped, the Iranian king Reza Shah Pahlavi and Crown Prince Mohammad Reza disembarked, both dressed in their usual military attire. The ceremony to open the Trans-Iranian Railway began.

Throughout the 1930s, the opening of each section of the Trans-Iranian Railway had been marked by a celebratory ceremony organized by the Pahlavi state of Iran, but this occasion was unique. It began with a speech by the minister of roads, who gave a historical overview of the project. He stressed the technological challenges that the Iranian state had faced in building the country's first long-haul railway. He particularly emphasized that the Pahlavi state, despite a lack of technological expertise, had managed to construct 224 tunnels and more than 4,000 bridges across mountainous terrain. Then the minister proclaimed that the engineering feat was the manifestation of the "great will power and ambition" of Reza Shah. The nation's "seventy-year-old" dream had finally been realized under the shah's leadership.[2]

After the speech, Reza Shah tightened the last bolt of the railway track, officially completing construction of the 1,394-kilometer railway. It had been eleven long years since the shah had inaugurated this construction, symbolically breaking ground with a pickax in 1927. Now the single-track railway connected Tehran to the new Caspian Sea port of Bandar-e Shah (present-day Bandar-e Torkaman) and another new port of Bandar-e Shahpur (present-day Bandar-e Imam Khomeini) on the Persian Gulf. The shah was uncharacteristically loquacious during the ceremony, praising the nation (*mellat*) for paying the hefty taxes levied on state-monopolized tea and sugar to finance the project.[3]

The royal retinue departed Lorestan the next morning in order to attend a larger ceremony to be held at Tehran Station on the southern outskirts of the city. Awaiting the royal retinue there, citizens lined the main streets, which had been decorated with Iran's tricolor flags and electric lights. School children, with flowers in hand, also waited anxiously for the ceremony to begin. A mood of jubilation pervaded the capital—or so it seemed if one gleaned information only from the censored Iranian press, which had enthusiastically covered railway construction since 1927.

So on the late afternoon of August 27, 1938, Najmeh Najafi was standing outside Tehran Station with a wilting flower in her hand. Lined up for hours along with hundreds of other Iranian schoolchildren, she kept wondering if she would be allowed to sit on the pavement and take a rest. She was exhausted, but she was also excited. For a seven-year-old girl who always dreamed of visiting all the places she learned about in her geography class, that hot summer day carried special significance. At home, at the public bathhouse, and in the streets, she had heard adults grumble about the railway project. They called it "Reza Shah's extravagance"—one they had to pay for by buying exorbitantly taxed tea and sugar, even though it was really a "military road" that served no major urban center outside the capital.[4] But the seven-year-old did not care about taxes. She just wanted to see the train for the first time in her life, and knowing that an official ceremony was taking place inside the station thrilled her. Although she did not get to see the train that day and went home disappointed, she continued to dream of train travel across Iran to see the nation. A decade later she was able to make that trip, before moving to California as an international student. In the Trans-Iranian Railway, Najafi could foresee her future of travel and migration.

The railway occupied a unique place in Najafi's recollections of growing up in a wealthy clerical family in Tehran. Even though she had traveled in a chauffeur-driven car, it was the railway project that ignited her wanderlust; it was because she wanted to save money for future train and steamship travel that she decided to learn how to use an American sewing machine; it was during her first train travel that she witnessed the unforgettably beautiful forests of Iran's Caspian Sea region; it was her encounter with numerous child beggars on a train platform that forced her to face her own privilege; and it was her skiing vacation by train to a Turkish-speaking village in Iranian Azerbaijan that made her aware of the diversity of her homeland.[5] Najafi frames her life as a story of the correlating increase between her mobility and her love of the nation, and the Trans-Iranian Railway is featured prominently in this story as the prime agent that augmented both. In her memoir, aptly entitled *Persia Is My Heart*, the railway is conducive of a mobile citizen.[6]

Juxtaposed with hagiographical accounts disseminated by the Iranian press, Najafi's memoir gives a glimpse of how ordinary people incorporated the railway project into the aspirations and anxieties of their everyday lives, regardless of the actual possibility of train travel.[7] Her memoir also illustrates how she constantly redefined herself in relation to the many encounters she had with the railway project. Najafi was not alone in this regard, as the rail infrastructure project coevolved with divergent imaginations and practices of mobilities. This book will weave together such individual experiences from the conception of a trans-Iranian railway in the nineteenth century to the early years of railway operations in the mid-twentieth century. As such, diverse actors take center stage in the book, including British imperial officials, Iranian diplomats, deputies of the Majles (Iran's parliament), technocrats, tribesmen, railway workers, passengers, and many others. In bringing together interconnected stories of mobilities, this book will address the following questions: How did the Trans-Iranian Railway project shape imaginations and practices of mobilities? How did preexisting mobility networks shape the project? How did individuals experience mobilities across space? What implications did those experiences have on the production and maintenance of spatial categories? And finally, what did those categories mean for individual subjectivities?

A STORY OF REZA SHAH'S RAILWAY

The Pahlavi state of Iran had been in existence for less than two years when railway construction began. Following his rise to power in a coup d'état of 1921, Colonel Reza Khan quickly consolidated power over the next several years. He abolished the moribund Qajar Dynasty and declared himself Reza Shah Pahlavi (r. 1925–41), founding what would prove to be Iran's last dynasty. In conjunction with highway and port construction, the new regime implemented the Trans-Iranian Railway as the mainstay of its ambitious centralization programs. The shah's authoritarian centralization programs were supported by a new generation of political elites, who had been disillusioned with more than a decade of weak central authority following the Constitutional period (1905–11). Therefore, and unlike the construction of many railways in colonized Asia and Africa, the Iranian state, not an imperial power, undertook the infrastructural project. Nor was the project undertaken by a foreign concession-holder, as was the case with many Ottoman and Chinese railways.[8] Rather, it took place in the context of various nation-building projects by the centralizing state, including conscription, sartorial regulations, language reform, history writing, construction of monuments, and state-sponsored ceremonies to celebrate national heritage.[9]

Equally important, the Trans-Iranian Railway materialized as a "belated" project when compared to other railway construction. The first railway in India opened between Bombay and Thana in 1853.[10] A railway line extending from Alexandria to Suez was completed in Egypt at the end of 1858.[11] In the Ottoman Empire, railway construction was finalized between Izmir and Aydin in 1866.[12] Thus, when the Trans-Iranian Railway was completed, there was a euphoric sense that Iran had finally acquired what its neighbors had possessed for a long time—hence the minister of roads' characterization of the project as the nation's "seventy-year-old" dream.

Reflecting these circumstances, the railway materially epitomized the civilizing modernity of the Iranian state, although the actual construction process was supervised by a Danish consortium called Kampsax, which handled all building activities, negotiations with subcontractors, payment to employees from state funds, and medical service.[13] The Trans-Iranian Railway functioned as what Manu Goswami has called "state works," or markers of state authority that were "constructed and construed as magical

technological and engineering feats that would domesticate, discipline, and modernize a barbarous population, tame its prejudices, and elicit its loyalty."[14]

The contemporary Iranian press underscored "time-space compression" mostly through examples of how the provinces were drawn closer to Tehran.[15] In this understanding, the shrinkage of distance meant that the enlightened government of Reza Shah pacified hitherto inaccessible provinces such as Lorestan (meaning "the land of the Lor people"). Press coverage emphasized that Reza Shah "saved" the Lors through the eradication of nomadism, the development of sedentary agriculture, the establishment of modern schools, and the sartorial assimilation of its inhabitants.[16] The railway was expected to accelerate movement between Tehran and the provinces and create a political community with a unified economy and a homogeneous culture.

In Pahlavi Iran, popular representations of the Trans-Iranian Railway project also emphasized a break from the immediate Qajar past and the weakened central authority of the preceding decades.[17] They made promises of a bright future to come, characterized by the presence of technology and industry. This vision, popularly called the New Civilization (*tamaddon-e jadid*) in the Iranian press, drew on European modernity. There would be no room for Islamic practices and various local customs in public once the age of railways arrived. This future would materialize as a result of the central state's civilizing mission.

The magnificence of the mission was concretized through the impressive material structure of the railway, including tunnels, bridges, and stations. To bolster its legitimacy, the Pahlavi state took advantage of nascent photographic journalism. Journalists diligently covered official ceremonies and recorded, for viewing in newspapers, the magnificence of rail infrastructure.[18] The photographs were accompanied by captions that provided quantifiable data detailing the material structure, including the width and length of tunnels and bridges as well as the amount of cement and lumber used. The meticulous quantification was not merely an obsession with technological factoids. It gave state power the appearance of objective reality.[19] Furthermore, by acknowledging ordinary people's contributions—in the form of the taxes on state-monopolized tea and sugar that made the project possible—official rhetoric gave a tangible form to a sense of national unity.

The project's heavy reliance on the general state fund and domestic bank loans was never mentioned because it would have undermined the narrative of the project as a citizens' accomplishment.[20] In official rhetoric, the Trans-Iranian Railway was a visual testament to the Pahlavi state's ability to replicate infrastructural projects found elsewhere despite unique Iranian political and environmental obstacles. It symbolized Iran's contemporaneous experience of technological modernity with the rest of the world. Achieved under Reza Shah's leadership, the Trans-Iranian Railway was represented as Reza Shah's railway.

Historians have largely accepted the fundamental premises of the Pahlavi self-representation of the Trans-Iranian Railway, viewing it as an episode within the story of Reza Shah's state. Standard accounts of modern Iranian history mention it briefly as a prime example of authoritarian centralization in the early Pahlavi period.[21] Seeing the railway project as symptomatic of Reza Shah's despotic state, Homa Katouzian characterizes it as "an unmitigated economic folly" driven by the shah's desire for military control and self-enrichment through land confiscation along the route.[22] And despite Mohammad Kazem Mokmeli's praise for the contribution of ordinary construction workers, his encyclopedic study also presents the Trans-Iranian Railway as Reza Shah's railway. It inadvertently does so by chronicling all failed and materialized railway projects from Qajar Iran to the Islamic Republic while entirely disregarding the processes of railway construction and operation. Mokmeli's narrative jumps from the beginning of construction in 1927 to the end of construction in 1938, followed by the continuous expansion of Iran's rail network to the present. By seeing the development of Iran's rail network as a series of political decisions made in Tehran, the book emphasizes the role of Reza Shah as the decisionmaker; the author's praise of ordinary workers appears only in the caption to a photograph.[23] In fact, despite the extensive coverage of railway construction in the early Pahlavi Iranian press, we know almost nothing about how laborers, workers, technocrats, travelers, and many others experienced the railway project.

Situating the Trans-Iranian Railway in Pahlavi state formation is not inherently problematic—in fact, it is essential. However, historians' exclusive attention to Reza Shah's state encapsulates what Cyrus Schayegh has critiqued as the "methodological statism" of Iranian historiography, in which

the Pahlavi state is seen as the "agent of modernization" and Iranian society as the "object to be modernized."[24] Methodological statism in understanding the Trans-Iranian Railway is problematic for three reasons. First, it is predicated on the underlying assumption that the railway project focused solely on creating the material structure and that railway technology was unproblematically transferred to Iran.[25] Second, it decouples the project temporarily from its pre–Reza Shah origins and post–Reza Shah consequences. Third, it decouples the project spatially from its transnational origins and consequences. In tackling these problems, this book offers an alternative framework for understanding the history of Iran's rail infrastructure.

STORIES OF MOBILITIES

That alternative framework is following stories of mobilities. Mobility is socially embedded motion, to which different meanings are assigned relationally depending on who or what moves, how they move, where they move, and why they move.[26] I read the history of Iran's rail infrastructure as interconnected stories of political contestations over mobility and argue that, rather than simply fostering national integration, the Trans-Iranian Railway project reorganized the movement of the nation. The railway redirected the flows of people and goods, conjoining as well as separating multiple geographies locally, nationally, and transnationally. It also sought to convert "unruly" mobilities into "tamed" mobilities by introducing new ideals of routinized physical movement that shaped normative social behavior. In other words, instead of producing rail mobility for all, the Trans-Iranian Railway redistributed mobilities both spatially and qualitatively, producing different mobilities among its citizens while setting Iran in motion.

My use of the term "mobility" carries spatial and qualitative meanings, tied together but also differentiated by factors such as form, purpose, direction, speed, and scale of movement. Thus, mobility entails not only the empirical reality of physical movement, especially travel and migration, but also the embodied experience of movement, or *how* individuals make bodily motions as they walk, sit, or even sleep during travel and migration.[27] The first component, the empirical reality of physical movement, is how historians widely employ the term to talk about the macroscale movement of people, goods, and ideas across space, including recurring movement such as daily commutes or tribal seasonal migrations. The second component,

which becomes important in the second half of this book, raises the obvious yet often overlooked point that, whenever moving across space, the individual makes all sorts of micromotions, and those motions shape individual experiences of travel and migration. This second component includes norms of behavior that passengers, workers, and others were expected to follow to ensure the order and productivity of the railway system. It also includes an experiential aspect of movement, with attention to the body as "an affective vehicle through which we sense place and movement, and construct emotional geographies."[28] For example, Iranian railway crews' autobiographical accounts reveal that they wove the physical and emotional hardship associated with their work into their story of migration and travel. They narrated their migration for work as the symbol of their sacrifices for the nation by tying to them the gritty taste of sand in rationed bread, the trauma of pulling out coworkers' corpses from mangled locomotives after railway accidents, the heavy perspiration caused by the heat of locomotives, and their own shivering bodies as they worked without winter uniforms.[29] By weaving such individual everyday experiences of mobility into macroscale stories of travel and migration across different spatial scales, from local and national to transnational, this book attempts to trace the processes of subject formation among mobile individuals.

The stories of mobilities that this book brings together are decentralized. This is the case because these stories do not have a single protagonist like Reza Shah. Rather, they trace an interplay among various components of the sociotechnical system, including collective actors such as passengers, workers, guards, engineers, and trespassers as well as infrastructure in its physical forms (trains, tracks, and stations) and institutional forms (railway regulations, management structures, and social conventions that govern people's behavior).[30] Thus, instead of assuming the completion of the infrastructural project with the construction of the material structure, stories of mobilities in part revolve around how the alignment of these components produced and maintained flows. In fact, the development of a network of railway regulations, institutions, skills, and knowledge took place three years after the 1938 completion of the Trans-Iranian Railway, in the peculiar context of the Allied occupation of Iran during World War II, when the multinational workforce faced the new task of transporting American lend-lease materials from the Persian Gulf to the Soviet Union by rail.

How can we situate the Pahlavi state in these decentralized stories of mobilities? After all, the Reza Shah period witnessed rapid modern state formation, exemplified by expansion of the state bureaucracy that comprised the core of the new modern middle class, which enthusiastically supported the ideals of the New Civilization.[31] Moreover, in order to demonstrate its technological mastery, the Pahlavi state needed to ensure that the Trans-Iranian Railway functioned without disruption, which required that all components of heterogeneous sociotechnical networks were synchronized. In addition to producing the material structure, the state was *expected* to be involved in all aspects of infrastructural operation and maintenance. These included, among other things, eradicating malaria from the vicinities of construction sites, securing access to water for steam locomotives, removing livestock from the railway tracks, preventing tribal raids on railway facilities, incentivizing workers to observe railway regulations, and making sure that passengers behaved respectably. While officials and state institutions did not engage with these actors in a coherent or consistent manner, and while interactions occurred between specific individuals with social relations that straddled state and society, it is important to acknowledge that official rhetoric generated expectations of the "state" when Reza Shah took credit for the success of the railway project. Thus, however incongruous or contradictory policies pursued by various state institutions may have been, and however limited the Pahlavi state's ability to control the outcomes of these efforts appeared, the railway project was instrumental in the production of the "modern state" in an abstract sense.

It is noteworthy that the material structure was the only component of the infrastructure network with a fixed location.[32] Everything else that the state tried to manage, both human and nonhuman, was highly mobile. The goal of the New Civilization was to redistribute mobilities among these already highly mobile actors, not to enhance mobility for all. In particular, the success of the Pahlavi civilizing mission by means of the railway project required transforming the habitual mobilities of individuals. This transformation entailed prescribing a precise sequence of physical motions that railway operators had to make in order to ensure that rail infrastructure would produce movement safely and steadily. It also meant remolding individuals who jeopardized the New Civilization into contributors who would help to reach its goals. For example, tribes threatened the project partly by raiding railway facilities, but a more serious threat stemmed from their

unreliability as construction laborers. In order to construct the railway, it was essential to transform tribal mobility into labor mobility, ensuring that tribal laborers came to the construction site at the same time every day for an extended period of time. Likewise, Shiʿi pilgrims threatened the project by thwarting its secularizing goal. Official rhetoric of the early Pahlavi period disapproved pilgrims' travel and instead encouraged citizens to tour the nation as a way to propagate national consciousness. In theory, if not in reality, pilgrim mobility had to be transformed into tourist mobility. Such attempts at redirecting undesirable mobilities, defined not only by their scale and direction but also by their mode and purpose, constituted the core of the Pahlavi state's New Civilization.

Considering the mobile nature of infrastructural components, it comes as no surprise that state attempts to redirect mobilities emerged in the context of "tactics" employed by ordinary people, spontaneously developed practices of mobility that were conditioned but not dominated by the state.[33] For example, when the Foreign Ministry acceded to a request from the Iranian Railway Organization (IRO) and declined to issue passports to Iranian citizens in order to restrict the flow of pilgrim passengers to Iraq, travelers responded by bribing border officials (state employees) and crossing the border illegally with the help of organized human smugglers. It was such specific, everyday encounters with state institutions that produced and reproduced an abstracted notion of "the state" in the lives of ordinary Iranians. At the same time, these encounters made it clear to ordinary Iranians that the way "state power" operated was contingent on social relations and thus could be worked out in their favor.[34]

Infrastructure gave rise to the "everyday state," making ordinary people's lives increasingly conditioned by state power, while actors within the heterogeneous infrastructural network could make it function for their own purposes.[35] Mobility was at the heart of such political contestations in the case of the Trans-Iranian Railway, and that is why mobility serves as a key concept in narrating its history.

MOBILITY AND SPACE

This book begins in the early 1860s, when Iranian diplomats first approached British entrepreneurs to convince them to pursue railway concessions in Iran, and it ends in the late 1940s, when the Iranian railway industry

faced new challenges in the aftermath of World War II. This chronological framework largely corresponds to the period James Gelvin and Nile Green have called the "Age of Steam and Print." During these nine decades, Iran and its surrounding world witnessed profound transformations of mobility, marked by new mechanized modes of transport such as steamships, railways, and automobiles.[36] These new modes of transport were most clearly differentiated from previous ones by their speed and scale. To a great extent, the presence or absence of these technologies dictated not only the number of travelers who moved across vast spaces but also their preferred routes, as exemplified by changes to the route Iranian pilgrims took to reach Mecca. During the last decades of the nineteenth century, pilgrims leaving Tehran for Mecca would go to the Iranian port of Anzali on the Caspian Sea, take the steamship to Baku, travel to the Black Sea by train, take another steamship to reach Istanbul, then to Alexandria, the Suez Canal, and Jeddah, the gateway port city to Mecca. At the end of our story in the late 1940s, a great number of Iranian pilgrims to Mecca used the Trans-Iranian Railway to Ahvaz or Khorramshahr, crossed the Persian Gulf by boat, and traveled by bus or caravan from there.[37] Conjoined with preexisting modes of transport (rather than replacing them), the Trans-Iranian Railway drastically reshaped the regional circulation of people and goods.

As new modes of transport compressed time and space, the age of steam and print witnessed the production of new spatial imaginations. Despite the association of railways with universal progress (*taraqqi*) and progress with European modernity in late Qajar popular discourses, the new imaginations did not epitomize global homogenization through increased mobility. Instead, dual processes of homogenization and differentiation intensified in this period. Spaces hitherto imagined as separate certainly became more interconnected. Aside from competing nation-states, "civilizational" units such as "the West," "Asia," and the "Muslim world" acquired spatiopolitical meanings in this period.[38] This process unfolded in a profoundly uneven manner, however, increasing the incongruence between physical geography and social geography.[39] For example, ʻAyn al-Saltaneh, a courtier of Naser al-Din Shah Qajar (r. 1848–96), most likely knew much more about Paris and London than he did about some villages around Tehran because reading Iranian travel accounts to Europe, most notably the ones penned by Nasir al-Din Shah himself, became an established part of social life in the Naseri

court.[40] As uneven as they were, the processes of time-space compression gave rise to new spatiopolitical categories of differentiation that organized the globe hierarchically, and an increasing number of Iranians began to embrace such categories to situate themselves.[41]

Infrastructure lies at the heart of this process of imperial, global spatial reconfigurations. Be they British or Russian, practices that were rooted in infrastructural development included the gradual banalization of the ways in which travelers described movement across space, the circulation of imperial administrators throughout consulate networks, and these administrators' attempts at promoting and regulating movement of imperial subjects on small and large spatial scales.[42] It was through these practices that the far-flung outposts that dotted vast terrains were integrated into an imperial space. Notably, these processes of producing imperial space could unfold outside of formal empires, requiring historians to employ multiscalar spatial frameworks beyond political boundaries to make sense of the production of new spatiopolitical categories.

This is an important insight for Iran's case, not because Iran's rail infrastructure extended to its surrounding world, although other modes of transport such as camels, boats, and automobiles did link Iran to neighboring countries. Rather, the significance of multiscalar spatial frameworks stems from the late timing of the Trans-Iranian Railway project and Iran's physical geography, both of which contributed to the specific ways in which mobility networks developed. Rail networks had developed around Iran a long time before the initiation of the Trans-Iranian Railway project in 1927. Therefore, imperial officials, European entrepreneurs, and nineteenth-century Iranian travelers imagined a future trans-Iranian railway in relation to emerging British and Russian imperial spaces shaped by infrastructural networks. In other words, its conception hinged upon preexisting regional circulation routes of people, ideas, and goods. Likewise, because previous railway projects had created skilled construction workers and railway operators among Iran's global neighbors, railway construction and its early operation connected different parts of Iran to different regional circuits of labor migration. The project reinforced northwestern Iran's historical link to Russia, the Caucasus, and Anatolia, while resituating southwestern Iran's relationships in the Persian Gulf.[43] Because Iran was a latecomer to infrastructural development, the Trans-Iranian Railway project pulled the country in

different directions rather than simply creating a Tehran-centered network of movement. Again, stories of mobilities are decentralized.

Infrastructure also produced a bounded national space and differentiated national publics. In particular, recent historical and anthropological scholarship has illuminated that infrastructure is produced by difference while being productive of difference at the same time.[44] Rail infrastructure encapsulates this phenomenon because it makes new connections, creates the potentiality for producing movement that would transgress real and imagined boundaries, and constantly raises anxieties of intrusion by individuals and things that do not "belong." Such anxieties demand a new logic of inclusion/exclusion, a logic that becomes accentuated in the confined space of railways. For example, in India, colonial discourse envisioned the elimination of caste difference through the transformative power of railway technology, while simultaneously accentuating the difference between the colonizer and the colonized by segregating the colonized from European passengers. At the same time, Indian nationalist discourse about respectability made visible divisions among Indian passengers based on categories such as class and gender.[45] Thus, a fragmented national public was produced through everyday spatial discourses and practices of railways. Going back to Najafi's example, it was through her encounters with other occupants of the railway space, from child beggars on the platform to a haughty woman who called them "dirty," that she began to distinguish her place from those of others within the heterogeneous Iranian national community. Differentiated access to infrastructure and norms of behavior shaped individual experiences, constantly reinscribing social boundaries and reshaping new senses of belonging among mobile individuals.[46] Such contestations over mobility were central to these processes of "differentiation of society."[47]

PRODUCING IRAN AND IRANIANS

This book builds on, but shifts attention from, many recent studies that decenter the nation as a taken-for-granted unit of historical analysis and provide a critical insight on the making of modern Iran out of transnational encounters. By exploring networks of intellectual exchange, historians have situated the processes of producing Iran in Indo-Iranian, Russo-Iranian, and many other transnational contexts.[48] On the one hand, attention to the transnational circulation of ideas and texts in the

emergence of Iranian nationalism tacitly acknowledges the centrality of mobility. On the other hand, the focus on intellectual networks tends to take for granted the undisrupted operation of mobility networks and to render them invisible. Given that transnational encounters were contingent on the material and social infrastructural network, however, it is important to investigate what kind of politics of mobility facilitated and sustained movement for some while curtailing the movement of others.[49]

Some studies of early Pahlavi Iran consider the contested nature of mobilities. Stephanie Cronin and Rudi Matthee illustrate that the Pahlavi state suppressed tribal mobility as a menace to its centralization programs and forced nomads to settle down as agriculturalists, a policy that had disastrous consequences.[50] Firoozeh Kashani-Sabet's study on the centrality of land in Iranian nationalism discusses anxieties about cross-border mobility, expressed by nationalists in Tehran and Baghdad, who attempted to safeguard their territories by asserting the Iranianness of Khuzestan (southwestern Iran) and the Arabness of Karbala (a Shiʿi pilgrimage site in Iraq) respectively.[51] Schayegh's work on modern science and class formation reveals a deeply ambivalent view toward the speed of mechanized modes of transport in early Pahlavi technoscientific discourses.[52] I revisit these concerns in this book, not mainly from the vantage point of Tehran as the political and cultural center of the nation but by way of stories of ordinary people's mobilities.[53] Such inquiries elucidate the ways in which the new spatiopolitical category of "nation" acquired meaning not simply through a diffusion of ideas from Tehran but through everyday experiences on the social and geographical margins of Iran and, in some cases, beyond its emerging territorial boundaries.

Tracing the history of the Trans-Iranian Railway project as stories of mobilities reveals that the project facilitated movement by intellectuals as well as construction workers, railway workers, and all sorts of passengers, transporting all these groups in unintended directions. In addition to thousands of transnational pilgrims, the railway transported local villagers, tourists, Allied soldiers, and communists who traveled to neighboring countries such as the Soviet Union and Iraq in order to connect with their comrades. The outcome was more ambiguous than the production of a national traveling public. Rather, railway journeys in Iran produced multiple frames of reference, be they Iranian, Shiʿi, or communist, as mobile citizens

moved across space beyond national boundaries and produced difference between themselves and others in numerous ways during their journeys. Transnational spatiopolitical categories did not necessarily contradict the national category, however, even if they constantly destabilized what that category entailed. Rather, as Fariba Adelkhah has argued eloquently, "the transnational field does not dissolve the national dimension, it enhances and sublimates it, enriching it with new reference points and new experiences."[54] Exercise of mobilities constantly produced difference in the processes of individual identification, creating the potential for travelers to identify as Iranian, Shiʿi, or communist—or by many other qualifiers—or by all at the same time.[55]

A ROAD MAP

This book is comprised of seven chapters, each of which uses a different set of sources to address imaginations and practices of mobility within a particular group. The first three chapters examine the restructuring of mobility and space envisioned by imperial administrators and Iranian diplomats, travelers, and Majles deputies. In doing so, these chapters incorporate multimodal infrastructural networks into analysis to stress how individual railway imaginations evolved within a broader context of infrastructural developments. These chapters also underscore the need to zoom out one's spatial lens in order to understand railway imaginations vis-à-vis Iran. For British imperial administrators, Iran was one of the many pieces that comprised a global arena in which the British Empire operated. For travelers from Iran, encounters with rail infrastructures occurred in sometimes distant parts of Eurasia as they moved across space, relying on various modes of transport. Railway technology certainly symbolized European modernity for them, but they encountered it for the first time in India, the Caucasus, and Egypt, requiring us to employ an alternative spatial framework that goes beyond Iran and Europe.

Chapter 1 examines primarily British imperial officials prior to World War I and their visions of redirecting the flow of goods through infrastructural projects. Various trans-Iranian railway projects they proposed were intended to link Europe with Asia through railways and steamships. Importantly, the perceived strategic interests of the British Empire were not the only reasons British officials advocated such reshaping of space. Rather,

their ambitions were couched in the language of a civilizational project to revive Iran's lost status as the corridor between East and West. Chapter 2 discusses railway imaginations among Iranians during the same period. By the turn of the twentieth century, Iranians had come to conceive the future trans-Iranian railway as a panacea for the nation, and many argued for a state-funded railway project that would create a Tehran-centered national space. This chapter illustrates that there was nothing predetermined about this development. Iranian diplomats and travelers held diverse opinions regarding the role of the state, the relationship of railways with preexisting modes of transport, and the purpose of building railways in Iran. While the first two chapters discuss early coterminous developments of British and Iranian railway imaginations, chapter 3 examines their convergence in post–World War I Iran. This chapter draws on Majles proceedings, the Iranian press, and railway station architecture to demonstrate how the new state attempted to produce a national territorial space with its own distinct economy and culture through the railway project.

Chapter 4 looks at the construction phase, which produced mobilities in the forms of displacement, transformation, and reorientation. Mainly based on petitions submitted to the Majles, the first example documents how the much-fanfared mobility brought by the railway depended on the displacement of agriculturalists. The second example examines how the Pahlavi state tried to transform the mobility of tribes into a predictable, routinized mobility of laborers to maximize productivity on construction sites. The third example demonstrates that early operators of the Trans-Iranian Railway were products of the prior transnational circulation of Iranian labor in Iran's neighboring regions. Thus, the railway project reversed the direction of labor flow. Taken altogether, the three cases suggest that the creation of an infrastructural system changed the qualities, scales, and directions of mobilities. Importantly, the production of mobilities during railway construction did not center around Tehran. Movement was generated in multiple directions, originating in multiple locations.

Chapters 5 through 7 explore how the railway produced new mobilities and new subjectivities following the beginning of its operation. Using industry publications and American archival documents from the occupation period, chapter 5 focuses mainly on accident prevention to illustrate that railway operations required a perfect alignment of sociopolitical, technological,

and environmental pieces. The material structure of the railway alone was insufficient to achieve the production of safe, speedy, and stable movement of trains. Seeing speed as corruptible through human behavior and perfectible through human endeavors, technocrats of the IRO and the Allied forces tried to contain its danger by reforming the embodied practice of movement among workers. Their endeavors required standardization in many realms, including mundane bodily motions of workers related to specific procedures, safety regulations, psychotechnical tests, all of which were to constitute essential pieces of rail infrastructure. Chapter 6 focuses on the objects of technocrats' reform: railway workers. In the postwar period, the IRO implemented various measures to cultivate a sense of corporate loyalty among Iranian railway workers, including redirecting workers' everyday mobility around company housing and socialization spaces. Simultaneously, however, workers themselves began to assert their rights as national citizens. This chapter highlights how railway workers valorized national-scale migration to lay claim to being the most self-sacrificing citizens of the nation—all the while discrediting migration by other workers—and leading to the production of a workforce differentiated by rank, provincial background, and nationality. In chapter 7, themes of space, practice, and subjectivity fully converge, as railway passengers continued to shape new subjectivities as they made mundane bodily motions within the railway space while moving across provincial, national, and transnational spaces. Rather than creating a homogeneous, Europeanized experience of railway journeys as desired by the advocates of the New Civilization, encounters in the railway space produced differentiated traveling publics who identified with local, national, and transnational communities simultaneously. Thus, the Trans-Iranian Railway not only integrated the nation but also fostered new connectivities that transcended the nation.

1 Building a Transimperial Infrastructure

IN SEPTEMBER 1889, after traveling by the newly opened section of the Trans-Caspian Railway to ʻAshqabad (Ashgabat), George Curzon entered Iran from Khorasan. For the next three months, the future viceroy of India and British foreign secretary toured Iran to gather information on the crucial kingdom that separated India from Russia. After the end of this sojourn in Iran, the only one Curzon would make in his lifetime, he authored *Persia and the Persian Question* and published it in two volumes in 1892, with the hope of producing a "compendious work dealing with every aspect of public life in Persia."[1] Curzon devoted the last chapter of the first volume to discussions of railways, including failed concessions made during recent decades, obstacles to railway construction in Iran, and possible routes for future railways, illustrating the significance of building railways for British imperial administrators.

Railways appear prominently in British archival documents about Iran, with hundreds of files detailing various proposals that remained unimplemented. Primarily relying on these archival documents, existing scholarship on railway projects in Qajar Iran is concerned with how "railway imperialism" unfolded within Iran even in the absence of successfully completed projects.[2] The rich empirical findings of these case studies show that citing the generic term "Anglo-Russian rivalry" only partially captures the

complexity of the reasons Iran remained without a substantial rail system until the 1930s. It is true that both British and Russian officials opposed railway concessions that would give an upper hand to their imperial rival, but existing studies also shed light on the diversity of the players involved in railway projects in Qajar Iran. Imperial officials from both Russia and Britain—officials representing a mélange of institutional and political positions—held differing opinions on the subject of railway construction. Their wide array of proposals necessarily reflected diverse interests. At the same time, they carefully calculated the potential impact of German and American proposals. To make matters more complicated, they also interacted with equally diverse Qajar statesmen as well as multinational bankers and industrialists, generating "divergent national, financial, and imperial considerations."[3] The "Anglo-Russian rivalry" was more than two groups competing against each other.

Rather than closely tracing diplomatic correspondence among imperial officials with regard to railway concessions in Iran, this chapter zooms out for a wider view of the world map because, as Firuz Kazemzadeh noted more than half a century ago, "The struggles of the two giant empires, whether for Constantinople, Central Asia, or the Far East, were constantly reflected and echoed at Tehran."[4] By paying due attention to the multiscalar spatial frameworks—from Iranian to Eurasian—found in various British perspectives, I demonstrate that imperial officials and foreign investors typically viewed Iran within a larger spatial framework of infrastructural networks that stretched across, and beyond, empires. For them, building a railway in Iran was not about Iran alone. Rather, a railway in Iran would be an extension of the infrastructural networks in India, which were meant to produce "the globally organized Britain-centered imperial scale."[5] This is why any discussions regarding railway construction were inevitably entangled with considerations of strategic and commercial implications on Iran's neighboring lands such as Iraq, India, and Russia as well as places further away, including Egypt and China.[6] British imaginations of Iran's rail infrastructure envisioned the imperial, and often transimperial, reshaping of space.

Despite their divergent considerations, imperial officials and foreign investors shared the conviction that rail infrastructure would foster the flow of people, goods, and ideas across vast distances, even penetrating sparsely populated mountains and deserts.[7] The problem was that they had only

limited measures to determine to whom the railways would, and should, provide mobility. Indeed, any new connectivity across the vast geographical space controlled by different empires amplified fear of undesirable mobilities in future, as refugees, diseases, and subversive ideas might also spread along infrastructural networks.[8] In the context of the politics of railway concessions in Qajar Iran, "undesirable mobilities" included accelerated movement of the goods and troops of its imperial rivals. British officials were committed to restoring Iran's historical role as the passageway between East and West; their goal was to connect and disconnect geographies so that India would be drawn closer to Europe through infrastructural projects.[9] This strategy stood in stark contrast with the Iranian view, which advocated for a trans-Iranian railway project that would reorganize mobility with Tehran as an uncontested center.

Although I discuss differing viewpoints among imperial officials and foreign investors separately from the varied Iranian visions of rail infrastructure, these coterminous processes were not completely separate. One of the key common assumptions of infrastructural projects was their replicability in different places. Therefore, in an effort to reproduce the same infrastructural projects as had been constructed elsewhere, both Iranians and non-Iranians constantly modified their priorities based on the larger regional and global contexts of infrastructural development. That said, the two processes were discrete enough to warrant separate discussion here. Imperial officials negotiated with Iranian political leaders, but they paid little attention to the wide range of ideas put forth by Iranian travelers and intellectuals, most of whom wrote treatises in Persian. Thus, despite Europeans' reliance on Iranian knowledge of topography and environment when surveying potential routes, the Qajar Iranian railway perspectives regarding railway construction did not inform imperial imaginations significantly.

RESHAPING IMPERIAL SPACE

During the second half of the nineteenth century, infrastructural networks developed in newly conquered territories of the Russian and British empires. Russia captured Tashkent in 1865 and incorporated the Khanates of Bukhara and Khiva as protectorates in 1868 and 1873, respectively. In the early 1880s, Russia conquered Trans-Caspia, the steppes on the eastern side of the Caspian Sea. By 1886, the Trans-Caspian Railway connected

MAP 2. Railway networks around Iran, 1905.

Kyzyl-Arvat, an inland town in Trans-Caspia, to 'Ashqabad and Merv. By 1888, the railway extended eastward to Bukhara and Samarqand and westward to Krasnovodsk (present-day Turkmenbashi), a port city on the eastern shore of the Caspian Sea. A decade later, the line from Samarqand to Tashkent was completed, with another plan to extend the line from Merv to Kushk, a town near the northern border of Afghanistan, only fifty miles from Herat.[10] The Caucasus also experienced infrastructural development during the second half of the nineteenth century. The first section of the Trans-Caucasus Railway opened in 1865 from the Black Sea port city of Poti. The railway was extended to Tiflis (present-day Tbilisi) by 1872 and then to Baku by 1883. At the same time, the Russian state began the construction of a railway and a pipeline to connect Baku and Batumi, another port city captured from the Ottoman Empire in 1878. In port cities like Krasnovodsk, Baku, Poti, and later Batumi, which overtook Poti as the main Black Sea port in the Caucasus, the Russian railway network converged with steamers, substantially compressing time and space across the empire. Through new infrastructural networks, trains and steamers transported people and goods, including troops, cotton, oil, and sugar, linking the empire militarily and economically.

The network extended beyond the formal empire. ʻAshqabad was only 150 miles away from Mashhad, the largest city in the northeastern Iranian province of Khorasan, by way of a carriage road partially built by Russia. Russian steamships from Astrakhan and Baku entered the Iranian port of Anzali on the southern shore of the Caspian Sea.[11] Moreover, Russia received numerous concessions for road construction in northern Iran and built nearly 500 miles of roads (Anzali–Tehran, Jolfa–Tabriz, and Qazvin–Hamadan) between 1893 and 1914.[12] In northern Iranian provinces, including major cities such as Tabriz and Mashhad, Russian products enjoyed virtual monopoly to the extent that, in 1890, the British minister in Tehran noted that "Khorasan practically belongs to Russia."[13] On the eve of World War I, trade with Russia accounted for approximately two-thirds of Iran's total trade.[14]

Improved accessibility to northern Iran meant that Russian goods had to compete with German and Austrian goods that were transported to Iran along the same infrastructural networks. However, the general perception among British officials did not always take that factor into consideration sufficiently.[15] They deeply feared, often in an exaggerated manner, that Russia's formal and informal imperial space extended along infrastructural networks, incorporating central Asia, the Caucasus, and northern Iran. As early as 1839, a British pamphlet maintained, "If Russia had never crossed the Caucasus, the intercourse of England with Persia would now have been purely commercial."[16] Especially after Britain established colonial rule in India in 1858, it became crucial to bolster India's defense, which included securing the line of communication between London and India. By 1865, this was achieved through telegraphic communication via Britain's Indo-European Telegraph Department.[17] British maritime networks also developed in the Indian Ocean. In 1862, the British India Steam Navigation Company began to operate steamers connecting India with the Persian Gulf, where the British had concluded treaties with local Arab rulers earlier in the century. By the mid-1870s, after the Suez Canal opened, direct lines from London to port cities such as Muscat, Bandar Abbas, Bushehr, and Basra operated via Aden and Karachi. The introduction of this direct line of steamers resulted in the Persian Gulf becoming economically more integrated with both India and Britain.

Port cities in India became connected to the interior to varying degrees, greatly depending on the conditions of roads and railways. For example,

by 1887 the Northwestern Railway extended from Karachi to the garrison town of Quetta via Sibi. By 1905, another line linked Quetta with Nushki in interior Baluchistan, approaching the southern border of Afghanistan.[18] In Iran, from the Persian Gulf northward, British companies acquired concessions such as the 1888 opening of the Karun River to international navigation up to Ahvaz, which contributed to the gradual rise of Mohammareh (present-day Khorramshahr) and of Basra as a port city at the beginning of the twentieth century.[19] Ahvaz was also linked to the interior city of Isfahan after the 1899 opening of the Bakhtiyari Road (also known as the Lynch Road) through the Bakhtiyari territory.[20] In the last decade of the nineteenth century, according to Curzon, the inhabitants of Isfahan had access to clothing from both Manchester and Bombay. Other port cities such as Bandar Abbas and Bushehr were also tied to inland urban centers, here Kerman and Shiraz respectively. Yet it is worth noting that Bandar Abbas began to decline during the 1890s,[21] because interior cities that had been served by the port—cities such as Kerman, Sistan, and Mashhad—increasingly acquired goods from Russia after the Trans-Caspian Railway and Russian-built roads significantly reduced the distance between Russia and eastern Iran via ʻAshqabad.

To sum up, imperial networks of transport infrastructure increasingly circumscribed Qajar Iran during the second half of the nineteenth century. The constant opening of new roads, railways, and steamship service meant that the routes through which people, goods, and ideas circulated were constantly shifting, which in turn led to the growth and decline of transportation hubs on a transimperial scale; hence, the rise of ʻAshqabad in central Asia coincided with the decline of Bandar Abbas in the Persian Gulf. As movement accelerated in the regions surrounding Iran, imperial officials began to pay close attention to the need to keep some strategic places without railways. The absence of railways in Afghanistan, for example, reflected the importance of purposefully *not* producing enhanced mobilities in order to maintain imperial equilibrium. In Qajar Iran, both British and Russian officials attempted to produce and prevent acceleration in strategic locations to ensure their own commercial and political upper hand.[22]

Because different imperial institutions and officials had competing priorities and conflicting interpretations regarding their respective empires' best interests, they proposed dozens of potential routes for future railways

in Iran. Several recurring routes surfaced. Two were overtly Indo-European routes, either from Russia to India or from Iraq to India. The details of the routes varied, but the Russia-India route often entered Iran from Jolfa or Baku, then passed through Qazvin, Tehran, and Yazd. From there, the route could either head eastward through inland routes to Kerman, Sistan, and Quetta, or take the coastal route through Bandar Abbas, Chahbahar, and Karachi. The Iraq–India route was to start from Baghdad, penetrating southern Iranian cities such as Mohammareh and Shiraz or central Iranian cities such as Isfahan and Kerman. Another route that prioritized access to India was the north-south line, usually from the Caspian Sea to the Persian Gulf, with port cities like Anzali and Mohammareh as potential termini. A number of proposals covered only the north line or the south line. Less extensive branch routes were also designed with access to international trade routes in mind, especially in conjunction with trunk railway lines, roads, and steamship routes. Examples of these proposals included Jolfa–Tabriz, ʻAshqabad–Mashhad, Mohammareh–Khorramabad, Baghdad–Khaneqin–Kermanshah–Tehran, and Kerman–Bandar Abbas. Indeed, all sorts of possible routes were proposed, partly to open interior Iranian markets but, more importantly, to bring Europe, Russia, and India closer in accordance with particular understandings of imperial interests.

THE BEGINNING: ATTRACTING FOREIGN INVESTMENT

Concession-giving emerged as a global phenomenon among infrastructural projects from the second half of the nineteenth century to the early twentieth century. For leaders of sovereign states in Asia, Africa, and Latin America, concessions enabled them to build massive physical structures without local capital or technological expertise. The popularity of concessions among political leaders continued despite mounting domestic opposition.[23] Concessions were also beneficial to foreign investors; investing in countries without the necessary economic-legal framework, especially property rights, carried risk. Concessions could reduce that risk by granting investors financial privileges such as a tariff reduction, monopoly, and guaranteed rate of return on capital. Moreover, concessions provided a legal framework to the concession-holders in countries where European investors' definition of property rights was not enforced at large. Thus, despite the threat concessions posed to local economies, they functioned as a way of creating ad hoc

economic and legal structures to incentivize investment in countries that had no means to undertake large-scale projects otherwise, facilitating the flow of capital from Europe to Asia, Africa, and Latin America.[24]

The story of railway concessions in Iran begins in the 1860s, a transitional decade for Naser al-Din Shah Qajar, who ruled Iran for nearly half a century from 1848 to 1896. As a teenager, he inherited the Qajar Empire, an empire increasingly threatened by the Russian Empire in the north and the British Empire in the south. Prior to his reign, the Qajars had lost control over the Caucasus as a result of military defeats at the hands of Russia in 1813 and 1828. In the northeast, the Qajar siege of Herat failed due to British intervention in 1838. Naser al-Din Shah's reign, therefore, began as the Qajar Empire was trying to assert its power in remote provinces while facing the growing presence of two imperial powers.

The first decade of Naser al-Din Shah's rule was tumultuous. In 1856, still an ambitious youth of twenty-five, he engaged in yet another territorial dispute with the British on two related fronts, one in Herat and the other in the Persian Gulf port of Bandar Abbas. The subsequent military campaigns resulted in disastrous defeats in 1857, forcing the shah to relinquish claims over Herat and to extend the lease of Bandar Abbas to the sultan of Zanzibar. Four years later, his military expedition against the Turkomans of Marv also ended in failure. These military setbacks compelled the shah to shift priorities. After 1861, Naser al-Din Shah "did not engage in any major diplomatic or military wrangles with the neighboring powers" until the end of his reign in 1896.[25] Thus, beginning in the early 1860s, the Qajar state began to redirect its resources to matters other than military campaigns against external forces. The shift had a significant impact on railway projects, particularly because an Iranian diplomatic presence in London was restored. As Iran's relations with Britain began to normalize, it became possible for a small circle of Iranian diplomats to attempt to convince British entrepreneurs to pursue railway concessions in Iran.

It was the Iranian initiative in this context that led to foreign attempts at gaining concessions. By the early 1860s, a small number of Iranian diplomats had witnessed railways firsthand in Europe as well as Iran's surrounding regions. These diplomats included prominent figures such as Mirza Mohsen Khan Mo'in al-Molk, the Iranian ambassador to London, Mirza Malkam Khan, who would fulfill the same position later, and Mirza

Hoseyn Khan Moshir al-Dowleh, the Iranian ambassador to Istanbul who had previously served in Bombay and Tiflis.[26] In the absence of local capital and expertise within Iran, they considered granting concessions as the only way to export infrastructural projects they had witnessed abroad to Iran. From London, Istanbul, and other cities, they frequently wrote reports to the Qajar monarch Naser al-Din Shah, arguing for the need to bring Iran technological innovations such as the telegraph and the railway.[27]

Unlike subsequent generations of Iranian reformists, they did not express misgivings about granting concessions to Europeans, nor did they view this strategy as a dangerous step toward European domination. Malkam Khan wrote as late as the mid-1870s, "The leaders of the state must, without delay, turn over the construction of railways, the operation of mines, the establishment of a bank, and all public works and structures to foreign companies. . . . The government of Iran must grant as many concessions to foreign companies as possible."[28] Diplomats such as Mohsen Khan and Malkam Khan as well as Naser al-Din Shah himself certainly benefited materially from the huge sums of money they demanded from investors. Monetary gains were not their only motives, however. They had witnessed or read about how infrastructural projects transformed the natural and economic landscapes of Iran's neighbors in Istanbul, Bombay, Tiflis, and Cairo.[29] Similar to other westernizing elites in mid-nineteenth-century Asia, they optimistically believed that replicating imposing physical structures was the key to participating in the contemporaneous technological modernity that Europeans enjoyed, and that it would elevate their position in the global hierarchy of civilization.[30] Iran needed its own megaprojects similar to the Suez Canal, which was under construction in Khedival Egypt during the 1860s. Reproduction of infrastructural projects was the primary goal; to whom these projects would be entrusted remained a secondary question for the small Iranian diplomatic circle of Mirza Hoseyn Khan. With Naser al-Din Shah's approval, they approached European entrepreneurs, including the French, British, and Prussians, and began to deliver their sales pitch.[31]

In the early 1870s, European investors did not consider Qajar Iran a sound investment opportunity. Keenly aware of the investment risk in Iran and the British government's unwillingness to back his investment officially, the British railway mogul Edward W. Watkin declined Iranian offers.[32] Other cautious investors also passed up the opportunity. When

approaching established investors turned out to be unsuccessful, Mohsen Khan attempted to convince a less reputable investor, Baron Julius de Reuter, a German-born naturalized British citizen. Despite the warnings from British officials about the riskiness of a railway project in Iran, the baron enthusiastically entertained the prospect of great profits. On July 25, 1872, Naser al-Din Shah granted Reuter a concession that George Curzon famously characterized as "the most complete and extraordinary surrender of the entire industrial resources of a kingdom into foreign hands."[33] Among other things, Reuter gained a monopoly for the next seventy years to mine minerals, build canals, irrigation systems, factories, roads, telegraph lines, tramways, and railways—including a line from Rasht near the Caspian coast to Bushehr on the Persian Gulf coast via Tehran. Interestingly, despite the all-encompassing nature of this concession, the shah's correspondence with Mirza Hoseyn Khan and a committee of ministers focused mainly on railway construction. Iran's committee of ministers welcomed the concession as the only way to fund a railway in the absence of necessary capital, underscoring the centrality of the railway question.[34]

The Reuter Concession encountered opposition both domestically and internationally. Domestically, critics understood the Reuter Concession in the context of larger reform projects initiated by Mirza Hoseyn Khan, who had risen to the position of prime minister. Critics were especially alarmed by the railway clause in the concession. Among domestic oppositions, Hajji Molla Ali Kani, a prominent *mojtahed* of Tehran, captured this sentiment when he said, "With the onrush of Europeans into Iran, no mujtahid would survive. Even if some ulama did survive, what guarantee do we have that Mirza Malkam Khan or the company, with all the wealth it can amass, and all the men it can bring into the country, would not surround us with their troops and weapons?"[35] He went on to argue that the concession would give "a foreign company the right to purchase land, which could lead to the invasion of the country by Europeans under the pretext of building railways."[36] He singled out rail infrastructure because of his conviction that it would produce mobility and cause the onslaught of European capital and troops into Iran.

The British Foreign Office distrusted Reuter and declined to support him from the beginning, suspecting that he might choose Russian protection and renounce his acquired British citizenship. The British minister in Tehran

was particularly concerned about the railway project to connect the Caspian Sea and Tehran, which he feared would compromise Iran's independence as Russia would gain easy access to the Qajar capital both economically and militarily.[37] The Russian legation also opposed the concession granted to a British citizen, fearing that British influence would increase once various infrastructural projects by British companies commenced. Thus, during Naser al-Din Shah's visit to St. Petersburg in the spring of 1873—his first journey to Europe—Russia pressured him to cancel the concession. Facing domestic and foreign opposition, the shah succumbed to the pressure, citing Reuter's failure to begin railway construction within the specified time.

Although canceling the concession, the shah noted that Iran still needed railways. While the British Foreign Office remained uninvolved with the Reuter Concession, the Russian Foreign Ministry actively searched for an adequate investor and found Baron von Falkenhagen, a retired Russian general. With tacit state support, Falkenhagen sought a concession for a railway from the Caucasian border town of Jolfa, which was soon to be connected to Tiflis by rail, to Tabriz, along with mining rights along the route. The Falkenhagen Concession in 1874, however, included a clause that required the Qajar state to give up the customs of Tabriz for the duration of the concession, which raised a serious concern for Mirza Hoseyn Khan. After failing to stall the deal, he, along with Malkam Khan, attempted to get the British involved. Fearing the expansion of Russian influence in Azerbaijan, the British used the nullified terms of the Reuter Concession (that gave Baron Reuter exclusive rights for railway construction) as a pretext to object to the Falkenhagen Concession. Since Russia preferred not to antagonize the British over the matter, the Russian-backed Falkenhagen Concession was canceled in 1875.[38]

By the late 1870s, foreign investors' interest in Iranian railway projects began to grow despite the riskiness of investment. The shah continued to promote concession-giving as a method of infrastructural development, meeting with interested investors in Paris during his second trip to Europe in 1878. Repeatedly, however, concession seekers walked away disappointed. While the British Foreign Office objected to Russian railway concessions in northern Iran for fear of the expansion of Russian influence, the Russian Foreign Ministry objected to British railway concessions in southern Iran to prevent the expansion of British influence. Moreover, when non-British

investors tried to develop a railway in southern Iran, they faced British objections. Likewise, when non-Russian investors tried to develop a railway in northern Iran, they faced Russian objections.[39] Clearly, each foreign ministry maintained ongoing suspicion of the other.

THE PATH TO INDIA

By the 1880s, imperial competition had intensified globally, and empires shifted from indirect rule through local intermediaries to direct rule. The change occurred most clearly in Africa, as empires scrambled to the continent to incorporate more territories following the British occupation of Egypt in 1882.[40] Just as the imperialist scramble for Africa picked up steam, the concession frenzy in Iran reached its peak. In both cases, Europeans provided moral and economic justifications for such interventions. Given that the occupation of Egypt was partly motivated by the imperial officials' desire to secure a route to India, the concurrent intensification in attempts to gain railway concessions in Iran was hardly a coincidence. Thus, despite continued concern among foreign investors regarding the soundness of Iran's economy, particularly when the Americas offered safer outlets for investments, heightened political tensions continued to drive competition for railway concessions.[41] Tensions were exacerbated by the development of competing infrastructural networks in regions surrounding Iran. In the north, Russian railways reached Baku (1883), ʻAshqabad, and Merv (1886). From the east, the British Northwestern Railway reached Quetta (1887). Combined with the development of steamship navigation on the Caspian Sea and the Persian Gulf, imperial officials increased their attempt at controlling the degree of acceleration in largely steamless Iran.

In this context, imperial officials more frequently discussed railway projects in Iran as a component of the larger Indo-European infrastructural network. The idea itself was not new. As early as 1845, a disciple of the social reformer Robert Owen proposed the "Atlas Railway" from Calais to Beijing via Istanbul and Calcutta, and a version of it was presented to the East India Company. During the 1850s, several others had also advocated plans to connect India with Europe, such as the Euphrates Valley Railway from the Mediterranean Sea to the Persian Gulf port of Basra.[42] Additional proposals appeared in the 1870s, including an 1875 proposal presented to the Russian ambassador in Istanbul by Ferdinand de Lesseps, the

French diplomat known for his role in developing the Suez Canal project. These plans mostly failed to generate enthusiastic responses among high-ranking imperial officials and investors; Lesseps's plan to build a railway from Orenburg to India via Samarqand was dismissed as "not realistic."[43] By the 1880s, the dream of connecting India and Europe by railway was finding more advocates among investors: in 1889, an American proposal planned to connect Alexandretta (present-day İskenderun) and India via Baghdad and Mohammareh, and a group of Russian capitalists proposed to connect the Caspian Sea to Chahbahar on the coast of Baluchistan.[44] Among the British, Curzon's *Persia and the Persian Question* represented the shift. Viewing the "Persian question" through a larger lens of imperial infrastructures, he noted, "In every scheme that has been or can be put forward, Persia, by its geographical position, plays a prominent part. . . . the future of Persian railways is consequently endowed with a more than local importance." After all, Iran was "placed geographically midway between Europe and India," and thus would "powerfully affect the fortunes of Great Britain's Empire in the East."[45] An Indo-European railway seemed more realistic by the 1880s.

A particularly influential political figure interested in the possibility of linking India with Europe was Henry Drummond Wolff, who arrived in Tehran in 1888 as the British minister. A resourceful man with a strong personality and connections in London's parliamentary, diplomatic, and business circles, Wolff was appointed by the Conservative government of Lord Salisbury to bolster Britain's position in Iran and to address the perceived increase in Russian influence. Wolff's stated mission in Iran was for Britain, Russia, and Iran "to work harmoniously together" to achieve the growth of commerce and industry "instead of maintaining a rivalry."[46] He hoped to achieve this goal through an idea that would be formalized in the Anglo-Russian Agreement of 1907: the formation of a Russian sphere of influence in northern Iran and a British sphere of influence in southern Iran. Through this division, he tried to maintain Iran's status as a buffer state and secure British dominance in southern Iran, which lay on the path to India. Thus, Wolff aggressively sought commercial gains for Britain in southern Iran, from the 1888 opening of the Karun River to the secret agreement with Naser al-Din Shah in the same year that promised the British preferential rights in a railway project from Tehran southward. The

agreement guaranteed that if a non-British company acquired a railway concession for northern Iran, a British company would gain a concession for a Tehran-Shushtar railway.[47]

At the same time, Wolff pursued a north-southwest railway project between Anzali and Mohammareh with British and Russian capital, believing that economic cooperation in an infrastructural project affecting both northern and southern Iran would lead to amicable Anglo-Russian relations. In arguing for the benefits of an Anzali–Mohammareh railway, he noted how much space such a route would shrink. He pointed out that the distance between Moscow and Karachi via Odessa and the Suez Canal was 5,306 miles but would be only 3,330 miles via the Anzali–Mohammareh route, saving 1,976 miles. The impact would be similar to that of the Suez Canal on the London-Bombay steamship journey, because the distance from London to Bombay via Cape Town was 9,545 miles whereas it was 7,053 miles via the Suez Canal, shortening the journey by 2,492 miles. For the distance between Baku and Karachi, the gain would be even greater. Under the current route via Batumi and the Suez Canal, the distance was 5,134 miles, while the proposed railway would shorten the distance to 2,035 miles, shrinking by 3,099 miles. Then Wolff estimated that the total cost of railway construction would be ten million pounds or less, even including the cost of "branches to Tehran and Kermanshah."[48] Importantly, in this scheme, Tehran was to be served only by a branch line, as the shortest line between Anzali and Mohammareh would go through Qazvin, about 100 miles west of Tehran. Because the purpose of this trans-Iranian railway was to link Russia and India, which also meant linking Europe and India via Russia, whether the line should go through Tehran or not was not the crucial issue. The bypassing of Tehran was not unusual among Indo-European railway proposals. In fact, several of the Indo-European railway routes that Curzon discussed in *Persia and the Persian Question* did not pass through Tehran, including the Baghdad–Kermanshah–Borujerd–Isfahan–Yazd–Kerman route to India and the Shushtar–Bandar Abbas–Karachi route.[49]

Unlike Wolff, Henry Brackenbury, the British director of military intelligence, along with Robert Morier, the British ambassador to Russia, insisted on delaying any Russian railway construction in the north, be it along the Caspian Sea or in Khorasan.[50] Like Wolff, however, Brackenbury evaluated the value of various railway projects in relation to the larger framework of

Indo-European infrastructure. In his 1889 memorandum, he advocated the Mohammareh–Shushtar–Balarud–Borujerd–Qom–Tehran alignment, citing its access to the fertile parts of Khuzestan. He also valued this alignment because, with the construction of branch lines from Borujerd to Kermanshah as well as to Isfahan, Yazd, and Kerman, the route could tap into trade in these commercial hubs. He further argued that Kerman might become the converging point between Iranian and Indian railways should the British Empire expand in the future and that Kermanshah might be linked to Baghdad, connecting India and Europe via Iraq.[51] Interestingly, despite the fact that the memorandum was about the possibility of connecting Tehran and the Persian Gulf, he spent remarkably little time discussing Tehran. He focused much more on securing British influence in southern Iran and connecting Iraq and India through Iran.

Brackenbury and Wolff disagreed on another railway proposal in the Indo-Iranian borderlands: a Quetta–Sistan railway via Nushki.[52] Brackenbury noted, "The safety of India from Russia lies in the distance of the Trans-Caspian Railway from the Indian frontier, combined with the difficulties of supply and transport."[53] He feared that extending the Northwestern Railway to Sistan would motivate Russia to seek a concession to link the Trans-Caspian Railway to Mashhad.[54] Wolff advocated the extension, however, following the recommendation of Colonel Mark Bell, the head of the British Intelligence Department in India. Wolff's argument partially hinged on the military defense of India in light of Russia's increasing presence in central Asia, Afghanistan, and northeastern Iran through the Trans-Caspian Railway.[55] The core of his argument was, however, economic. In a series of letters to Lord Salisbury, he repeatedly stressed that the commercial advantage of Russia in Khorasan owed much to easier access to the province through rail and road infrastructure. He noted in reference to Russian rail infrastructure, "It has opened out fresh markets, increased cultivation and production. Wild tribes have become pacified, and the annexed provinces are undergoing a rapid though rough process of civilization. Meanwhile, commercial relations between Russia and Persia are being strengthened by a fresh bond of mutual interest."[56] Wolff wanted to repeat the same transformations through a Quetta–Sistan railway. The Indian railway to Sistan would shorten the distance from India to Khorasan, since the main route at the time was from Bombay/Karachi to Bandar Abbas by steamship, and

from Bandar Abbas to Mashhad via Kerman on caravan roads. By constructing the railway in conjunction with a concession for an irrigation system in Sistan, Wolff argued that Britain would be able to utilize the water from the Helmand River to create agricultural prosperity in the poverty-stricken region. Thus, the British Empire would acquire new markets for Anglo-Indian goods as well as a granary to provide agricultural goods to India.[57] In short, the railway, along with the irrigation system, would tear eastern Iran away from Russia and put it together with India.

In the end, none of these railway projects materialized. At the close of the nineteenth century, the only railway that foreign investors built in Iran was an eight-kilometer tramway from Tehran to the shrine of Shah ʻAbd al-ʻAzim, a project completed by a Belgian company in 1888.[58] This stalemate may be traced to Russia's reaction to Wolff's aggressive efforts at promoting commerce through concessions in southern Iran. Indeed, the opening of the Karun River in 1888 to international navigation left Russian capitalists and political leaders divided on the issue of railway construction in Iran. Some continued to push for railway construction. For example, during a ministerial meeting in early 1890, the Russian minister of ways and communication, along with Muscovite merchants, insisted that delaying railway construction would strengthen British commercial influence in Iran.

Others, including the Russian ministers of finance and foreign affairs, were concerned about Russian goods' relative lack of competitiveness. If access to Iran improved, they feared that this expanded access would benefit more competitive Anglo-Indian and other European goods, weakening Russia's commercial influence, which was predicated on the difficulty of access in northern Iran. The Russian minister in Tehran also opposed railway construction in Iran, suggesting that a trans-Iranian railway might prove economically unviable. He argued that European merchants, particularly British merchants, trading with India would avoid the political risk of any trans-Iranian railway that relied on a Russian railway system. Moreover, it would continue to be much faster and cheaper for them to use the existing Suez Canal route.[59] Any proposed trans-Iranian railway would become a burden for Russia.

In November of 1890, the new Russian minister in Tehran and the Iranian prime minister, Amin al-Soltan, signed an agreement that included a clause banning any railway construction in Iran for the next ten years,

temporarily halting discussions of connecting India with Europe by railway networks that would go through that country. This moratorium was later extended for another ten years until 1910.[60]

RECLAIMING THE LOST STATUS

By the time the moratorium was due to expire, the political context surrounding Iran had shifted significantly. The most crucial change was the growing influence of the German Empire on the Ottoman Empire, especially through Germany's involvement in the Baghdad Railway project. Financed by German banks, the project was to connect Berlin with Baghdad via Istanbul and Aleppo. German firms such as Philipp Holzmann were involved in construction, which started in 1903. Combined with other infrastructural projects, the Baghdad Railway would greatly enhance German access to the Persian Gulf through Basra, enabling the rising empire to compete with the British commercially.[61] Russian merchants regarded the Baghdad Railway and its potential branch lines to Iran as a real threat to the dominance of Russian products in northern Iran. Development of the Baghdad Railway also made clear that extending the Iranian moratorium would be untenable given the high level of German interest in railway construction in the Middle East. Particularly since the Russian Empire had been weakened by defeat in the Russo-Japanese War in 1905, imperial Russia viewed a new regional arrangement as essential and urgent.

The Anglo-Russian Agreement of 1907 was the culmination of the two imperial powers' efforts to respond to the rise of Germany by deescalating Anglo-Russian tensions in Asia.[62] Without consulting with local rulers, imperial officials signed the agreement, thereby formalizing Anglo-Russian relations regarding Tibet, Afghanistan, and Iran. Despite lip service paid to Iran's territorial integrity and independence, Iran was divided into de facto spheres of influence. The Russian sphere of influence was defined as north of the line connecting Qasr-e Shirin, Isfahan, Yazd, and the meeting point of the Afghan and Russian borders, which meant that the two powers recognized Russia's prevalence in major urban centers such as Tabriz, Hamadan, Kermanshah, Tehran, and Mashhad. The British defined their sphere of influence as southeastern Iran from the Afghan border, Kerman, and Bandar Abbas. Although the British zone included far fewer urban centers of significance, the agreement placed the Indo-Iranian borderlands

safely under British dominance. Both powers were to refrain from seeking concessions in the other's sphere of influence. The area in between, including southwestern Iran, was defined as a neutral sphere. The agreement impacted railway projects until World War I, since it required all railway projects in the two spheres to be internationalized with the participation of the power that controlled the sphere. Otherwise, construction plans were restricted to the neutral zone, as exemplified by the Mohammareh–Khorramabad railway project that the British Foreign Office and the India Office prioritized in this period. Because the Russian zone lay north of Khorramabad, the plan had to stop at a provincial city in Lorestan rather than extend northward to Tehran or to the important commercial hub of Hamadan.[63]

Not long after the Anglo-Russian agreement, Russia sought to improve relations with Germany, which had deteriorated following the 1908 Bosnian Crisis. Ongoing negotiations between the tsar and the kaiser culminated in the 1911 Potsdam Agreement, wherein the two powers recognized Russia's special interests and German commercial interests in Iran. In return for Germany's promise not to seek concessions in the Russian sphere, Russia was obliged to build a railway from Tehran to Khaneqin near the Irano-Ottoman border within two years of the completion of a branch of the Baghdad Railway to Khaneqin. In the eyes of Russian merchants, a railway from the Caucasus to Iran needed to be completed at once—before the influx of European commodities into northern Iran through the Khaneqin Railway diminished the competitiveness of Russian goods altogether. Russia's strategy behind the agreement was to delay undertaking the railway construction as long as possible in hopes that the international situation would change and offer Russia a reprieve. In short, penetration of German goods into northern Iran would inarguably threaten Russia's commercial position. Given that it would take at least another decade or more to complete the Baghdad Railway, Russian delay seemed to be the best option available.[64]

Russia's need to neutralize the economic impact of the Baghdad Railway rekindled proposals to connect India and Europe through a trans-Iranian railway. Although Russian proposals had fallen apart in 1889 and 1905, this time Russian banks and industries actively gathered capital for the project in order to protect their commercial interests in Iran. As 1910 came to a close, Russian bankers and business interests, as well as N. A. Khomyakov, president of the Duma, who had proposed the previous Russian

trans-Iranian railway in 1889, successfully formed a consortium, with a proposed route that would penetrate through Iran diagonally, from Baku to Quetta via Tehran, Kerman, and Nushki. The plan gained support from French investors; in order to circumvent British objections, the consortium tried to internationalize the project further by bringing in British capital. In June 1912, the *Société d'Études du Chemin de Fer Transpersan* was established with the endorsement of the governments of Britain, France, and Russia.[65]

In late 1910 and early 1911, British public interest in the trans-Iranian railway rose significantly following the visit of Russian parliamentarians and industrialists to London for the promotion of the project. In this promising atmosphere, Lieutenant-Colonel A. C. Yate, the former consul in Muscat with extensive experience in Iran, gave a lecture in February 1911 at the Central Asian Society in London to discuss the trans-Iranian railway project. Yate, an enthusiastic supporter of the project, characterized it not so much as trans-Iranian but rather as "Indo-European," since its route would largely parallel the existing Indo-European Telegraph. In fact, the project would enable rail service from Calais all the way to Calcutta through Russia, the Caucasus, and Iran, truly connecting "East and West."[66] For Yate, this was not a new phenomenon but a restoration of lost Afro-Eurasian connectivity. He began his lecture with historical precedents of East-West connections all the way back to Pharaonic Egypt.[67] Civilizations had interacted by land and sea routes, led by the Phoenicians, Arabs, and central Asians, at a time when Europeans had no direct interactions with China and India. According to him, the golden age of Eurasian connectivity ended with the destruction of fertile and populous lands by "Turk and Tartar hordes." Then the advent of steam power revolutionized movement. On land and sea, the British Empire contributed greatly to the development of networks, especially in the Persian Gulf, reviving the lost connectivity of ancient empires. Due to the inertia of the British government in recent years, however, that role was being taken over by the Germans, as exemplified by the Baghdad Railway project. Russia was also rebuilding East-West connections through the Trans-Siberian Railway, linking China and central Asia with Russia and Europe. Thus Yate promoted the "Indo-European" railway project in the moment of perceived crisis. Britain had to reclaim its leading role in the global acceleration of movement; after all, "we have developed all the trade routes . . . and it is our

travellers, who, for more than a century, have opened up this, till recently, imperfectly known country to the more civilized world." Just as British engineers were rejuvenating Merv to be worthy of its former title, "Queen of the World," and building Egypt's Aswan Dam to restore the "Garden of Eden," Britain also had to take an active part in East-West reconnection through the Indo-European railway via Iran. Yate, confident that the Indo-European railway would restore the decayed economies of the East, proclaimed, "A railway which taps the wealth and traffic of the vast populations of Europe and of India, and of the lands where flourished the 'Great Oriental Monarchies' of pre-Christian days . . . will be a commercial success."[68]

The fact that Yate envisioned rail infrastructure as a recivilizing force was unsurprising. British writings on infrastructural development surrounding Iran often made references to the glories of the past such as the Achaemenid Empire under Darius, the Abbasid Caliphate, and the Safavid Empire under Shah Abbas, creating a contrast between the past glories and the present decay.[69] In particular, British travelers who did preliminary surveys for railway projects in southern Iran often encountered remnants of caravanserais and irrigation systems. Arnold Wilson, one such surveyor, found some twenty caravanserais from the Shah Abbas period between Bandar Abbas and Shiraz alone, which prompted him to estimate that there were over one thousand caravanserais from the same period.[70] Discoveries like this reinforced the perception that the British Empire was resurrecting an infrastructural network that had once made Iran a prosperous passageway between "East and West." Thus, similar to the cases of the British in India and Iraq as well as the French in North Africa, the presence of the ruins in Iran justified the presence of the British with their mastery of nature and technology.[71] Only with British interventions would Iran be able to rebuild its infrastructure and once again fulfill its unique historical role. Referring to the trans-Iranian railway project, Yate reiterated, "If ever she [Iran] has the opportunity of reviving the past glories of Naushirwan and Shah Abbas, this is it."[72] In fact, Yate even envisaged the possibility of Iran's future role as the passageway between the Mediterranean and the Pacific when, not if, railway networks expanded.[73] It was Iran's destined role to function as a nodal point of transimperial infrastructural connectivity, and it was Britain's duty to use its mastery of steam power to restore that connectivity.

Once again, the railway project did not materialize. Officials in the Indian government objected to the proposed route from Kerman to Sistan and Nushki, fearing that it would give Russia easy access to India. The British Foreign Office was more concerned about antagonizing Russia following the Russo-German agreement, so it conveyed British support for the trans-Iranian railway project in principle while objecting to the interior route. Instead, it proposed the coastal route through Bandar Abbas to Karachi, but the Russian Foreign Ministry refused to accept a route that would run parallel to the British fleet along the Persian Gulf. By the beginning of World War I, surveys for the northern section by way of Anzali and Tehran had been completed.[74] But the war halted the project, along with the Mohammareh–Khorramabad project that the British supported. By the end of World War I, only several short lines existed in Iran, built mainly for military purposes. These lines included the Russian-built Jolfa–Tabriz Railway, the British-built Bushehr–Borazjan Railway and Nushki Railway not to Sistan but to Dozdab (present-day Zahedan).[75] These lines fostered the movement of troops (and goods in the postwar period), but they did not reconnect "East and West" as Yate had envisaged.

* * *

Proposed imperial railways in Iran did not envision a Tehran-centered national economy. Rather, these imperial powers sought to attach Iran's local economies in Tabriz, Mashhad, Mohammareh, or Sistan to regional economies of the Caucasus, Trans-Caspia, the Persian Gulf, and India—all of which were becoming increasingly tied to broader imperial circulation routes of people and goods in the age of steam. In this sense, advocates of imperial railway projects tried not only to accelerate movement but also to redirect that movement for their own strategic and commercial interests. At the same time, advocates of proposed railway projects also aspired to connect empires to rejuvenate lost Afro-Eurasian connectivity between the Mediterranean, the Indian Ocean, and the central Asian steppes through networks of steamships and railways. In this sense, imperial officials and investors intended to foster trade across empires through trans-Iranian railway projects and to reshape space locally, regionally, and transimperially.

Unlike in India and other parts of colonial Asia, imperial railways remained unrealized in Iran for the most part. Thus, debates on restructuring

space were mostly hypothetical. Yet imperial reimaginations of space matter as they continued to evolve in interaction with internal debates and negotiations with their imperial counterparts, constantly informing the contours of imperial political and economic discussions about railway projects, discursively placing Iran within imperial space. Moreover, although Iranian imaginations of rail routes rarely made explicit reference to imperial imaginations, the fundamental assumption of asymmetrical global economic relations was well taken by Iranians, who began to respond with their own visions of spatial restructuring through railways. I will turn to these diverse Iranian responses in the next chapter.

2 The Road to Salvation

IN 1859, a young Iranian cleric left his home village of Mahallat and began an eighteen-year journey that would take him to lands both near and far—including the Hejaz, Russia, Europe, the United States, Japan, China, Singapore, and India. Acquiring the moniker Hajj Sayyah ("traveler"), he recorded numerous travel experiences, including time spent on European trains (*kaleskeh-ye rah ahan*). In Pest, Vienna, Milan, Paris, and other European cities, he took advantage of the rapidly expanding railway networks to move speedily from one city to another, crossing iron bridges and long tunnels that penetrated the prosperous and well-cultivated lands of Europe, the details of which he faithfully recorded. Aboard one particular train in France, Hajj Sayyah made the acquaintance of a French peasant. According to Hajj Sayyah, unlike Iranian peasants, this man possessed ample knowledge of the world and conversed intelligently on a wide range of topics. At one point, the peasant asked, "Is our railway better or yours?" Hajj Sayyah responded, "In our land, there is no railway yet." The peasant seemed perplexed and asked why this was so. Unsure how to respond, Hajj Sayyah simply replied, "I don't know," and changed the subject. The experience embarrassed him to such an extent that he spent the remainder of the journey in silence.[1]

This chapter examines how Iranian travelers' imaginations of a trans-Iranian railway evolved in the context of discursive production of Iranian national space. In her seminal study on nationalism, Firoozeh Kashani-Sabet has argued that Iran's loss of land during the nineteenth century fueled a territorialized notion of the Iranian nation. The loss of land in her account was not limited to military defeats; she details how concessions given to foreign subjects also raised anxieties of European economic penetration into Iran among Qajar intellectuals. Thus, in her account, the external threat that Qajar intellectuals perceived, be it military or economic, was fundamental to the production of a new imagination of Iranian national space.[2] This chapter builds on Kashani-Sabet's study by reframing the spatial focus of the narrative. While the intellectuals she discusses sensed external economic threats from their presumed physical presence in Iran, I pay attention to the fact that many of the participants in the debate, like Hajj Sayyah, were mobile figures who had extensive experience abroad. This generation that followed the diplomatic circle of Moshir al-Dowleh and Malkam Khan began to imagine Iran's future with a railway as they encountered various railway systems abroad. Out of transnational encounters with rail infrastructural systems in Iran's surrounding world, Iranian aspirations to construct a national railway and produce a Tehran-centered national space emerged.

THE AGE OF STEAM AND PRINT IN NASERI IRAN

Hajj Sayyah's journey was unusually extensive in terms of its geographical and temporal scale, but he was by no means an exceptional figure. Nor was he the first Iranian traveler to record railway journeys.[3] Of the 283 extant Qajar-era Iranian travel writings, 162 were produced in the Naseri period.[4] Like their predecessors, Naseri-era travel writers described various aspects of foreign lands and presented readers information with which to compare and contrast Iran's conditions—including issues such as gender relations, political structure, and economic prosperity. Although current scholarship focuses mostly on how the political elite with diplomatic experience imagined the impact of having railways in Iran, they were not the only individuals who took advantage of the nineteenth-century transport revolution.[5] Pilgrims, Sufis, merchants, and migrant workers also encountered steamships and railways during their circuitous journeys to Mecca, India, and other destinations.[6] Hajj Sayyah was merely one of the earlier

examples of this broader trend. Indeed, the age of steam in the second half of the nineteenth century saw a growing number of Iranians traveling newly established infrastructural networks on an unprecedented scale.

Hajj Sayyah's anecdote illustrated the emerging consensus in the discourse of reform that a railway was an essential ingredient for progress (*taraqqi*). But that was not necessarily the consensus at the time of his journey in 1859. He composed the manuscript of his travel writing after returning to Iran in 1877, which means that as many as eighteen years might have passed between his encounter with the French peasant and his decision to include the event as a meaningful anecdote. Given that the manuscript was apparently edited again after the Constitutional Revolution, the incident may have been recounted even fifty years after it happened.[7] The conversation itself and Hajj Sayyah's subsequent shame reveal a great deal about his sociopolitical concerns at the turn of the twentieth century. By then, he had a clear idea as to why Iran clung to a world without railways: the Qajars had failed to implement infrastructural development as the French state had done.

Hajj Sayyah's implicit criticism of the Qajars reflected another development in the late nineteenth century. The period was not only an age of steam; it was also an age of print. The intellectual landscape of Qajar Iran changed significantly as expatriate Iranians started to publish Persian newspapers abroad. The first notable publication, *Akhtar*, was issued in Istanbul in 1876. Another newspaper, *Qanun*, started in London in 1889; *Hekmat* began in Cairo in 1892; *Habl al-Matin* was published in Calcutta in 1893.[8] These newspapers circulated among Iranian communities in cities such as Bombay, Baghdad, Basra, Trebizond, Erzurum, Istanbul, and Tiflis.[9] While they were not politically monolithic, they all benefited from the relative freedom from censorship imposed by the Qajar state and emerged as a new public medium to discuss sociopolitical issues. They attributed Iran's perceived backwardness (*'aqabmandegi*) to the absence of concepts and institutions such as those existing in Europe, including rule of law and modern education. More importantly, they considered technology a primary criterion dividing the globe into haves and have nots. This viewpoint paralleled the widely held opinion among Europeans that technological advances distinguished them from the rest of the world. The logical conclusion, according to the European worldview, was the need for the European civilizing mission

in Asia and Africa.[10] Iranian writers and thinkers took note, concluding that misrule by the Qajars left Iran technologically backward and thus vulnerable to the increasing influence of imperial powers.

Considering the regional circulation of people and ideas in the age of steam and print,[11] one should not restrict an analysis of Iranians' technological aspirations to their encounter with the West. Rather, Iranians began to observe the impact of increased mobility across the globe, especially noting changes among their neighbors and surrounding regions.[12] It is also inaccurate to characterize the Trans-Iranian Railway as an embodiment of the unchanging "longtime dream of Iranian patriots" of seventy years.[13] As newspapers and treatises began to share observations of railway infrastructural projects elsewhere, Iranian visions of a railway system that would maximize mobility domestically and internationally began to take shape.

Although Qajar political elites continued to hold diverging opinions, we can discern a gradual shift throughout the Naseri period. By the Constitutional period, railway advocates rejected a project implemented by Europeans. As exemplified in Hajj Sayyah's criticism of the Qajars, they believed that the Iranian state should construct a railway, financed through taxation, in order to create an economic network centered around Tehran. And by then, animal-powered transport had come to signify Iran's perceived backwardness and illustrated increasingly rigid differentiation among modes of transport. The railway project was reimagined as a state-led national infrastructural project to produce economic space, networked by mechanized modes of transport.

ENCOUNTERING RAILWAYS ABROAD

In the midst of the Reuter Concession controversy, Naser al-Din Shah decided to leave Tehran for what would become the first of his three trips to Europe. He did so with the encouragement of Moshir al-Dowleh and with funds provided by Baron de Reuter. Existing scholarship cites a number of possible motives for his 1873 trip to Europe, including accruing information and cultivating amicable relations with European monarchs.[14] Importantly, the shah and his retinue were expected to cultivate connections that would transform previously lukewarm European responses, especially by the British, to investment opportunities in Iran; specifically, opportunities to invest in infrastructure through concessions. Lord Granville, the

British foreign secretary, welcomed the shah's interest in attracting British capital "for the development of such a naturally rich country as Persia."[15] Rather than simply bearing witness to symbols of technological modernity, it was crucial for Iranians to find the financial means to replicate similar projects at home.

Throughout the journey, Naser al-Din Shah extensively recorded what he observed. It was neither his first time leaving Tehran for an extended period nor his first time writing a travel diary. Indeed, he had written about places such as Gilan and Khorasan as well as the ʿAtabat, the Shiʿi shrine cities in Ottoman Iraq. However, it was his first railway journey. He recorded how his trip accelerated after traveling slowly on horseback in Iran. He crossed the Caspian Sea from Anzali to Astrakhan, sailed down the Volga River, and rode the train from Tsaritsin to Moscow—a new line that had opened only two years prior, in the midst of the Russian Empire's railway boom. Despite the myriad challenges of writing on a moving train, he recorded details of the journey, beginning with the spaciousness and luxuriousness of the royal carriage. He was particularly impressed by the prosperity of agricultural lands along the route. Having witnessed green fields, livestock (such as sheep and pigs), and populous villages, he attributed Russian prosperity to the presence of the railway stations strategically situated every few leagues. The stations connected cities and villages to the hinterlands by horse-drawn carriages that stood ready in front of each station.[16]

Reminiscent of Hajj Sayyah's depictions of how rail connectivity generated growth, the shah's descriptions of the economic impact of the Russian railway were remarkably formulaic. His assumption of a causal relationship between the railway and prosperity echoed earlier Persian writings, including Malkam Khan's insistence on infrastructural development for the sake of progress. The Qajar official gazette *Iran*, which generally reflected the perspective of Moshir al-Dowleh, also argued for the railway's transformative power to develop agriculture, mining, forestry, trade, and industry.[17] The shah's formulaic descriptions suggest that he had heard extensively about railways prior to the trip.[18] As advocacy for railway construction in Iran emerged in the 1860s, subsequent Persian travel writings often repeated the conventional wisdom about the new rail technology in a derivative manner, confirming what the writers had already heard before undertaking their journeys.

The shah's narrative included worrisome details about train facilities, such as the discomfort of darkness, smoke, and noise when passing through tunnels. No aspect of the railway journey captured the shah's attention as vividly as its speed. From Tsaritsin to Moscow, for example, he noted that the train traveled five leagues per hour, and added the following: "Once the fields became flat again, crows could not fly at the pace of the train. We left them behind." While fascinated by the railway speed that enabled him to visit distant places in a short period of time, the shah also expressed concern about the problems caused by high speeds. In Germany, he complained that he lacked adequate time to sleep because the train carried him so quickly from one city to another. And he resented this loss of sleep, forced as he was to prepare instead for greeting local officials. Likewise, in England, the rapidity of the train "was like electricity" and made it "impossible for one to distinguish any place" and, even worse, almost caused a catastrophe when a spark from the wheels lit a train car on fire.[19]

Despite the discomforts and dangers inherent in railway speed, he chose train travel for intercity movement, especially in Europe, including train rides from Russia to Germany, from Germany to Belgium, from France to Italy, in England, and in the Caucasus, before returning to Iran. The shah had experienced firsthand how the nineteenth-century transport revolution was transforming the way in which travelers moved. His narrative, echoing accounts of other nineteenth-century European railway travelers, introduced the promises and perils of speedy movement to Iranian readers.[20] The shah underscored a sobering reality: enhanced mobility could also result in disorientation and discomfort and even worse, in death and destruction. As we will see in chapter 5, the societal fear of speed would heighten in early Pahlavi Iran in the context of rapid infrastructural development.

In 1886, a little over a decade after Naser al-Din Shah's journey, another traveler left Iran. His name was Hajji Mohammad Ali Pirzadeh; he was a dervish who had enjoyed the patronage of Moshir al-Dowleh.[21] Possibly because of his previous experience traveling across Europe in 1860, he was invited to accompany Mo'ayyed al-Molk, a prominent official from the province of Fars in need of medical treatment. This three-year journey took Pirzadeh to Muscat, then on to India and Egypt before entering Europe via the Mediterranean. Thus, after traveling in Iran along caravan trade routes, he first encountered railways in Karachi and then in Bombay.

The dervish was deeply impressed with the new section of the growing port city of Karachi. While the old city looked similar to Iranian cities with "narrow alleys, lowly buildings, and dirty shops," the new quarters built by the British boasted impressive "stone buildings like European buildings,"[22] including the railway station. Hajji Pirzadeh attributed Karachi's prosperity to its role as the transportation hub of the Indian subcontinent. While the port connected Karachi to destinations like London, Paris, Egypt, Iran, and other Indian port cities, the extensive railway network provided access to various domestic destinations, particularly Peshawar and Sind. From Pirzadeh's perspective, the future of Iran needed to be inextricably linked with railway projects, which would ultimately allow Iran connection to the global economy.

After leaving Karachi, the dervish took note of the impressive railway system in Bombay. He recorded, "In Bombay and the rest of Indian provinces, there is no high price, famine, or poverty among local populations because railways always carry goods and grain." Then he added that because of railways, "people of India, both men and women, are busy with work. From ten-year-old boys and girls to seventy-year old men and women, nobody is idle." Thus, his impression of Bombay as a bustling city in which everybody was constantly moving centered around the existence of railways, which created not only well-fed, energetic laborers by eliminating food shortages but also demand for those laborers who would transport goods and grain from stations to elsewhere. He concluded, "they [railways] have become the reason for the flourishing of India."[23]

Hajji Pirzadeh acutely observed that India's railways were part of a larger network that enabled movement and linked Bombay to the rest of India. Similar to Naser al-Din Shah, he was struck not only by the centrality of new modes of transport, such as steamships and railways, but also by their relationship with animal-powered transport, another crucial component of India's mobility network. He wrote about "big, plump, and handsome" cows that "would not be seen in Iran, as well as other animals such as camels, mules, and donkeys."[24] These healthy animals transported both goods and people from the port and railway station to various quarters within the city as well as to the surrounding hinterlands. Pirzadeh viewed animal-powered transport as an integral part of the infrastructural network rather than a sign of backwardness. Indeed, for Hajji Pirzadeh, the interconnectivity of

animal-powered transport, railways, and steamships allowed the hardworking Indian people to maximize their productivity. In short, in his mind, rail mobility had an interdependent relationship with other forms of mobility, including animal-powered transport, and he perceived nothing inherently objectionable about animals pulling carts and carriages.

Pirzadeh's journey eventually took him to Suez, Cairo, Alexandria, and England. As time passed, his railway travel descriptions became increasingly brief and perfunctory. He still marveled at Egypt's rich agricultural lands and at London's new subway system, but it was India, its infrastructure and related productivity, that stood as the shining example of what Iran could become. His first encounter with the Indian railway system shaped his understanding of rail technology.

Yet another traveler during the Naseri period was the diplomat Mirza Mohammad Hoseyn Farahani. Unlike Naser al-Din Shah and Hajji Pirzadeh, Farahani did not visit Europe. Having served in India and performed pilgrimage to holy cities such as Mashhad, the 'Atabat, and Mecca multiple times, he had taken advantage of the rapidly developing railway networks of the Caucasus. On one journey, he traveled from Tehran to the Caspian port of Anzali via Qazvin and Rasht by horse-drawn carriage, the most comfortable mode of land transport at the time. From Anzali, he crossed the Caspian Sea by steamship to Baku, where he boarded the train for a seventeen-hour journey to the Black Sea port of Batumi. Since the Russian-built railway had only opened two years earlier, Farahani felt the need to explain to his readers logistical issues such as where to buy tickets, which fees were assessed for certain kinds of luggage, and methods for maintaining ritual purity when traveling the railway among non-Muslims.[25]

On a subsequent trip to Mecca, he traveled by train again from Alexandria to Suez in Khedival Egypt, which had been under British occupation since 1882. Farahani's comments contrasting the two railway systems—Russian and Egyptian—shed light on his view about the integral role of the state in maximizing the economic impact of railways. For example, in the port city of Batumi, he had noticed the Russian military making use of the railway and was struck by Batumi's rapid growth since the railway had opened. This prosperity stood in stark contrast with the decline of Poti, another Black Sea port city located about seventy kilometers north of Batumi. Poti had served as a land and sea transportation center prior to

the Batumi railway, but its position of importance had been superseded. Farahani attributed the growth of Batumi to Russian policy, which included the construction of orderly bazaars and streets near the railway station. More importantly, the Russian government had issued a decree against the imposition of customs duties on imported items entering from Batumi.[26] Farahani believed that, due to these measures, the Russian government had maximized the benefits of Batumi's new railway.

In contrast, Farahani found the Egyptian railway less than satisfactory. Although acknowledging the positive economic impact of the railway on Egyptian cities, he complained at length that the railway station buildings were dirty, amenities lacking, food and drink unavailable, and the trains unpunctual—a poor comparison with the Russian railway in the Caucasus. He explicitly attributed the poor condition of the Egyptian railway to the political conditions in Egypt, "For those twenty-five years that it [the railway] was with the [French] company, all was in perfect order. Then the company's term expired, and now the railway has been given over to the Khedive of Egypt. He gives the profits to the English because of the debt."[27] Thus, Farahani considered that Egyptian bankruptcy in tandem with the British occupation made it impossible for the Egyptian state to properly maintain and operate the railway, causing its rapid deterioration. He observed that powerful states played a crucial role in developing infrastructure and maximizing economic benefits. Under British occupation, the Egyptian state was incapable of managing infrastructure properly, a chilling warning to the Qajar state of the 1880s in the context of its increasing dependence on European, especially British, concessions.

While the travel writings discussed here are admittedly selective samples, they do in fact illustrate that journeys to foreign lands and subsequent writings about those journeys provided valuable information about railways and the larger infrastructural systems that fostered movement and connectivity. Both Naser al-Din Shah and Hajji Pirzadeh were mesmerized by the transport system in Europe, which boasted the highest speed trains, long tunnel systems that took half an hour to pass through, and impressive new subways. But Europe was not the exclusive source of information about new modes of transport for Iranian travelers. Despite the academic emphasis on Qajar travel writings to Europe, the vast majority of Iranian travelers who set foot in foreign lands never visited Europe. In the list of 283

Qajar-period travel writings, the two most popular destinations outside of Iran were Mecca and the ʿAtabat, with over forty accounts each. Along with Europe, India comprised the next most common destinations, with over twenty travelogues. Other major destinations included Egypt, Istanbul and Anatolia, the Caucasus, Russia, and central Asia, with between five and ten narratives each.[28] Naseri-era Iranian travelers typically experienced their first encounters with railways in these, Iran's neighboring lands, because infrastructural development in Qajar Iran occurred much later than it did in its neighbors.[29] Reflecting the geographical expansion of Iranian itineraries, some Iranian travelers encountered railway technology in places even further away, such as Japan or the United States.[30]

Even when early Iranian travelers were bound for Europe, their first railway encounters occurred in the Caucasus, Russia, or India, depending on their route. Given the significance of the Caucasus route for travelers to both Mecca and Europe during this period, the most typical initial encounter with railways among Iranian travelers occurred in the Russian Empire, where the state played a crucial role in directing the movement of goods and people. As Farahani recorded, Iranian travelers witnessed firsthand how state policy influenced the larger infrastructural network and could foster or sabotage growth.

It is telling that Naser al-Din Shah's travel diary only mentioned railway construction once, in Poti, Georgia, when he was returning to Tehran. Veering from the usual narrative detailing his personal experience of being on a train, he discussed instead the topographical challenges of constructing a railway from Poti to Tiflis due to the region's heavy forest, marsh, and frequent flooding.[31] The unique detail of such descriptions may have arisen due to the apparent comparability of Georgia with Iran. Georgia was geographically close but had also been long under Iranian rule, until it was ceded to Russia in the 1813 Treaty of Golestan. Railway construction may have appeared a more realistic future scenario for Iran since it had already been accomplished in the former Qajar domains of Georgia.

Thus, despite the absence of railways in Qajar Iran, a small yet growing number of Iranians began to have a contemporaneous experience of global technological modernity by traveling and by reading about traveling by train. Needless to say, Iranian travelers were aware of the European origin of railway technology. They aspired to achieve the status of "civilization"

(*madaniyyat*), and Europe was at its apex, not Georgia or India. They imagined what European modernity would mean for Iran through their experience in Georgia or India. But it is imperative to keep in mind the multiple origins of Iranian perspectives on the benefits and dangers of railways in order to complicate our understandings of how Iranians experienced the transportation revolution.

IMAGINING AN IRANIAN RAILWAY PROJECT

The frenzy for European concessions and the proliferation of travel writings refueled the debates about railways within Iran. In particular, Iranian statesmen with diplomatic experience began to envision railway projects of their own, sometimes in collaboration with other prominent figures in Qajar Iran. One such diplomat was Mirza Yusef Khan Mostashar al-Dowleh, who had served as a diplomat in Tiflis and Paris.[32] He was also connected to influential individuals inside and outside of Iran, including Moshir al-Dowleh and Mirza Fath Ali Akhundzadeh, an anticlerical intellectual in the Caucasus.[33] While not excluding the possibility of foreign capital altogether, Mostashar al-Dowleh proposed two ideas for railway construction, preferably by domestic capital, and presented them to Naser al-Din Shah. His 1874 plan was to build a railway from Tehran to the Shi'i holy city of Qom via Shah 'Abd al-'Azim, a popular pilgrimage destination south of Tehran.[34] Thus, the proposal intended to connect two major shrine cities for Tehran's growing population. The cited benefits went beyond building a railway to facilitate pilgrimage; the plan also intended to develop industry, the fishery, and agriculture as well as to eradicate famine. The last benefit became particularly important in the wake of the 1870 famine that devastated the Iranian population. The famine had occurred in large part due to the lack of an adequate transportation infrastructure in Qajar dominions.[35] To provide an estimate of profits, Mostashar al-Dowleh took into consideration the number of pilgrims, the money they would spend depending on their economic status, which agricultural products would be transported from Qom to Tehran, and various items that would be transported to Tehran, northwest Iran, and Istanbul from areas south of Qom, including India.[36]

To secure support from the ulama, Mostashar al-Dowleh attached to his proposal a fatwa of Hajji Molla Sadeq, a prominent *mojtahed* in Qom. The

fatwa proclaimed, "Railways result in the cultivation of dreadful ruins and uncultivated lands as well as the reduction of the price of not only grains and fruits but also most food and consumption items. They also remedy idleness and help the unemployed and profligate to find use." Thus, "if God's will and His favor include the conditions of the Iranian people, a railway will connect the land to the sea, and there will be a prosperous kingdom, and the brokenness and misery of people will be remedied, and everybody will be working."[37]

Though the Qom railway did not materialize, Mostashar al-Dowleh managed to propose another railway during his trip to Mashhad in 1879. This time the plan was to build a railway from Tehran to Mashhad, in addition to a branch line from Shahrud to Bandar-e Gaz to connect the line to the Caspian Sea. Like his previous proposal, Mostashar al-Dowleh secured support from prominent local figures, including merchants, Qajar notables, and six *mojtaheds* in Mashhad who agreed that the rapid development of Alexandria had been largely due to Egypt's railway system. Like his previous proposal, Mostashar al-Dowleh justified his plan by stressing economic benefits. First, he believed that the railway would generate sufficient profits due to the presence of Imam Reza Shrine in Mashhad, the most popular pilgrimage site in the Qajar domain. With the accumulation of profits, it would be possible to construct another line from Tehran to Khaneqin, the Irano-Ottoman border town that connected Tehran to Baghdad via Qazvin, Hamadan, and Kermanshah. Second, he argued that the increase of trade, agriculture, and industry would allow Iranians to accumulate capital and diminish dependence on foreign capital and expertise. Furthermore, considering the remoteness of Khorasan, he stressed the political benefit of strengthening the presence of the central government.[38]

Aside from the growing emphasis on domestic capital, Mostashar al-Dowleh's plans deserve attention because of his concern to facilitate pilgrimage. In contrast to future visions for railway projects that would emerge in the post-Constitutional period, Mostashar al-Dowleh did not consider fostering the mobility of Shi'i pilgrims as an obstacle to achieving progress; on the contrary, he imagined that doing so would provide lucrative means to generate sufficient capital for other lines. He was not exceptional in this regard. Other turn-of-the-century visionaries also imagined the benefit of pilgrimage trains. An *Akhtar* article stated that pilgrimage would generate profits

to fund additional railway endeavors in Iran.[39] *Habl al-Matin* also reported positively on the Hejaz Railway project in the Ottoman Empire as a way to facilitate pilgrimage to Mecca.[40] Among late nineteenth-century advocates for railway projects, the religious "industry" was a perfectly legitimate catalyst for driving capital endeavors. Just like the arenas of agriculture or mining, Iranian railway projects moved ahead to capitalize on pilgrimage.

In 1889, when the craze for railway concessions reached its peak, another Persian treatise on the benefits of railways appeared. Its author was Mohammad Mirza Kashef al-Saltaneh, who served as vice minister of the Iranian Embassy in Paris at the time.[41] Kashef al-Saltaneh strongly believed in the benefits of railways, particularly their economic benefits to the *public*. Railways would foster industry and agriculture and create jobs. They would also facilitate the internal distribution of food, which would prevent disasters like the 1870–71 famine. More fundamentally, unlike Mostashar al-Dowleh's focus on pilgrimage, Kashef al-Saltaneh stressed the importance of international trade as requisite for Iran's progress. He particularly relied on France's statistical data, which revealed a total trade volume increasing eightfold between 1840 and 1870, during the French railway boom.[42]

Kashef al-Saltaneh also believed that the state needed to get involved in the railway sector to maximize economic benefits. He cited numerous examples of European governments—including the Belgians, Dutch, and Germans—that focused on building new railways and purchasing existing railways from private companies. He insisted, "In no European country do companies own railway tracks, but only the right to use the state-owned tracks for the period of ninety-nine years." The notable exception he cited was England, where private companies paid 5 percent of their ticket sales to the government.[43]

The cases that particularly interested Kashef al-Saltaneh with regard to state involvement were Russian and Brazilian railways. These governments played an especially prominent role in constructing and operating railways across vast distances, in sparsely populated territories—making them more comparable to Iran than countries such as Germany and France. In both cases, in order to protect the interests of the public, the government subsidized the railway sector at least initially until freight and passenger traffic increased and the railways started to generate substantial revenues for the state. Thus, citing a French engineer and politician, Kashef al-Saltaneh proclaimed, "Even

if railway companies do not generate profits at all and the government needs to shoulder the entire expenses, it should try to increase railways."[44]

Despite his deep interest in European railway projects, Kashef al-Saltaneh explicitly opposed the implementation of a European railway project in Iran. He predicted that Iran would face major challenges in railway construction due to two factors: paucity of local capital and division among its people (*qowmiyat*). He attributed the failure of previous plans to these factors. Yet he was convinced that giving concessions to British or French companies would be a mistake, allowing them to interfere in Iranian affairs by using their government's influence and by ultimately assigning important positions to their compatriots. Alternatively, he proposed that the concession should be given to a patriotic Iranian; any concession-holder would have to establish a company with investors or receive loans to execute a costly railway project. Also, while he did not oppose receiving loans in principle, he opposed receiving loans from Europeans because they did not share any sense of unity with Iranians. Instead, reflecting the rise of a new civilizational consciousness in 1880s Asia, Kashef al-Saltaneh proposed that Iran should receive loans from fellow Easterners (*hamkishan-e mashreqi*) such as the Ottomans, Indians, or Chinese. In his view, borrowing from other Easterners would strengthen solidarity among Eastern governments and allow them to regain power over the West.[45]

Indeed, what infuriated the young diplomat most was the domination of the West (*maghreb zamin*) over the Islamic East (*mashreq-e eslami*) and the inattention of Iranian authorities to this imminent threat. He protested, "The Iranian governmental authorities do not pay attention to acquiring what brings national progress (*taraqqiyat-e mellat*), and because of their ignorance and inattention, neighbors have exploited the opportunity and invaded from all directions. They will gradually gain control of our country (*mamalek*)." His criticism went beyond Iran. He lamented, "Oh people of Asia and Africa. Oh brothers of the Islamic land! Until when do you sink yourselves in the sleep of ignorance? . . . What makes you finally feel that your homeland, language, customs, and religious traditions are disgraced?"[46]

According to Kashef al-Saltaneh, the fundamental reason behind Europe's rapid progress was not education, because European powers did not dominate the East until the nineteenth century—despite the existence of education in Europe prior to that time. It was due neither to the inherent

superiority of Europeans nor to the richness of Europe's soil, because the people of Asia, especially Iranians, were exceptionally apt and hardworking, and the soil of the East was more productive than anywhere else. Nor did Europe have an advantage due to its wealth of natural resources; Iran was impoverished despite its abundance of natural resources. According to Kashef al-Saltaneh, the root cause of "the progress, wealth, and power of European nations" (*taraqqi va servat va qodrat-e mellal-e farangestan*) was the invention of steamships and railways because these innovations revolutionized movement.[47]

To demonstrate his point, Kashef al-Saltaneh compared the importance of movement to the human body; similarly, movement within a nation was essential for the health of a national community. He divided movement into the internal and external, without which all living beings, both plants and animals, would perish. Likewise, a society needed both internal and external movements, and that necessity increased as the population increased. Much in the same way as blood circulates through arteries and veins, a nation needed to transport agricultural and industrial products internally, that is, within its territory on roads, canals, and rivers. A nation also needed to be able to communicate internally via the telegraph. Yet internal movements alone were insufficient. Nations needed external movements, too, represented by political and commercial connections and relations with other nations. Without such internal and external movements, a nation would be a "soulless nation" (*mellat-e biruh*).[48] Because railways permitted this component of motion, so essential to the lifeblood of a nation, they had enabled Europe to surpass the power of the East in a short period of time. Therefore, in order to tilt the power balance back toward Iran and the East in general, railway construction was crucial.

With the goal of strengthening Iran and Iran's unity with Muslims of the East, particularly those in the Ottoman Empire, India, and Afghanistan, Kashef al-Saltaneh proposed potential routes for a future railway project. He argued that Iran should prioritize an international line, because only by tapping into its geographical advantage of lying between the West and the East could Iran become a major player in international trade. Thus, his proposals ironically echoed British and Russian proposals that had aimed to connect European and Indian railway systems by viewing Iran largely as a place to pass through. Specifically, Kashef al-Saltaneh proposed several lines

including: 1) Istanbul–Ankara–Trabzon–Tabriz–Tehran–Bandar Abbas–Karachi; 2) the Caucasus–Tabriz; 3) Alexandretta–Baghdad–Shushtar—a trunk line that would penetrate central Iran to cities such as Isfahan; 4) Tehran–Mashhad–Merv–Mongolia–Beijing; 5) Mashhad–Kabul–north India. While most of these lines completely ignored the international politics of railway construction, they demonstrated his support for increasing interactions with neighbors to the east. Naturally, Kashef al-Saltaneh also advocated a railway within Iran. Countering arguments for a railway from Rasht to the port of Bushehr, a significant transportation center connecting Iran and the Persian Gulf at the time, Kashef al-Saltaneh proposed a line to connect Amol on the Caspian Sea coast with Shushtar on the Persian Gulf coast. This line would be relatively short and would present far fewer topographic challenges in terms of construction.[49]

The proposals submitted by Mostashar al-Dowleh and Kashef al-Saltaneh in the two decades after the Reuter Concession exemplified shifting trends in the Iranian discourse regarding railway construction. By the late 1880s, it had become unacceptable to consider giving railway concessions to Europeans as Moshir al-Dowleh and Malkam Khan had done. In fact, by the 1890s, Malkam Khan himself argued against the "selling of Iran to foreign interests" in his newspaper *Qanun*.[50] Mostashar al-Dowleh still hoped that Iranian investors would provide funds for the construction of the railway with minimal involvement by the Iranian state. He even consulted with Iranian merchants in commercial centers such as Tabriz, Isfahan, Bushehr, Istanbul, and Bombay, who also expressed interest in such projects to increase their commercial opportunities.[51] His focus on private Iranian capital was partly based on the understanding that the Qajar state would be financially incapable of completing a railway. Incidentally, in 1887, the prominent merchant Hajj Mohammad Hasan Amin al-Zarb used his own capital to launch a railway project in the Caspian Sea province of Mazandaran, with the possibility of an extension to Tehran.[52] Although Amin al-Zarb's Amol–Mahmudabad Railway ultimately failed, his efforts, along with the proposals presented by Mostashar al-Dowleh and Kashef al-Saltaneh, illustrate the increasingly active attempts by a broad coalition of Iranian statesmen, merchants, and the ulama to construct railways with Iranian capital. This occurred just when the craze for railway concessions reached its peak before culminating in the 1889 embargo.

While Mostashar al-Dowleh doubted the possibility that the state could or would undertake railway construction, Kashef al-Saltaneh envisaged active state involvement. Although he considered the involvement of fellow Easterners in Iranian railway construction as a more realistic option given the financial weakness of the Qajar state, he observed the international trend of active state involvement in the railway sector, particularly among latecomers to the Industrial Revolution and sparsely populated countries. Therefore, at roughly the same time that Russian state involvement with railways in the Caucasus impressed Farahani on his way to Mecca, Kashef al-Saltaneh was articulating the benefits of railways as state projects rather than as financial schemes of entrepreneurs. Thus, by the end of the nineteenth century, members of the Qajar political elite had gradually shifted their opinions regarding the economic role of the state in railway construction.[53]

THE ROAD TO SALVATION

The Constitutional Revolution of 1905 significantly changed the discussion about railway construction. Most significantly, while proponents of railway construction prior to the revolution shared proposals by relying on their informal ties to influential merchants and members of the ulama, the Constitutional Revolution enabled them to discuss the matter in the legislative body, the Majles, with other elected representatives. In this new political context, the issue of railway construction became a matter of public debate. For example, Majles representatives debated how a railway would bring down prices, make hoarding obsolete, and improve postal service.[54] Likewise, although unimplemented, the bill to establish a national bank included a clause that would give the bank the right to construct railways throughout Iran.[55]

Even when discussions did not result in legislation, railway advocates now had the option of gathering as an informal group to discuss potential railway projects and have their voices heard as a petition on the floor of the Majles. In 1910, the Rescue Commission (*komisiyun-e nejat*) was formed to establish an Iranian company with the capability of constructing a railway entirely with Iranian capital. Its members included such prominent figures as Arbab Keykhosrow, Sani‘ al-Dowleh, Aqa Seyyed Zia al-Din, Hajji Mo‘in Bushehri, Kashef al-Saltaneh, Hajj Mohammad Hoseyn Amin al-Zarb (the son of the late Hajj Mohammad Hasan Amin al-Zarb), and Mostashar

al-Dowleh (the son of Mirza Yusef Khan Mostashar al-Dowleh), among others. The commission's report was read in the Majles as a petition in January 1911. Rather than allowing Russia to continue seeking railway concessions in Iran, the report urged the government's serious participation in railway construction by Iranians themselves. This effort would require the formation of a national bank, with half the capital coming from the government and half contributed by the Iranian people.[56] Despite the eventual failure of the commission, their proposal reflects a growing desire among Iranian merchants and intellectuals for the state to play an active role in railway construction. At the same time, they envisioned maintaining private capital for the project through the proposed national bank, which would rely partly on Iranians' contributions.

The most influential proposal for a trans-Iranian railway during the Constitutional period came from Sani' al-Dowleh during his tenure as minister of finance in the spring of 1908. A German-educated constitutionalist and member of the Rescue Commission, Sani' al-Dowleh came from a prominent family, much like previous advocates of railway construction. His brother was Mehdi Qoli Khan Hedayat Mokhber al-Saltaneh and his wife was the daughter of Mozaffar al-Din Shah. He also had extensive experience in Europe, accompanying Naser al-Din Shah there in 1873 and receiving an education in Germany.[57] Because his proposal came about two months before the closure of the First Majles due to the 1908 counterrevolution led by Mohammad Ali Shah, the proposal was never implemented. Nevertheless, it influenced debates regarding potential routes and funding sources for the trans-Iranian railway, debates that took place in the post–World War I period.

Much of Sani' al-Dowleh's proposal in the Majles was taken from a treatise he had written six months earlier entitled "The Road to Salvation" (*Rah-e Nejat*). In the treatise, he listed four duties of a government in relationship to the welfare of its citizens: 1) military power to secure the assets and lives of people; 2) a justice system to protect people from oppression; 3) a modern education system so that people would acquire necessary knowledge and skills for survival; 4) a transportation system, especially a railway system, so that "people of this country can transport cheaply and easily from places near and afar what they need for life." This last duty, development of a transportation system, was particularly important because, unlike a

modern education system—the benefits of which would become apparent only after several generations—an advanced transportation system would produce positive results immediately.[58] Thus, fueled by optimism and the power of a new constitutional government, Sani' al-Dowleh proposed that railway construction was an urgent duty of the government, and he thereby supplanted the long-held vision of private investment as the primary potential funding source.

In Sani' al-Dowleh's view, the main obstacle to the government following through on the duties described was that, unlike Europe, Russia, and the Ottoman Empire, Iran lacked an efficient system of taxation. Thus, the new constitutional government of Iran needed a way to tax its citizens, particularly the wealthy, who avoided paying taxes proportionate to their wealth. The solution to this problem, according to Sani' al-Dowleh's 1908 bill to the Majles in which he proposed a trans-Iranian railway, was the imposition of taxes on comestibles such as sugar (*qand va shekar*) and tea, with the rate of ten shahi per tabrizi man (approximately three kilograms) of sugar.[59] Although imposing an indirect tax on consumables would impact the poor more critically than the wealthy, the act of collecting taxes would become theoretically less problematic for the Qajar government. Sani' al-Dowleh's proposal to tax sugar and tea evolved into a state monopoly on the sale of sugar and tea, ratified by the Fifth Majles in 1925 to generate funds for the trans-Iranian railway.

Financing the railway would remain a problem even with taxes on sugar and tea. Therefore, rather than opening the entire line at the same time, Sani' al-Dowleh advocated the construction of a north-south trans-Iranian railway between the Caspian Sea and the Persian Gulf, opening section by section in a gradual manner. He argued that, because railway construction would be costly, the Iranian government should construct the most lucrative section first and spend the profits from operating that initial section on building other sections. Once the entire trans-Iranian railway started operation, Sani' al-Dowleh predicted that transportation costs would fall, enabling Iranian farmers to sell their agricultural products to distant cities and countries.[60]

Furthermore, Sani' al-Dowleh used his powers of persuasion to confirm that railways would not eradicate the need for, or utility of, animal-powered transport. Rather, reliance on animal-powered transport would likely

increase as the total volume of trade increased. Therefore, the traditional reliance on animal-powered transport would remain intact, especially for carrying goods from railway stations to cities and villages.[61] Like advocates of railway construction prior to the Constitutional Revolution, Sani' al-Dowleh conceived animal-powered transport as a supplementary form of mobility, supporting the success of railway's mechanized mobility; in no way did he view them as mutually exclusive.

THE CONSTITUTIONALIST PRESS

Iran's constitutionalist newspapers actively supported public debate on the need for a trans-Iranian rail system. Their articles were read aloud in urban spaces and so reached a broad segment of the population, literate and illiterate alike. *Habl al-Matin* printed praises for Sani' al-Dowleh's "The Road to Salvation," claiming that the railway would increase the value of land, enrich Iranian landowners to the level of the wealthiest English and Americans, improve movement routes for both people and goods, and connect northern and southern Iran within a few short years.[62] In short, the railway would redirect movement and foster national enrichment.

Particularly important in Iran's low-literacy environment was the distribution of political cartoons through the constitutionalist newspapers. One in particular, *Kashkul*, became preeminently known for its satirical cartoons. Edited by Sheykh Ahmad Majd al-Eslam Kermani, who also edited the constitutionalist newspaper *Neda-ye Vatan*, *Kashkul* printed several cartoons with regard to railway construction in Iran.[63] Among these was one from 1908 that captured the constitutionalists' growing impatience with the absence of railways in Iran (fig. 1). The drawing above showed a steam train with a caption that read, "This is a European railway that travels twelve to twenty farsakh per hour."[64] In contrast, the drawing below showed two kinds of animal-powered transport: a horse-drawn carriage (with a broken wheel) and camels. The caption above the carriage read, "This is an Iranian railway that travels one farsakh per hour in a two-day trip from Tehran to Qom." The camels were even slower, with the speed of "one farsakh every three hours."[65]

While discourse in the Naseri period saw no contradiction in the symbiotic relationship between animal-powered transport and railways, the cartoon in *Kashkul* depicted animal-powered transport as an opposing

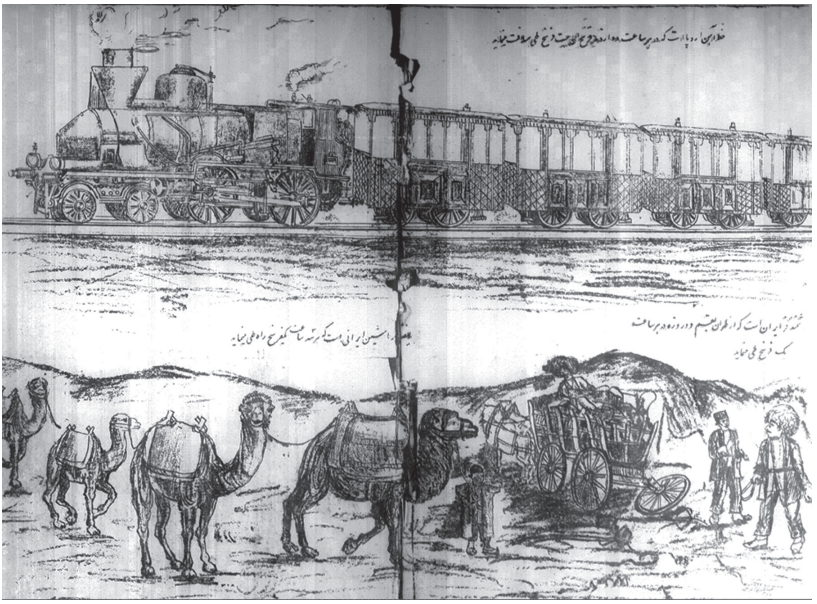

FIGURE 1. With or without Railways? Source: *Kashkul*, May 12, 1908.

category to the railway, that embodiment of European modernity. Notably, the horse-drawn carriage, the quintessential "new" mode of transport in the previous period, was lumped together with camel transport in contradistinction to the steam power of the railway. Therefore, rather than imagining Iran's future in which the railway *and* animal-powered transport comprised a high-speed transportation system to foster economic growth, the cartoon presented a dichotomous view in which Europe and Iran were juxtaposed by the presence of either the railway *or* animal-powered transport. In this view, Europe became characterized not only by the presence of the railway but also by the absence of animal-powered transport.

The Majles was dissolved in 1911, marking the end of the Constitutional Revolution. World War I soon followed, with the result that Iran became a battleground for warring empires; proposals made during the Constitutional Revolution remained unimplemented. Nevertheless, the Constitutional period was significant because, compared to unpublished travel writings and treatises shared among the political elite, the Majles and the rapidly growing constitutionalist press functioned as public forums to discuss railway construction. As exemplified by the Rescue Commission, railway advocacy among prominent constitutionalists could find a larger

audience by filing a petition to the Majles, where it was read aloud to representatives. Notably, some members of the commission were among those who had expressed great interest in matters of railway construction prior to the Constitutional Revolution, including Kashef al-Saltaneh. In addition to the Majles, constitutionalist newspapers disseminated the call for building a railway system to a broader audience of both literate and illiterate Iranians through newspaper readings at social gatherings and coffeehouses—and through political cartoons that visually conveyed a key message: Iran was lagging behind Europe due to the absence of railways. These new media popularized the idea of Iran's need for a railway, and they underscored the importance of active involvement by the Iranian state. Notably, the call for state involvement did not always preclude possibilities of railway construction by foreign entrepreneurs backed by their own governments, as illustrated by Sani' al-Dowleh's negotiations with Germans for a railway project during his tenure as minister of finance in 1910.

* * *

In his autobiography, Mokhber al-Saltaneh, Sani' al-Dowleh's brother, included the poem that he received from an acquaintance immediately after the later Majles debates on the trans-Iranian railway, in February 1927:

> In the West, they need railways because they don't have donkeys
> We have donkeys. When do we need railways?
> The enemies of railways are loving friends of donkeys
> We are the loving friends of donkeys and enemies of railways
> Railways uproot donkeys from the country
> We uproot whoever wants railways
> Until there would be Sir Camel and His Highness Donkey
> When would it be permissible for us to boast of railways?[66]

The sarcasm inherent in this poem reflects how railway discourse during the Constitutional period shaped subsequent discussions regarding railway construction in the early Pahlavi period. Instead of manifesting as an unchanging "seventy-year dream" of the nation, the vision for the trans-Iranian railway underwent significant changes following the 1860s.

By continually using railway projects across the globe as referent points, Iranians gradually formulated their own imaginative version of the trans-Iranian railway, ideas that would be repeated and developed further in the

Pahlavi period. Attitudes toward complex issues such as the role of the state, pilgrimage traffic, and animal-powered transport shifted significantly. In contrast, what did *not* change from the 1860s to the Constitutional period was a shared confidence in the power of railways and a larger system of transport infrastructure to foster rapid movement—a precondition to generate economic prosperity. Many key railway advocates remained unwavering in their belief that Iranians, and not Europeans, needed to control the direction of such movement. The Qajar political elite imagined the creation of a national economy with Tehran as its center. Therefore, as previously mentioned, British and Russian railway proposals to crisscross Iran yet bypass Tehran proved unacceptable. The ultimate goal became clear: to connect regional economies to Tehran and to create a national economy, which would trade with foreign countries through ports on the Caspian Sea and the Persian Gulf or borderland cities such as Tabriz, Mashhad, and Khaneqin. In effect, railway advocates embraced the production of Iranian national space as the fundamental goal.

With the further weakening of central authority after the failure of the Constitutional movement in 1911, debates regarding railway construction disappeared from political discourse during World War I. Railway construction did not receive much coverage in prominent Persian newspapers of the late 1910s such as *Kaveh*, which was published with German funding by a group of Iranians exiled in Berlin.[67] By the 1920s, when a new generation of political elites emerged following the rise of Reza Khan in 1921, advocates for a trans-Iranian railway started to assign another life-changing power to railways: cultural transformation. The success of a trans-Iranian railway became intrinsically tied to the idea of the New Civilization (*tamaddon-e jadid*), linking the success of the railway project to the very survival of the nation. Iran's development of railways became associated with a comprehensive notion of the "modern" man. Cultural transformation ushered in by railways would create a homogeneous national citizenry, which would in turn trigger unprecedented economic transformation.

3 Nationalizing the Railway

ON FEBRUARY 21, 1921, Colonel Reza Khan of the Cossack Brigade entered Tehran with three thousand men and took control of the capital. He encountered virtually no resistance. With the detention and arrest of many Qajar statesmen, he and his civilian ally Seyyed Zia al-Din Tabataba'i established a new regime in Iran. After the coup, while initiating a series of military campaigns against the numerous provincial movements that had increasingly mushroomed across Iran, Reza Khan quickly assumed control of key governmental positions, beginning with the removal of Tabataba'i. By late 1923, Reza Khan laid claim to the following positions: commander-in-chief of the army, minister of war, and prime minister. By the end of 1925, following the deposition of Ahmad Shah Qajar, who had been in voluntary exile, Reza Khan became Reza Shah—a military officer from humble Mazandarani origins who established the Pahlavi Dynasty, the last dynasty of Iran.[1]

The rise of the new regime in 1921 rejuvenated public debates on railway construction among new generations of Iranian nationalists. One month after the coup, the Young Iran Society (*anjoman-e iran javan*) released its manifesto. Founding members of this cultural society included future political leaders such as Ali Akbar Siyasi and Ali Soheyli as well as Morteza Moshfeq Kazemi, who later contributed to the publication of *Iranshahr* and *Nameh-ye Farangestan*, prominent Berlin-based Persian newspapers

published during the 1920s. Coming from a new generation of Iranians who reached political maturity after the failure of the Constitutional movement in 1911, founders of the Young Iran Society expressed their desire to complete many tasks left unfinished from the Constitutional period, even if that meant the eclipse of constitutionalism and the rise of a dictator. They reframed the desire broadly as "the adoption of the positive aspects of European civilization," which, in more concrete terms, included the expansion of modern education and railway construction.[2] Railway development was no longer a matter of economic prosperity alone. Nor was it an exclusive matter of political centralization by the state. Railway development became part and parcel of a comprehensive way of life called "European civilization."

Afshin Marashi has noted that the state-led project of nation-building in the Reza Shah period should be contextualized among the larger sociocultural transformations of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.[3] This includes the many competing ideas for developing infrastructure expressed in early Pahlavi Iran. Building on various visions from preceding decades, early Pahlavi participants in this debate disagreed with each other regarding key issues such as which route would maximize its benefits, what goals it should achieve, and, more fundamentally, whether building a railway made sense at all. Even among advocates of a national railway project, what it should look like remained highly contested, particularly as Majles deputies and petitions began to express provincial interests.

Two new concerns characterized post-coup debates on the railway project. The first was the increasing entanglement between a trans-Iranian railway and national culture. The early Pahlavi period was marked by state-sponsored construction of new monuments in public spaces, most notably mausoleums dedicated to medieval poets such as Ferdowsi, Hafez, and Sa'adi, as visual manifestations of national culture.[4] Likewise, in the burgeoning popular press and the material structure of railway stations, the projected trans-Iranian railway was represented to express various elements of Iran's national culture, especially its pre-Islamic glories and historical role as the passageway of civilizations. Building a railway to facilitate the movement of people and goods became linked to the revival of this culture. The second concern was the safeguarding of Iran's national economy, expressed through the notion of trade balance. Although previous generations had argued for developing indigenous industry, the new language of

trade balance reflected the increasing standardization of economic practices through budgetary management. The emphasis on national culture and economy highlighted the production of Iran as the fundamental spatial unit on which state power would be exerted.[5] Therefore, despite the limited role played by the Trans-Iranian Railway in reducing actual transportation costs compared to the highway network that expanded contemporaneously, it was much more dominant in nationalist discourses of the time, normalizing national space as the natural ordering of things.[6]

WHO SHOULD BUILD A RAILWAY?

The central authority of the Qajar state had collapsed during World War I. Because of the ongoing revolutionary struggles in Russia at that time, British presence increased in postwar Iran. In order to secure British interests in Iraq and continued access to oil fields in Khuzestan—oil fields that the British Navy had begun to rely on—British officials sought to establish a stable, pro-British government in Tehran. With this goal in mind, Lord Curzon, who had risen to the position of British foreign secretary, negotiated with the Vosuq al-Dowleh cabinet. The outcome of the secret negotiations was the 1919 Anglo-Persian Agreement. If the agreement had been ratified by the Majles, it would have significantly increased British interference in Iran's financial, military, and other affairs of the state. One of the key stipulations of the agreement was Anglo-Iranian cooperation regarding the development of transportation infrastructure, including railways.[7]

When British negotiations on railway development with Minister of Foreign Affairs Firuz Mirza Nosrat al-Dowleh began after the announcement of the agreement, the two parties agreed to make the Khaneqin–Tehran route via Kermanshah and Hamadan the top priority.[8] Considering Britain's dominance in Iran and Iraq, this line seemed to benefit Britain more than the previously proposed Mohammareh–Khorramabad railway that would have passed through Lorestan, where rural insecurity often led to the complete breakdown of the transport system. Therefore, in January 1920, the Persian Railway Syndicate, a consortium in which the Anglo-Persian Oil Company (APOC) played a dominant role, obtained the option for building the Khaneqin–Tehran railway with branch lines from Qazvin to Anzali and from Hamadan to Mohammareh.[9]

The Anglo-Persian Agreement not only faced dissent from various British government authorities from the outset but also invited international criticism, especially from revolutionary Russia, which denounced the British Empire for enslaving Iran. Domestic opposition within Iran also exerted pressure on Vosuq al-Dowleh's cabinet. Moreover, the agreement proved problematic from a constitutional viewpoint because Article 24 of the Iranian constitution stated that international agreements had to be ratified by the Majles. In the mood of nationalist opposition against the first postwar manifestation of British imperialism, Vosuq al-Dowleh resigned, effectively aborting the Anglo-Persian Agreement, including the option for the Khaneqin–Tehran railway.

Meanwhile, American economic involvement in Iran was also on the rise. In 1919, Mirza Ali Qoli Khan, the Iranian minister to the United States in the 1910s, established the Persian-American Commerce Company, while maintaining contact with Tehrani merchants who pursued a railway project from Shushtar in Khuzestan to Bandar-e Gaz on the southeastern side of the Caspian shore. Following the 1921 coup, the new Iranian minister Hoseyn 'Ala began to cultivate ties with American bankers and oil and mining companies to link the exploitation of natural resources with a loan to build infrastructure and improve agriculture in Iran. Although the loan did not materialize, oil concessions in the north were awarded to American companies such as Sinclair Consolidated Oil Corporation and the Standard Oil Company.[10] America's position in Iran was further strengthened by the dispatch of Arthur Millspaugh, a former advisor serving in the US Department of State's Office of Foreign Trade. His mission in Tehran, based on Iran's request, was to reform and centralize Iran's finances and taxation policy.[11] Millspaugh's new position caused significant chagrin among competing commercial powers, including Germany. With an American advisor serving as powerful director-general, American corporations would inarguably benefit when competitive bids were submitted to win the construction contract for the trans-Iranian railway.[12]

Toward the beginning of 1922, the Persian Railway Syndicate invited the new American minister in Tehran to its directors' meeting. It also inquired into the permissibility of sharing documents of past railway concessions with him. The syndicate hoped that sharing these documents would achieve two objectives. First, it would open the door to possible cofinancing of the railway

and, at the same time, it would avoid antagonizing the Americans; the syndicate did not want the Americans to negotiate with the Iranian government on their own.[13] While the British Foreign Office objected to the idea of sharing documents with the American minister, the viceroy of India acknowledged, "The time has passed when British capital and enterprise could hope to secure a privileged position in Persia, and to carry out schemes of railway development singlehandedly."[14] He grudgingly noted the desirability of cooperating with the Americans but voiced his concerns about a line to connect Tehran to the Caspian Sea, as such a line would "enhance the amount of Russian trade and Russian influence at the capital."[15] In the end, the Foreign Office had no choice but to approve the idea of cooperating with "a responsible American firm or group" in financing the railway.[16]

In the aftermath of the failure of the Anglo-Persian Agreement, Britain's position deteriorated more than the Foreign Office was willing to acknowledge. Reza Khan expressed to Percy Loraine, the British minister in Tehran, an interest in offering construction of the railway to American companies while "allowing" British participation "provided that the company was American in name"; he knew Iranian public opinion would not accept an active British participation in the project. Reza Khan also emphasized his preference for a line from Mohammareh to Tehran via Khorramabad.[17] Believing that the British generously brought Americans into the Iranian railway scheme, Loraine complained how Americans "snatched" the Mohammareh–Khorramabad–Tehran railway plan from British hands.[18] Well into 1925, Loraine continued to negotiate as if the British were still able to exert control over Iran's future railway route. He insisted that a railway system in Iran should link East and West so that Iran would fulfill its historical role. Doing so would help counter Russian infrastructural networks. Specifically, he supported the east-west route from Khaneqin to Dozdab via Hamadan, Isfahan, Yazd, and Kerman, with a branch line from Hamadan to Tehran to appease the Iranians.[19] By then, however, a report on the future national railway was being prepared by a commission formed under the Ministry of Public Works.[20] Loraine's preference was no longer relevant.

In the meantime, heated debates on railway construction took place in the Majles. The Fifth Majles opened in early 1924, with the majority of deputies endorsing drastic reform policies such as conscription and male sartorial regulations as a way to build a centralized state and a homogeneous

nation. In 1925, it ratified a state monopoly on tea and sugar (*qand va shekar)* to fund the future railway project. This law placed the purchase, sale, and distribution of tea and sugar under state monopoly, taxing two *qerans* on each *man* (approximately three kilograms) for sugar and six qerans on each man for tea.[21] In the following year, the Fifth Majles approved employment of German and American engineers for a preliminary survey to determine the optimum railway route.[22] After the preliminary survey, "The Law of Permitting the Construction of a Railway between Khor Musa, the Port of Mohammareh, and Bandar-e Gaz," (*Qanun-e Ejazeh-ye Sakhtman-e Rah Ahan ma beyn-e Khor Musa va Bandar-e Mohammareh va Bandar-e Gaz*) or the Railway Act, was submitted to the Sixth Majles on February 22, 1927. Only two days later, the bill was hastily ratified despite complaints from Majles deputies about the lack of information.[23] Construction began in late 1927; German firms, including Philipp Holzmann, Julius Berger, and Siemens Bauunion, were assigned the trial section from the northern terminus, while the American firm Ulen & Company was awarded the southern railway track on the Persian Gulf.[24]

Following a dispute with Ulen & Company over payment and the quality of completed railway sections, Iran terminated its contract with the American company in 1930 and with the German companies in 1931.[25] In 1933, after a failed two-year attempt to build the railway without foreign involvement, the Pahlavi state signed a contract with Kampsax, a Danish consortium that had been involved with railway construction in the Turkish Republic.[26] Kampsax divided the route into smaller sections and tendered them out to construction companies from various countries, including Angiolini Balocca and Mottura Zaccheo (Italy), Hochtief A. G. Essen (Germany), Brüder Redlich (Austria), Richard Costain (Britain), and Kalantari and Neka (Iran).[27] Fearing that a reliance on one country would compromise its sovereignty, the Pahlavi state preferred making the trans-Iranian railway project a multinational endeavor; foreign companies also preferred international involvement to reduce the risk of business with the financially unreliable Iranian government.[28]

IMPROVING TRADE BALANCE

Continuing the general trend from the Qajar period, most Iranian arguments for and against the trans-Iranian railway revolved around the perceived economic impact of the project. Curiously absent in most debates

in the Majles and the press were military and strategic calculations, which many Iranians rumored to be the main goal of the railway project as indicated in Najmeh Najafi's memoir discussed at the beginning of this book. Economic arguments of the early Pahlavi period differed slightly from those of the previous debates. Reflecting the shifting terms of debate following Millspaugh's reform of the state treasury, both proponents and opponents of the project pointed out the need to improve Iran's trade balance, a concept that had been absent earlier. For late Qajar intellectuals, the focus was on protecting the economic frontier from foreign goods through the promotion of self-sufficiency.[29] The new question was whether the railway would increase Iran's export or import capabilities, couched in the language of budgetary concerns.

When Mokhber al-Saltaneh, the minister of public works, introduced a new railway act to the Majles in 1927, he claimed that the proposed route would tap into the economic resources of the rich provinces of western and northwestern Iran by going through Hamadan, the transportation hub of western Iran. He also argued that the railway would increase the agricultural productivity of Astarabad and Mazandaran in the north and Lorestan and Khuzestan in the south. Thus, the railway would open up the unexploited wealth of interior Iran to global markets by linking the most fertile regions of Iran to the new ports; it would improve Iran's trade balance by increasing its exports.[30]

The newspaper *Kushesh* made a similar argument in an article specifically supporting the route from Bandar-e Gaz to Tehran. The article enumerated various problems with other possible routes in northern Iran. The east-west route to connect India with the Mediterranean Sea would not only face competition from cheaper and easier sea trade routes but would also force Iran to rely entirely on foreign ports for trade, making it a questionable option for the national railway. The Tabriz–Tehran route and the Anzali–Tehran route would have a comparatively small impact on Iran's trade because both Azerbaijan and Gilan were already well connected to international trade routes. Targeting Bandar-e Gaz as the north terminus would maximize the railway's economic benefit because it would link the hitherto unexploited wealth of Khorasan and Mazandaran to Tehran and to locales further south rather than to the Soviet Union, as had historically been the case. By doing so, this route would facilitate Iran's export capability and improve its trade balance.[31] Previous arguments for railway development

had emphasized the benefits of connecting various parts of the country. Connectivity to the world was mentioned as an additional benefit but often without specifying details. In contrast, the new arguments rested on the idea that economic benefits should be measured according to national wealth, which was quantifiable through import and export data. Accordingly, the trans-Iranian railway should foster Iran's exports and restrict its imports.

Proponents of the railway project were not the only individuals who used the concept of trade balance to bolster their arguments. Mohammad Mosaddeq expressed concerns regarding the high cost of railway construction and maintenance. He cited as example the struggling Russian-built Tabriz–Jolfa Railway, ceded by the Soviet Union. Mosaddeq emphasized the need to keep as much money as possible circulating within Iran. Because the bulk of construction and repair materials had to be imported, he argued that the railway project would drain money from Iran for as long as a decade, both during construction and afterward. Moreover, contrary to the optimistic view held by other Majles deputies that Iranian goods would gain access to global markets through the railway project, Mosaddeq believed that Iran would end up with an imbalance of imported foreign materials; in his opinion, Iran had only opium to export. Instead of a railway, he advocated building a sugar refinery as a way of reducing Iran's trade deficit. By building a factory, Iranians would consume local products instead of consuming imported sugar from Russia and India and thus increase the amount of money in circulation.[32] He did not clarify, however, how sugar produced in one location in Iran could be transported to other locations without infrastructure. Nevertheless, from Mosaddeq's perspective, the threat posed by global markets was by far the more serious issue.

A 1927 article in *Ettela'at* also discussed the impact of infrastructural development on Iran's trade balance. The article, which argued against investing in road development, was written in response to a previous article that had described the railway as an outdated nineteenth-century mode of transport; Iran should follow instead the example of countries such as France, Germany, Italy, and the United States and start building new roads instead of railways.[33] In refuting this enthusiastic support for roads, the second article pointed to the potentially negative impact that road development and automobiles would have on the Iranian economy. Its core argument suggested that roads and cars would transfer national resources from Iran to

foreign hands. A rapid increase in motor traffic would result in an increased consumption of foreign-produced gasoline, increased profits for foreign-owned transport companies, and the increased import of automobiles and auto parts. Thus, while countries such as the United States produced their own motorized vehicles and used them to export goods to global markets, Iran neither produced its own vehicles nor had goods to export. Iran would end up importing everything, from vehicles to gasoline. Doing so would be necessary for the importing of additional foreign goods, which would exacerbate even further the negative trade balance.[34]

Iran's nascent automobilization had already begun to attract foreign entrepreneurs, including Danish and Russian bus companies that operated in and around Tehran[35] and Indian and American companies that handled automotive products.[36] Around the same time, the distribution of Russian gasoline from Baku—and British gasoline from the Anglo-Persian Oil Company—also became speedier and more efficient as companies began to use trucks instead of caravans to transport gasoline.[37] The rapidity of these changes led prominent figures such as the veteran constitutionalist Seyyed Hasan Taqizadeh to advocate road construction and transportation by trucks instead of railway development. At the same time, rapid changes made the concerns expressed in the *Ettela'at* article more acute.[38]

The article also claimed that increasing the number of motorized vehicles and facilitating roadway transportation had begun to spell destruction for Iranian villages. Local villagers had traditionally profited from selling travelers eggs, yogurt, and cheese. However, travelers moving at rapid speed in automobiles were less likely to stop and linger along the way. Moreover, villagers who handled animals that were used for transport, such as donkeys and camels, lost their jobs because of the fierce competition with automobiles. Ultimately, promoting the automobile would benefit only the wealthy because, according to the article, most automobiles in Iran were imported as luxury goods for them to show off their wealth. The rest of the nation would be impoverished.[39]

Both Mosaddeq's critique of the railway project and the *Ettela'at* article's critique of the road project rested on the argument that the integration of Iran into global markets through infrastructural development would have adverse effects on Iran's trade balance. Rather than generating industry and economic prosperity, these projects would ensure that Iran would become

technologically enslaved by industrial nations. Iran would have to import all machinery to operate infrastructure, which would in turn facilitate Iran's efficient importation of more foreign products. Infrastructural development would exacerbate Iran's status in the global market as a net importer of agricultural and industrial products.

Furthermore, according to the article, highway infrastructure would be useless to those who did not own a car—ignoring the emerging bus services in Iran. Thus, the antiroad argument resonated with the antiluxury campaign of the early Pahlavi period. Discussed in the Majles and the press, the campaign severely criticized the unnecessary consumption of luxurious foreign goods as the source of Iran's trade deficit and attempted to restrict importation in order to improve the national trade balance.[40] By asserting that only wealthy car owners would benefit from road development, the article placed road development in the luxury category and implicitly noted that a national railway project would, at least theoretically, benefit all citizens equally because both the rich and the poor would use the same trains.

Despite the radically different conclusions, all arguments for and against the railway assumed that such a railway project would stimulate the flow of money; they just could not agree on the direction of that flow. Thus, they stood rigidly in support of their separate ideas regarding how best to retain money in Iran, ideas that had not been articulated prior to the 1920s. The centrality of the issue of trade balance to (de)legitimize the railway project reflected the changing nature of debate in the nationalist discourse, particularly after the arrival of the American financial mission in 1922.[41] Millspaugh attempted to increase revenues through taxation, which included an attempt to bring the lucrative opium trade under state control.[42] The obsession with trade balance among Majles deputies and newspapers emerged from these new interests in managing the trade balance through concerted efforts of the central state. In order to establish its credibility as a national project, the trans-Iranian railway had to meet standards set by the new buzzword of trade balance. Only if it improved the national trade balance, and thus strengthened the nation economically, would the trans-Iranian railway be viewed as legitimate.

WHICH ROUTE?

Majles deputies considered a wide variety of routes for the future railway. The only shared assumption among deputies who represented different regional interests was that the railway had to go through the national capital.

A deputy from Gilan noted, "Our fundamental goal is to build a railway from the north to the south," but there was not even consensus on that.[43] When a draft bill authorizing the government to implement the railway project was introduced to Majles deputies in February 1926, the bill noted eight potential routes, which included the Turkish-Iranian border town of Qotur and the Iranian-Indian border town of Mirjaveh. A year later, the proposed railway act specified a route connecting Bandar-e Gaz with Mohammareh/Khor Musa via Tehran and Hamadan, but the precise route was to be determined only after a comprehensive survey.

Both the draft bill and the final railway act itself were extremely vague and perplexing to Majles deputies. Questions remained as to construction costs, duration of construction, and the rationale for selected routes. Many of the deputies attempted to push for alternative routes. For example, Seyyed Ya'qub Anvar, a deputy from Shiraz, complained that the Iranian government had ignored southern provinces: "Aren't Fars and Kerman Iranian provinces? Aren't Fars and Kerman paying for sugar and tea?" Instead of a route that would go through thinly populated Lorestan, he proposed a line from the Caspian Sea and Tehran to Isfahan, Shiraz, and the Persian Gulf. He also introduced a proposal printed in the newspaper *Shafaq-e Sorkh* to extend the railway to Chahbahar in coastal Baluchistan.[44] Mohammad Taqi Bahar of Kashmar, Khorasan, questioned why as many as three routes out of eight (from Tehran to Qotur, Ravanduz, or Astara) had their terminus in Azerbaijan without connecting to international rail networks.[45] Deputies from Azerbaijan were not satisfied, either. They requested that the railway act specify the route between Tehran and Hamadan. In particular, they hoped to see the transport hub of Qazvin mentioned in the proposed route to make sure that the railway would benefit Azerbaijan. Other deputies proposed alternative routes that would serve urban centers such as Anzali, Isfahan, Shiraz, Bushehr, and Mashhad. Majles deputies tried to protect their respective regional interests.

Local populations also voiced concerns for their communities. Immediately after the Railway Act was ratified, the Mohammareh Chamber of Commerce sent a telegram to Tehran, protesting the selection of Khor Musa as the southern terminus. The chamber maintained that the railway should start from Mohammareh instead, and it offered the following reasons: 1) Since Khor Musa was not a thriving port compared to Mohammareh, building an entirely new city would be expensive; 2) Because

Khor Musa stood on marshlands, land reclamation would be costly; 3) Khor Musa harbor would be unsheltered from storms; 4) There was no fresh water in Khor Musa; 5) Since Khor Musa was far from existing transport routes, it would cause inconvenience to merchants and the public.[46] Some 175 merchants, traders, and notables of Mohammareh and Abadan also petitioned jointly to the Majles to conduct more research, and they suggested sending specialists to the region to ascertain the suitability of Mohammareh as the terminus rather than Khor Musa. They cited additional advantages of Mohammareh, including lower construction costs. If Mohammareh were chosen, there would be no need to build bridges to cross two major rivers. Also emphasized was the strategic advantage of protecting Iran's territorial rights due to Mohammareh's proximity to the Iraqi border.[47]

Only a few weeks after petitions from Mohammareh and Abadan were received, another petition arrived from Hajj Gholamali Me'mar, who advocated the route from Khor Musa to Dezful by claiming, "Whoever has a different view is either mistaken or has an ulterior motive." In particular, he pointed out that it would be sensible to complete the Khor Musa route in tandem with the building of Ahvaz Dam, claiming that he personally could build the dam for two million *tomans*, unlike European engineers who had provided a cost estimate of three million tomans. Furthermore, he added that he could build the railway for six thousand tomans per mile.[48]

Despite the more organized petition from Mohammareh and Abadan, Bandar-e Shahpur, a location in Khor Musa, was chosen as the southern terminus. Although no public debates explained the choice, British and American sources noted two reasons. First, Mohammareh sat too close to the border with Iraq and also too near Shatt al-Arab, a disputed territory between Iran and Iraq; it was an overly hazardous location to serve as the railroad terminus and the main outlet for Iranian exports on the Persian Gulf.[49] Second, rapid silting around Mohammareh required constant dredging to keep the channel clear, an activity that had already cost the Anglo-Persian Oil Company a significant sum.[50] Khor Musa, by contrast, was a deepwater port located in a bay and did not require extensive dredging. These strategic and environmental concerns with Mohammareh justified the choice of Khor Musa.

Similar arguments appeared in the selection of Bandar-e Gaz as the northern terminus, to the relief of British officials who feared that Anzali might be chosen. Anzali was Iran's historical main port on the Caspian shore, but the city was vulnerable to attacks from the north. Indeed, the Soviet fleet had captured Anzali during the heyday of the Jangali Movement in 1920. To secure Tehran's access to the Caspian Sea, Reza Khan's regime needed an alternative route with an alternative port. Bandar-e Gaz, surveyed by a Belgian engineer before World War I, was chosen partly because of its location in the Astarabad Lagoon. With the lagoon providing an extra line of defense, it was considered more secure than Anzali. Moreover, the terminus in Bandar-e Gaz would give the Iranian army easy access to the tribal areas of the Torkaman Desert as well as create employment for the recalcitrant tribes, facilitating their pacification. According to a British report, aside from military advantages, Bandar-e Gaz was environmentally desirable—not only because of its deep water but also because of the possibility of creating a water current within the lagoon and thus keeping the port free of silt.[51] The terminus was later moved to Bandar-e Shah, another location in the lagoon with similar perceived strategic and environmental advantages.

The exact railway route continued to change during the 1930s as additional surveys were conducted along the route. Despite their commercial and strategic importance, mountainous cities such as Hamadan and Khorramabad were avoided to keep construction costs low, whereas cities such as Qom, largely ignored in earlier debates, were on the new route due to their flat landscapes.[52] The route necessarily changed direction multiple times partly because the consortium in charge of construction changed multiple times, each with new budgetary demands. By the time Kampsax joined the project, Reza Shah faced financial problems and needed a cheaper railway, which meant fewer tunnels and bridges.

We still know very little about the exact processes of selecting the final route, as the brief discussion above is based on fragmented summaries found mainly in British and American consular reports. In particular, we do not know exactly how planners, including surveyors and engineers, made arguments based on intertwined economic, strategic, technological, and environmental factors. What is clear is that, by the early Pahlavi period, nobody questioned that the railway would emanate from

Tehran to the provinces to create a national space. As the next section will show, the national space was expressed visually in cartoons and architecture, building on some of the key images that emerged in the Qajar era among imperial administrators and Iranian nationalists.

THE NEW CIVILIZATION

In 1923, Ali Akbar Davar, who would later become an influential minister of justice of the early Pahlavi period, made a case for railway development in the editorials of his newspaper *Mard-e Azad*. He contended that railways, along with roads and factories, would link the countryside to urban centers, create markets and workplaces for the poor, and improve the living conditions of Iran's people. He argued that, because infrastructure development would improve Iran's economy immediately, railway construction should be prioritized, even ahead of implementing a policy of expanded modern education, which would provide no immediate and tangible economic impact.[53]

The press was a vehicle through which political elites of post-coup Iran articulated their visions. Just as Davar ran *Mard-e Azad*, other prominent statesmen were in charge of publishing influential periodicals. Tabataba'i ran *Sharq*; Taqizadeh ran *Kaveh* while he was in Berlin; and Ali Dashti ran *Shafaq-e Sorkh*. The circulation of Persian newspapers increased exponentially with the growth of the modern middle class in urban centers. Although strict censorship made the content of the press increasingly homogeneous by the 1930s, at least ten Tehran-based Persian newspapers, excluding magazines, had a circulation greater than 1,000. In particular, *Ettela'at*, the most popular newspaper, printed 11,500 copies each day.[54] Because of newspapers such as *Ettela'at*, the Majles proceedings regarding railway development were made available to the public and enthusiastically discussed.[55] The press provided readers a guideline for understanding infrastructural development in early Pahlavi Iran. The operative framework of that guideline was referred to as the New Civilization (*tamaddon-e jadid*).

"New Civilization" came to refer to various manifestations of modernity under the new regime. The term was never defined precisely, but it described a wide range of phenomena characteristic of an urbanized, literate, and secular society that highly valued technoscientific progress. New modes of transport, especially the railway, served as a centerpiece for the New Civilization because of their vital role in facilitating mobility. In unifying Iran

politically as well as integrating regional economies into a Tehran-centered national economy, mobility was viewed as a fundamental priority. In early Pahlavi Iran, however, the creation of a unified economy was not the only expected outcome of enhanced mobility. Advocates of the New Civilization understood mobility as an essential precondition for reshaping society. They reformulated the goal of infrastructural development to emphasize the cultural transformation of what they considered to be the ignorant masses, a pejorative referent for the vast majority of Iranian society. Without a significant transformational shift, there would be insufficient manpower and therefore insufficient productivity on farms and in factories. The new elite's fear of the ignorant masses was clearly articulated in the Young Iran Society's manifesto, which called for disenfranchising the illiterate.[56] Subsequent chapters will examine how the Pahlavi state attempted to inculcate the ideals of the New Civilization and reform specific groups, including nomadic tribes, railway workers, and travelers. Here, we restrict our discussion to how advocates of the New Civilization viewed new modes of transport as essential to Iran's recovery of its civilizational "essence."

Two juxtaposed cartoons printed in *Setareh-ye Sobh* captured the centrality of the emerging mechanized modes of transport (fig. 2).[57] The upper drawing portrays the state of "civilization in today's world." A young female figure and the smiling sun are surrounded by the blessings of technological advancement in the background, including factories with smoking chimneys. The foreground includes a steam train, an airplane, and an automobile—with a chauffeur in the driver's seat and a gentleman in European clothing and silk hat smoking a cigarette in the back seat. Conversely, the cartoon depicting the state of "our civilization today" features an old, sullen female figure and a dark sky surrounded by mountains with a mosque in the background. In the foreground are men in traditional garb with long pipes (*chopoq*), either walking or relying on animals such as donkeys or camels for transport.

These cartoons characterize Iran as bereft of mechanized modes of transport and plagued by the persistence of animal-powered transport. The cartoons laud industrial activity while questioning the value of omnipresent religion. This newly popular view, emphasizing the contradiction between railway technology and religion, reflects an attitude shift toward Islam during the early Pahlavi period.[58] Hence no deputy serving in the

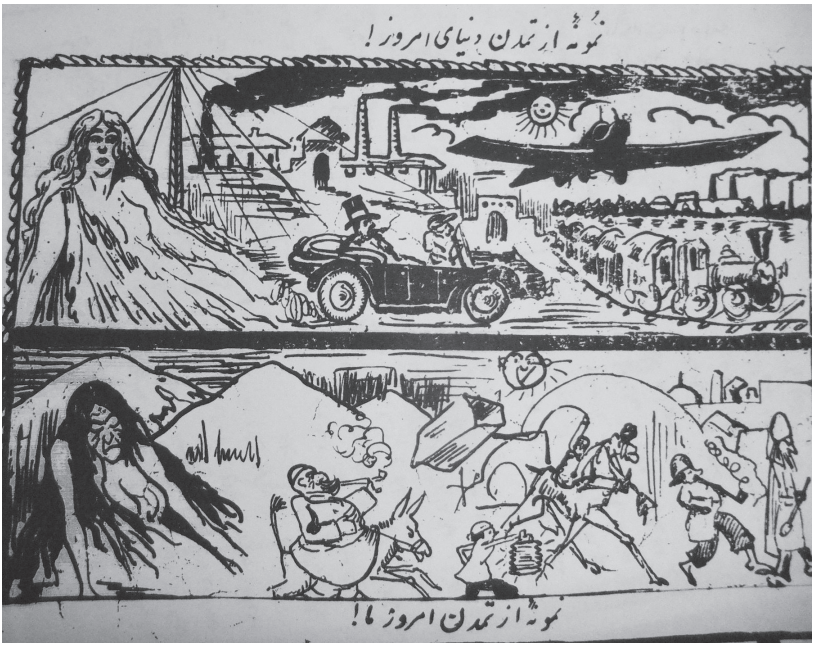

FIGURE 2 Two civilizations. The caption to the cartoon above says, "An example of the civilization in today's world!" and the caption to the cartoon below says, "An example of our civilization today!" Source: *Setareh-ye Sobh*, July 4, 1925.

Fifth and Sixth Majles, including advocates of a Tehran–Mashhad railway, ever mentioned pilgrimage traffic as justification for building a railway. The difference in the modes of transport in the two cartoons signified completely different and even incompatible cultural universes. The cartoon with mechanized modes of transport stood for growth, industry, and a European lifestyle devoid of any public expressions of Islamic religiosity. The cartoon with animal-powered transport stood for decline, backwardness, and a traditional lifestyle with a visible presence of Islam. This dichotomy was oft repeated in juxtaposed cartoons of the period.[59]

These cartoons suggested the absence of mechanized modes of transport as symptomatic of fundamental problems far beyond low industrial productivity and economic prosperity. Iran's absence of trains and cars translated to cultural stagnation and, furthermore, it was the ignorant masses who perpetuated that stagnation. Addressing this problem became a central pillar of the New Civilization. National reform was needed to transform

the masses culturally and to create productive citizens. Only by replacing the long pipe, local headgears, and mosques with a cigarette, silk hat, and factories would Iran be capable of manifesting the New Civilization.

New Civilization ideals, as expressed in the juxtaposed cartoons, resonated with Hasan Taqizadeh's controversial statement in *Kaveh*. He argued that Iran's transformation needed to take place "both in appearance and essence" through "the unqualified acceptance and promotion of European civilization, i.e., absolute surrender to Europe and the adoption of its customs, traditions, order, science, industry, lifestyle, in totality, with the sole exception being language."[60] Advocates of the New Civilization hoped to transmute Iran's ignorant masses into replicas of Europe's middle class as they imagined it, and the implementation of new modes of transport was key to that transformation.

The concept of civilization was undergoing a global transformation. By the post–World War I period, the nineteenth-century idea of civilization as a yardstick to measure the degree of achievement toward universal progress gave way to the new idea of civilization as a manifestation of a people's material and spiritual achievements.[61] The post–World War I concept of civilization was multiple and discrete, as in "Indian civilization" and "Iranian civilization." The prominence of the German notion of *Kultur* in this conceptualization was significant given the activeness of Berlin-based Iranian intellectuals during the 1910s and 1920s. Having formulated the concept of the New Civilization in this intellectual current, its advocates searched for authentic national culture as a crucial component to define Iran under the new regime while striving to create Iran's Europeanized citizenry. They identified that authenticity primarily with pre-Islamic Persian empires that prospered before the seventh century, when imperial rulers promoted Zoroastrianism. Along with the heyday of the Safavid Empire in the early seventeenth century, the pre-Islamic period was also associated with Iran's golden age as a passageway between East and West. Importantly, the notion of Iran as a passageway was an interpretation of the past that increasingly attracted attention among Iranian nationalists as the concept of the "Silk Road" gained currency in European writings to refer to the sustained trade between China and Europe.[62] As the idea of "the East" expanded eastward to incorporate China, Iran's role as a middle point between Europe and India as well as China came to be stressed as a vital component of Iran's national essence.

The newspaper *Nahid* often used the image of its namesake Nahid (Anahita), the Zoroastrian goddess of water and fertility, to illustrate what the railway symbolized in the New Civilization paradigm. For example, one illustration from that publication features an Iranian map, featuring the capital overlaid with Reza Shah's face; Nahid sprinkles flowers near the two termini on the Caspian Sea and Persian Gulf as workers build railway tracks. The caption reads, "The fortune of Iran begins with the beginning of the construction of the railway."[63] Moreover, the front page of each issue anticipates Iran's imminent national revival, symbolized by an image of Nahid's victory over the devil (fig. 3). On the left side of this image, the devil stands on ruins and a dark sky, reminiscent of Iran's destruction during World War I.[64] His sword has fallen on the ground; his posture suggests that he has been vanquished by Nahid. Indeed, Nahid stands to the right with her arms and wings wide open. Behind her a brilliant sun rises from the mountains. At the foot of these mountains one sees telegraph lines and a train emerging from a tunnel. The railway track passes directly behind Nahid until disappearing from the frame. Harking back to the pre-Islamic glory of the Persian Empires, the Zoroastrian goddess is recast as the harbinger of a brighter age for Iran, an era symbolized by the impending arrival of the railway.

FIGURE 3 *Nahid* front page. Source: *Nahid*, November 30, 1926.

Iranian publications of the early Pahlavi period also promoted the railway project as essential to reclaiming Iran's pivotal role as the intersection of the Far East, India, and the West—as well as central Asia and the Middle East.[65] The nationalist discourse increasingly refashioned Iran as a place *between* East and West. A 1938 article from the official yearbook *Salnameh-ye Pars, written after completion of the railway,* claimed that Iran had lost its status as the nexus of East and West only temporarily, due to political instability and such natural obstacles as the Alborz and Zagros mountains. On completion of the railway, it proclaimed, "The vast country of Iran once again became the main route between East and West, and the Iranian nation regained its former status among the great nations of the world through this great and essential road."[66] The article characterized the railway as a facilitator of global interactions, with Iran functioning as the all-important passage point.[67]

Railway architecture also played a pivotal role in the revival of Iran's identity as an international corridor. The initial designs of many train stations were introduced in the press; design features included a pointed arch (*eivan*) and sometimes a dome flanked by two symmetrical wings.[68] Though Kampsax did not adopt these lavish Iranian architectural designs after taking over the project,[69] the official publication that commemorated completion of the Trans-Iranian Railway in 1938 claimed that the Trans-Iranian Railway stations symbolically captured Iran's desire to reassert Iran's presence as the "passageway of civilizations" (*gozargah-e tamaddonha*).

The in-betweenness of the Iranian nation was articulated by using what the official publication called "Western," "Iranian," and "Eastern" architectural styles of station buildings. Stations of the north line were built in a simple, modern "Western" style, characterized by their functionalism and use of concrete. Tehran Station was in a category of its own because of its magnificence. Designed by Kampsax architects in Copenhagen and constructed by the Swiss company Sofitec,[70] it boasted a wide range of facilities many other stations did not have and served as the main gate to Iran. Most stations on the south line were built in an "Eastern" style, characterized by the use of mud bricks, round arches, and geometric carving patterns on the walls at major stations such as Ahvaz and Salehabad (Andimeshk). In between these north and south styles, the Qom and Soltanabad (Arak) stations in central Iran were built in an Iranian style, characterized by the use of limestone and pointed arches flanked by two symmetrical wings (figs. 4–7).[71] Iranian-style

FIGURE 4 Shahi (present-day Qa'emshahr) Station on the North Line. Source: *Salnameh-ye Pars*, 1935–36, 23.

FIGURE 5 Tehran Station during the official ceremony in 1938. Source: COWI Archives, Iran Jernbaner Nordlinien 1934–36 II, F 50B. Reprinted with permission.

FIGURE 6 Qom Station under construction. The station was built in an Iranian style, distinguished by its pointed eivan from southern stations in an Eastern style. Source: COWI Archives, Iran Jernbaner Sydlinien III, F53C, 107. Reprinted with permission.

FIGURE 7 Ahvaz Station in an Eastern style with a round eivan. Photograph taken by the author.

stations were symbolically situated where Western-style stations ended and Eastern-style stations started, spatially reproducing Iran's regained status as the main corridor of international traffic. The New Civilization would restore Iran to its destined role in the global market.

* * *

After more than half a century of competing visions regarding railway construction—ideas resulting from interactions with global infrastructural trends—the Pahlavi state undertook the Trans-Iranian Railway project between 1927 and 1938. The completed railway was expected to embody New Civilization aspirations, including extending the power of the Pahlavi state to the provinces, increasing agricultural and industrial productivity, exporting a diversity of Iranian goods to global markets, and refashioning Iran's citizenry partly after the imagined European model. It was expected that rail mobility would produce Iran as a politically, economically, and culturally coherent national spatial unit. Now we will examine the many intended and unintended consequences of the Trans-Iranian Railway project on its builders, operators, and users.

4 Redirecting Mobilities

BEFORE CONSTRUCTION on the Trans-Iranian Railway began, Keshvar was an obscure hamlet in Lorestan Province. The Zagros Mountains separated it from Khorramabad, Lorestan's provincial capital. From Keshvar it took two days traveling by mule to access Khorramabad, less than fifty kilometers away. When railway construction reached Lorestan, a multinational construction crew arrived to build service roads and a construction camp, which included stores, teahouses, housing for Scandinavian engineers, and barracks with corrugated iron roofing to house workers. The new service road from Keshvar to Khorramabad would theoretically shorten the trip to fewer than two hours by automobile—though the poor condition of narrow service roads could not accommodate heavy motor traffic and, therefore, animal-powered transport was still required.[1] In addition to food and other worker necessities, mules and trucks transported construction materials such as Mazandarani, Dalmatian, and Luxembourgian lumber. Local oak trees lacked the desired quality required for railway construction.[2] Nearby Lor tribes found employment as laborers and guards at the construction camp. They sometimes handled mail service, delivering letters in the various languages used in the camp.[3]

Construction camps like the one at Keshvar mushroomed along the future railway route in the 1930s, only to disappear once the construction

phase was over.[4] The emergence and decline of these construction camps illustrates that, even before the Trans-Iranian Railway began operation, the construction phase generated new flows of movement as mules and trucks transported people and goods along service roads, bringing in workers and commodities from near and far. The intensified movement around construction camps was linked to the broader stimulation of movement in Iran. In addition to foreign engineers and workers, tons of railway construction materials entered Iran via otherwise quiet ports such as Bandar-e Shahpur, which was equipped with only one small jetty. In November 1933, 60,000 bags of cement arrived from Japan alone. The bags were transferred to freight trains bound for Ahvaz, and then to Salehabad (present-day Andimeshk), the temporary terminus, from which they were conveyed to construction sites along the route by mules and trucks.[5] Transported primarily by British, German, Japanese, Italian, and Greek vessels, construction materials were imported from all over the world: Japanese, Italian, Soviet, German, and Iraqi cement; Soviet, German, and Polish rails and track fittings; Soviet and German dynamite; Australian jarrah wood; French telegraph poles.[6] However isolated European workers may have felt in construction camps like Keshvar, they were directly linked to the global circulation of construction materials.

This chapter examines how the construction of the Trans-Iranian Railway differentiated and redistributed mobilities. Building the railway did not make everybody and everything equally mobile. It certainly enhanced mobility for some, as illustrated by the flocking of the multinational construction crew to Keshvar. At the same time, it forcibly moved some and made others less mobile. Simultaneously with the railway project, the Pahlavi state exiled hundreds of nomadic Lor tribesmen from the future railway route in western Iran to Khorasan in northeastern Iran. Others were forced to sedentarize in Lorestan.[7] To examine how such creation and disruption of movement occurred on local, national, and transnational levels, this chapter looks at three cases: agricultural communities, tribal communities, and workers with different provincial and national origins. These three groups with unique relationships to the land along the future railway route serve as snapshots that reveal how the railway project promoted mobility only selectively, justifying the measure in the name of maximizing productivity. The mobility of agriculturalists was imposed, as land confiscation and

disruption to various flows that had previously sustained agricultural communities resulted in their displacement; tribal mobility came under scrutiny as the centralizing state attempted to convert it into tamable labor mobility; migrant labor mobility from Iran to its neighboring countries, which had characterized migration in Iran's borderlands since the nineteenth century, was reversed to a flow of workers into Iran to build and operate the railway. In short, the Trans-Iranian Railway project hinged on preexisting mobility networks, while redirecting mobilities and transforming their qualities, scales, and directions. Yet individual experiences differed greatly, indicating the unevenness of the ways in which the project interacted with a broad segment of society.

DISPLACING AGRICULTURALISTS

Mobility scholarship in the social sciences generally presumes the existence of a complex, interdependent mobility system and analyzes the production of (im)mobilities in that system, paying limited attention to the construction phase of various components in the system. Peter Adey briefly discusses displacement as a form of mobility created in developmental projects such as dam construction, but he is specifically interested in evictions of inhabitants.[8] In this section, I discuss how displacement of agricultural communities occurred to illustrate that the construction of the Trans-Iranian Railway produced and disrupted flows, with devastating consequences on agricultural communities.

Displacement of agriculturalists took place in the context of state attempts at consolidating the practice of private landownership, especially following the 1921 coup. Beginning with the land registration law during Arthur Millspaugh's financial reform, a series of laws were passed in the Reza Shah period to create a new framework for landownership, including water rights.[9] At least in theory, if not in reality, a legal framework to acquire land for the railway project existed. The Railway Act of 1927 included an article that was added later, which stated that the government was responsible for providing just compensation for property owners whose land was taken by eminent domain.[10] This was implemented at least in some cases. When Ulen & Company planned Ahvaz Railway Station, a new town around it, and the exact route of the railway in 1929, it destroyed around fifty houses and stores in Ahvaz village. The owners received the total compensation of

25,200 tomans, although disputes erupted between the powerful merchant Mo'in al-Tojjar and occupants of the houses regarding who legally owned the properties.[11] Confusion and contestation over property rights characterized this period, and, writing in the early 1950s, Ann Lambton remarks, "considerable areas of the country have not been registered. Disputed ownership of land is of relatively common occurrence."[12]

Petitions stored at the Majles Library in Tehran indicate that both urban and rural inhabitants complained about land confiscation and destruction of properties. The rapid development of transport infrastructure required a transformation of urban and rural morphologies to accommodate new material structures; preexisting bazaars, caravanserais, and saints' shrines were confiscated or destroyed despite the local populations' opposition.[13] In rural areas, infrastructure penetrated cultivated lands and cut off the existing *qanat*, an underground irrigation system that played a pivotal agricultural role in largely semiarid Iran.[14] The creation of mobility for new modes of transport such as trains and automobiles sometimes interfered significantly with local flows of people and resources.

While documented instances of land confiscation are often isolated, we have relatively well-documented cases of Tehrani landowners who lost their properties to build Tehran Station and other railway facilities around it. The censored Iranian press of the Reza Shah period frequently celebrated the transformation of the railway station site in southern Tehran. Thanks to the Trans-Iranian Railway, it claimed that Tehran Station would create a thriving new urban center in previously "the lowest," "underdeveloped," "empty," and "silent" areas.[15] Yet the press's emphasis on the emptiness and barrenness of these areas, particularly outside old city gates such as Gomrok and Khaniabad, concealed the destruction of agricultural properties, residential buildings, caravanserais, and icehouses that had existed long before the coming of the railway.

We have documents of these cases because of a bill ratified by the Majles following the abdication of Reza Shah in 1941. The bill was meant to handle the large number of complaints regarding land confiscation under his rule and required that grievances be filed either in person or via mail to the investigation committee of the Ministry of Justice within six months of its implementation. In principle, the person who filed the grievance had to bear the cost of the investigation.[16] The press, sermons, and radios also spread

news of the Pahlavi state's willingness to listen to grievances.[17] In response, individuals who were displaced during the Reza Shah period resubmitted complaints in 1941–42. Many of them had been petitioning for years to various branches of the Pahlavi state, including the Ministry of Roads, the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Justice, contractors, municipal governments, the Majles, and the shah—all to no avail.

Archived cases of land disputes near the site of Tehran Station pertain to landowners who possessed at least 4,000 square meters, many of them around 40,000 square meters. Their complaints were strikingly similar. In many cases, landowners claimed that they had not received prior notification about the pending confiscation of their properties and subsequent construction of the station, illustrating the hasty manner in which railway construction was executed.[18] In one case, while a small portion of the confiscated land was indeed used for the railway station, the rest was given to the prominent Farmanfarma family, reflecting the general trend of land registration benefiting large landowning families, including the royal family.[19]

While the bill specified a standardized procedure, its implementation was less than standardized. Hajj Seyyed Hasan Sabuni complained in late 1941 that the Ministry of Roads and the municipal government of Tehran had not investigated the confiscation of his land and caravanserais. According to Sabuni, the ministry had claimed that the investigation of land losses was the responsibility of municipal governments, but the municipal government never responded to his petitions.[20] In the case of another landowner named Ali Qal'eh Vaziri, the municipal government responded to his request and claimed that his case had been taken to the court, but no response came afterward.[21] In the case of Ali Akbari in late 1945, appraisers from the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Roads, and local trustees assessed the value of his confiscated land. They then determined that the Iranian Railway Organization (IRO), a state institution established in 1935, should compensate accordingly, but nothing followed the investigation.[22] In the case of Esma'il Firuzi, an investigation determined that the Ministry of Roads should compensate him 10,000 *riyals*, but it did not do so, as the ministry considered this to be the municipal government's responsibility.[23] These cases indicated the absence of a shared understanding of procedure between the state bureaucracy and former landowners who filed complaints. Perplexed bureaucrats often tossed around the petitions from one branch of

the government to another, particularly from ministries to municipal governments.[24] Consequently, many petitions got lost in the nebulous labyrinth of the emerging bureaucracy, leaving displaced landowners uncompensated for their losses.

In low-elevation Caspian areas such as Bandar-e Shah, Sari, Shahi (present-day Qa'emshahr), and their surroundings, land confiscation also took place, but not to accommodate the railway's material structures. Rather, the goal was to control the movement of mosquitoes. Faced with a high mortality rate among construction laborers due to malaria in the rice-cultivating region, in addition to reclaiming swamps, Reza Shah prohibited rice cultivation near railway construction sites in order to eradicate mosquito breeding grounds.[25] Then the shah ordered the affected peasants to move elsewhere or find other occupations. With no prospect of finding jobs elsewhere, many displaced peasants opted for employment on railway construction sites as unskilled wage laborers.[26] Thus preventing malaria resulted in the forced mobility of local populations and the temporary transformation of agriculturalists into wage laborers. These measures were typically taken in conjunction with Kampsax's aggressive distribution of quinine among laborers, which often resulted in an influx of quinine on the black market.

Railway construction interfered with existing flows in numerous other ways as well. For example, it redirected the flow of irrigated water, as illustrated by the petition from small-scale agriculturalists of Kachu Mesqal, a small village in the province of Isfahan. When construction on the line from Qom to Yazd started, Zavareh, another village roughly twenty-five kilometers from Kachu Mesqal, became the planned site of a railway station. Because Zavareh stood in a completely arid area with no locally available water for steam locomotives, the IRO planned to haul the *qanat* water of Kachu Mesqal to Zavareh. Kachu Mesqal's villagers protested that diverting precious water from the village would be ruinous. Overexploitation of the *qanat* water for railway operation would destroy the precarious environmental balance and result in insufficient water to keep alive more than one hundred fruit-producing trees in the poor village.[27] Although Kampsax engineers sometimes took measures to protect the *qanat* by coating it with reinforced concrete so that the shaking of trains would not collapse the irrigation system,[28] the serious threat to agricultural communities was not

restricted to physical destruction. The environmental needs of agriculturists in semiarid Iran were diametrically opposed to the introduction of steam locomotives.[29] A general solution to the scarcity of water for steam locomotives was eventually set in place during the 1940s with the arrival of American diesel locomotives, which were meant to replace steam locomotives to address a safety concern, not an environmental one; steam locomotives raised the temperature in unventilated tunnels to a degree unbearable for stokers.[30]

Other anecdotes suggest that railway construction destroyed agricultural properties in many other ways, producing and clogging flows in unexpected ways. For example, in Varamin, a village about fifty kilometers southeast of Tehran, the Pahlavi state tied the arrival of the railway to state-led industrialization, including the operation of a sugar refinery and the establishment of an oil extraction factory on the north side of the railway track. Small landowners in and around Varamin not only suffered from land confiscation but also from the environmental impact of new infrastructure as well. Portions of their land that had *not* been confiscated became unusable for agriculture due to dust and sand accumulation caused by heavy road and rail traffic.[31] Linked with road development and industrialization projects, the Trans-Iranian Railway project generated the flow of dust and sand. In Khuzestan, the railway embankment blocked the flow of rainwater, which inundated cultivated areas and completely ruined barley and wheat crops. Local farmers were unable to attain any compensation for damages.[32]

Overall, the mounting number of complaints from local populations along the route suggests that the consortium simply did not exert enough control over the actions of numerous multinational contractors, much less the subcontractors. To make matters worse, local communities had no mechanism through which their losses could be rectified because ministries, provincial governments, municipal governments, contractors, and subcontractors passed responsibility on to one another.

Arbitrary actions and the lack of standardized procedures were not the only reasons that the railway project displaced many inhabitants of agricultural communities.[33] To them, mobilities ushered in by the railway project went far beyond the mobility of trains. All sorts of actors, from mosquitoes to dust and water, moved in unexpected manners, often wreaking havoc on

agricultural lands. Agriculturalists did not always benefit from the promises that the railway would generate a thriving, unified national market marked by flows of agricultural commodities from rural areas to urban markets in and outside Iran.

CONVERTING TRIBAL MOBILITY

In October 1928, Reza Shah visited Lorestan and Khuzestan to commemorate the opening of the last section of the Tehran–Khuzestan road from Borujerd to Dezful as well as to inspect the progress of railway and port construction.[34] Following his visit, *Nahid* printed two juxtaposed cartoons (fig. 8). On the right was a cartoon of Naser al-Din Shah on a donkey, leading a swarm of veiled women against retreating Lors on donkeys. According to the caption, despite the urgency of the situation, Naser al-Din Shah was "preoccupied with donkey-riding among women of his harem."[35] In contrast, the cartoon on the left showed Reza Shah and his retinue in motorized vehicles penetrating the mountains of Lorestan. It portrayed not only the effectiveness of state control (thanks to the new road and the automobiles traveling along its route) but also the concomitant implementation of disastrous policies exemplified by the forced settlement of nomadic tribes.[36] As the cartoon showed, the Pahlavi state housed Lor tribesmen in black tents along the Borujerd–Khorramabad section of the new road and built watchtowers to prevent highway burglaries by them. Thus, while Naser al-Din Shah's military campaign did not leave a lasting state presence in Lorestan, the cartoon depicted the new Pahlavi regime successfully establishing its permanent presence. The caption proclaimed that the new regime was to "open the greatest economic and military road in Iran."[37]

Early Pahlavi infrastructural development contributed to the suppression of tribal power in remote provinces such as Fars and Baluchistan. Roads (and also railways where they existed) transported troops and provisions on trucks and camels. Furthermore, improved infrastructure allowed Reza Shah to increase his physical presence in the provinces in a way that no previous shah had achieved. During the three months from Mordad to Mehr 1307 (late July to late October 1928), Reza Shah visited Rasht, Torkaman, and Khorramabad and spent at least a week in each location to attend various ceremonies and inspect conditions in the provinces.[38] The Iranian press celebrated the shah's enhanced mobility and the expansion of state power,

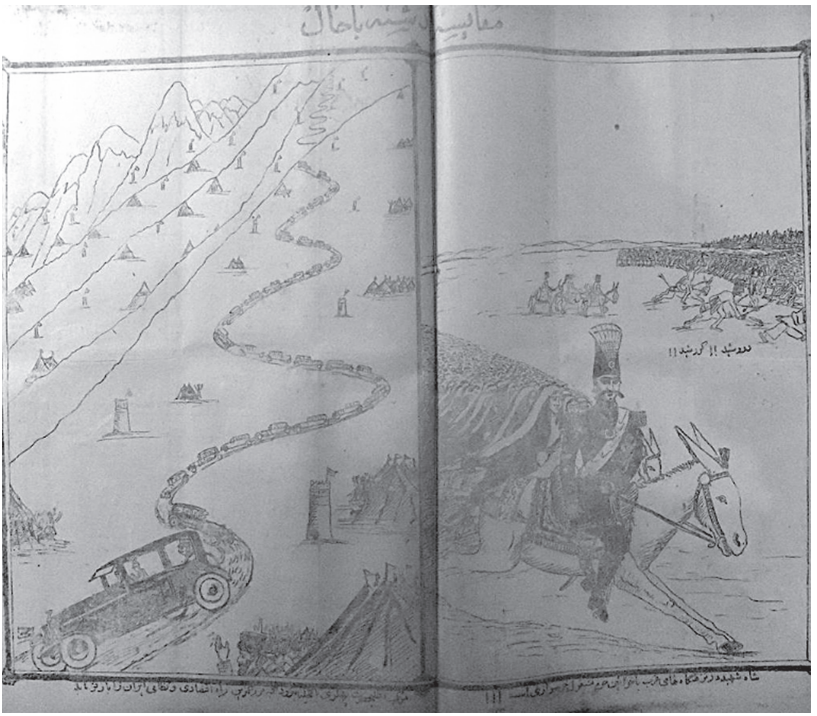

FIGURE 8 Naser al-Din Shah's military campaign against Lors (right), and Reza Shah's military campaign against Lors (left). Source: *Nahid*, October 30, 1928.

emphasizing changes occurring in tribal lands—including the establishment of modern schools, the nomads' increasing "inclination" to sedentarize (in reference to the forced sedentarization program), and the newly emerging observance of hygienic principles.[39]

While the Qajars ruled tribes in a decentralized manner by allowing a "plurality of power,"[40] the Pahlavi state and its supporters conceptualized tribal power as an existential threat to national survival and to the success of the New Civilization. In particular, they viewed the mobility of nomadic tribes as an obstacle to rural security, hindering the success of key policies of the new state such as conscription, sartorial regulations, and, most importantly, the smooth flow of people and commodities. Yet, as Stephanie Cronin argues, state-society relations in rural Iran of the early Pahlavi period made an "erratic narrative" influenced by contingent factors, rather than a linear narrative in which an eternal conflict between tribes and central

authority inevitably culminated in violent repressions of tribal forces by the state.[41] Contemporary Iranian publications like *Nahid* might prove a suitable departure point for examining the "peculiar frame of mind"[42] widely shared among advocates of the New Civilization with regard to the "tribal problem,"[43] but they fail to shed much light on how tribes, the object of state reform, experienced the development of transportation infrastructure.

In her study of globalization, Valeska Huber argues that the Suez Canal "channeled" mobilities, accelerating certain kinds of mobilities while decelerating others, including the desert mobilities of Bedouins, the object of a European civilizing mission in late nineteenth-century Egypt. The canal and Bedouins developed a complex relationship. While the canal infrastructure took away economic opportunities from Bedouin-operated caravan routes, it also relied on Bedouins' knowledge and skills in the desert to ensure the smooth flow of people and goods.[44] As with the case of the Suez Canal, we cannot talk about a single experience of the Trans-Iranian Railway project among tribes, because factors such as shifting alliances among tribes and the growing military power of the Pahlavi state resulted in very different experiences among tribal groups even within the same locale.

Despite the unevenness of tribal experiences, we can characterize the goal of the railway project regarding the tribal question as the conversion of tribal mobility to labor mobility, paralleling the Anglo-Persian Oil Company's attempt to create a permanent workforce out of villagers and nomads. By converting tribal mobility to labor mobility, the Pahlavi state attempted not only to ensure productivity but also to improve rural security, a crucial ingredient for the steady flow of goods and people. Because the new regime did not enjoy absolute military superiority over tribal forces, co-opting at least some tribal groups played a vital role in the expansion of Tehran's power.[45]

This is not to say that tribes were seamlessly integrated into the economic structure that the project created. Rather, attempts at making a permanent workforce out of tribesmen continually presented difficulties. This section primarily focuses on the case of Lorestan; specifically, the part of southeastern Lorestan around Bala Gariveh. This region is ideal for analyzing the impact of the railway project precisely because of the limited penetration of state power and because of an absence of Europeans prior to the Trans-Iranian Railway project. By the end of the Reza Shah period, tribal mobility was far from converted in Lorestan.

When Reza Khan came to power in the aftermath of the 1921 coup, Lorestan was politically decentralized, with the exception of the western part of the region, which was called Posht-e Kuh and is part of the Ilam province today. In contrast to Posht-e Kuh, Pish-e Kuh, separated from Posht-e Kuh by a mountain range, had no state presence after the death of Naser al-Din Shah in 1896. In fact, governors sent from Tehran for tax collection could not even enter Khorramabad, the capital of Lorestan situated in Pish-e Kuh.[46] In Bala Gariveh, which lay southeast of Khorramabad and Pish-e Kuh, Lor tribes remained mostly autonomous until 1921. Various Lor tribes in Pish-e Kuh and Bala Gariveh, such as the Beyranvands, Judakis, and Papis, did not form a large, stratified confederation, and tribal khans exerted only limited influence over members of their tribes. This was in contrast to the hierarchical structure of the relatively well-studied Bakhtiyari Confederation. The absence of state power and a dominant local ruler made eastern Lorestan notoriously difficult to pass through. The British frequently complained about its "chronic state of anarchy,"[47] which disrupted the flow of commodities between Tehran and the Persian Gulf because Lorestan lay in a crucial location linking Khuzestan to Tehran via Dezful, Khorramabad, and Borujerd.

Economically, Bala Gariveh was linked to Borujerd and Dezful rather than Khorramabad, which was tied more to its surrounding areas of Pish-e Kuh.[48] In particular, in winter and spring the nomadic Lors of Bala Gariveh traveled southward to the vicinity of Dezful and sold items such as charcoal while purchasing commodities such as tea and sugar. C. J. Edmonds, a British officer, noted that during his 1917 trip to Lorestan escorted by local tribes, Lors of Bala Gariveh such as Judakis and Papis came down to Dezful en masse with their livestock for sale and pitched their black tents on the bank of the Dez River.[49] Raiding and blackmailing caravans also defined the economic interaction between city dwellers and the tribes of Lorestan. Constant pillaging by Lors of Bala Gariveh had closed trade routes that connected the Persian Gulf with Tehran in the 1910s. Settled cities and villages also suffered from raids by Lors; for example, the Beyranvands would attack Borujerd.[50]

Through military campaigns, the opening of the new Tehran–Khuzestan road, and attempts at tribal disarmament, Reza Khan's new regime increased its presence in rural Lorestan. As it did with other provinces,

Tehran attempted to pacify Lorestan by negotiating with tribal khans in the aftermath of military campaigns. Incentives, such as subsidies and governorships, were offered in exchange for allegiance.[51] By the late 1920s, rural security in Lorestan had improved, although raids continued to occur sporadically. Therefore, construction of the Trans-Iranian Railway, which took place primarily during the 1930s in Lorestan, did not play a substantive role in suppressing tribes in the region. Rather, it functioned to maintain the shaky stability in Lorestan by providing employment to tribes that had reached an agreement with the Pahlavi state during the 1920s.

The Papi tribe is a case in point. Around 1920, Papis numbered about two thousand families, mostly nomadic pastoralists living in territory between the future railway stations of Mazu and Bisheh during the summer and moving southward to the area around Salehabad in fall.[52] In the early 1920s, Papis joined other Lors against Tehran's military campaigns, such as the 1923–24 campaign that ended with the executions of Lor tribal khans. Along with several other Lor tribes, Papis agreed to disarm in the summer of 1925, with the understanding that they would be required to start a sedentarized life on land distributed at the expense of nearby landowners, mostly Arabs.[53] During tribal unrest in 1928, Lor rebels sabotaged railway construction by tearing up the railway track and burning sleepers. To them, the railway symbolized the power of the new state.[54] Nevertheless, the Papi khan, who was released from captivity in Khorramabad upon the arrival of Reza Shah, worked as a liaison between Lors and the shah, which resulted in the distribution of gifts to Lor tribal chiefs.[55] No detail is available regarding Papis' relations with the Pahlavi state between this incident and the early 1930s. Yet, while names of some other Lor tribes continued to appear in British documents as perpetrators of highway robberies and attacks on road and railway construction sites in the 1930s, Papis ceased to appear in these documents after 1928. Instead, having established marginally amicable relations with the Pahlavi state, Papis, along with some other tribes of Lorestan, secured employment on railway construction sites as laborers and sometimes even as more skilled laborers, while often retaining their livestock and farms.[56]

This attempt at establishing lasting stability posed problems when construction projects came to a halt and unemployment ensued. The danger inherent in high unemployment first started to manifest in the oil industry.

By the early 1930s, the effects of global depression began seeping into Iran, which slowed railway construction. Funding dried up and, with it, the rise of unemployment among Lor tribes and other tribal groups. The increasing number of attacks on railway construction sites correlated with this rise in unemployment. Between February 1931 and January 1932, workers' camps and railway facilities were attacked at least ten times by nearby Arab tribes in interior Khuzestan alone, often resulting in injuries, deaths, and the loss of property and cash.[57] In addition to soldiers, local Lor and Arab tribesmen whose chiefs had reached an agreement with the state were employed as guards to placate tribal entities and prevent looting in return for government subsidies to tribal chiefs.[58]

However, the situation continued to deteriorate. At the beginning of 1933, massive layoffs of clerical staff occurred and were followed by the complete suspension of construction along new sections of the south railway line.[59] By February of 1933, five hundred armed Arab tribesmen aligned with Lors and led by Yadollah Khan of the Beyranvand tribe, attacked a railway workers' camp, killing some laborers and stealing about 6,000 riyals.[60] Before long, the number of tribesmen led by Yadollah Khan increased to 3,500. The Beyranvands, joined by conscription deserters, engaged in the kidnapping of prominent figures such as the governor of Lorestan. They pillaged villages and took part in highway robbery between Khorramabad and Dezful. Because Yadollah Khan was able to amass such a large number of tribal bandits, passing through Lorestan without their permission became particularly difficult, especially for trucks carrying goods. The bandits controlled the profitable highway transportation of basic commodities such as tea and sugar, and local authorities in Khorramabad had no choice but to purchase goods from them.[61] Thus, high unemployment in Lorestan brought about disorder. The distinction between "friendly" tribes that provided laborers and guards and "unfriendly" tribes that threatened rural security was highly contingent on whether the Pahlavi state could distribute the benefits of allegiance in return.

In fact, in the same way that the Pahlavi state preferred to reach a precarious agreement with Lors rather than engage in costly military campaigns, Lors attempted to remain "friendly" with the state if that friendliness ensured survival. At the beginning of 1933, in return for the safety of traffic, Yadollah Khan made the following demands: his appointment as governor

of Lorestan, the withdrawal of Iranian troops from the province, and an agreement not to station a garrison there.[62] These demands meant maintaining the decentralized structure of previous eras, keeping the central state out of Lorestan, and retaining his power within local communities. A few months later, however, he kidnapped C. J. Carroll, the American director of the south railway line under construction, and made new demands. This time, Yadollah Khan called for the security of his tribe and the distribution of land in return for the release of Carroll, indicating both his desperation and his willingness to adopt a sedentarized life. Equally if not more important was his insistence that "certain members of the tribe must be given employment on the Persian Railway."[63] In other words, the Beyranvands were focusing on survival by following the same path taken by the Papis. Rather than rejecting state authority altogether, the nomadic tribe—which had been vilified in the nationalist discourse for its presumed recalcitrance—was now contemplating the option of abandoning its tribal mobility in return for a comparatively secure livelihood. Yadollah Khan was searching for a way to resituate himself vis-à-vis new players in the province: the Pahlavi state and the railway syndicate.

Believing the promise that his demands would be considered, Yadollah Khan released Carroll from what was his third captivity. In return, Yadollah Khan was captured and taken to Tehran for further negotiations. Although he eventually accepted Tehran's terms, culminating in the distribution of land along the Khorramabad Road among some of the rebels, rural unrest continued and villages in Lorestan were pillaged sporadically throughout the Reza Shah period.[64] The continuing tensions were illustrated by the fact that, throughout the 1930s, a large number of the Beyranvands were exiled to various provinces of Iran, including Khorasan. In this case, therefore, the Pahlavi state's effort to control tribal mobility was implemented through either settlement programs or the severance of ties that tribes like the Beyranvands had to the land, displacing them from the regional urban-rural socioeconomic networks. In an utterly unfamiliar ecological environment, Lors that experienced forced movement were pushed to further destitution in Khorasan.

The Papis and other tribes employed on construction sites were also exposed to attempts to contain their mobility through labor discipline. Tribal populations were generally recruited for work situations based on

their tribal membership and affiliation with tribal khans rather than as individual laborers.[65] As was the case with contemporary road construction, railway construction contractors would recruit laborers through provincial governors, who circulated information to tribal chiefs, who in turn supplied labor from their tribesmen.[66] Once recruited, unskilled tribal laborers were generally organized into a group of ten to thirty under a foreman, and most of them were between fourteen and twenty-five years old.[67] Many of them lived in railway camps like Keshvar. Every morning, workers got up before sunrise, worked throughout the morning, had a long lunch break in an effort to avoid summer heat, resumed work when a camel bell was sounded, and continued working until sunset.[68] Builders did not use machinery as widely as contemporary construction projects elsewhere. Tools such as pickaxes and chisels as well as wagons pulled by humans did much of the work.[69]

Retaining tribal laborers posed a serious problem. They took advantage of different construction projects managed by different contractors, creating a fluid labor market along the future railway route. When American engineers of the German-American railway syndicate initially commenced construction between Ahvaz and Dezful in Khuzestan in late 1927, the standard daily wage for road construction labor was two qerans per day.[70] Following "some discussions as to their daily wage," the American manager who, as a newcomer, may have lacked familiarity with the average wage or may have desperately needed more laborers, offered three qerans per day. The immediate consequence was the spontaneous mass exodus of road construction laborers employed nearby under the supervision of a Russian engineer to railway construction sites.[71] Laborers could benefit more from the high demand for labor at the peak of construction. The American firm Ulen & Company had to increase the daily wage from three to four qerans in 1929 in order to attract more Arab laborers in Khuzestan, where agricultural harvesting had previously been prioritized over construction labor.[72]

The practice of employers paying an annual sum to tribal khans rather than to individual laborers from tribal groups declined by the 1920s. In nearby oil fields, Bakhtiyari guards hired to protect properties of the Anglo-Persian Oil Company were paid directly by the head guards in 1909, not by the khans. Direct payment of salary from employers to workers weakened the influence of tribal khans. Furthermore, it worked as an incentive for laborers to return to construction sites on a regular basis rather than showing

up only when they were not harvesting crops or tending livestock. Similar to the APOC in its early years, the Trans-Iranian Railway project struggled to retain recruited tribal laborers for the entire year, or even for much shorter periods of time. Laborers frequently stopped coming to work after a week or two. To prevent the desertion of workers and ensure the continuity of its workforce, construction subcontractors, following the practice of the APOC, made wage payments on a fortnightly basis.[73]

The system was open to manipulation. In order to receive salary in cash, on specified payment days, laborers had to present tickets that they had received in exchange for daily labor. Since many tribal laborers had their own crops or livestock, however, it was sometimes problematic to be present at the construction site on payment days.[74] Therefore, many laborers sold their tickets on the black market to reap the benefits of their labor. The long payday list of employees that section managers possessed in comparison with the actual number of laborers who showed up to be paid indicated the prevalence of this practice, which in turn made it necessary for the Ministry of Roads to examine the tickets and ticketholders more closely at the time of payment.[75] Thus, despite Kampsax engineers' goal to "de-Orientalize" Iran and bring "Westernization" to Iran through the Trans-Iranian Railway project, techniques for controlling the mobility introduced by the railway project did not smoothly transform tribal laborers into sedentarized workers.[76]

Local populations such as Lors and Arabs were not the only workers present on construction sites; geographic areas with fewer technological challenges required fewer skilled foreign workers and engineers. For example, in the flat section immediately south of Qom, most of the five hundred workers were Iranian because that region had little need for skilled stonecutters and masons.[77] Conversely, more challenging areas such as the mountainous regions of Mazandaran and Lorestan featured a diverse group of engineers and workers who lived and worked side by side with locally employed unskilled laborers. Semiskilled diggers and masons were Azeris from the province of Azerbaijan, where they might have gained experience partly because of the Russian-built Jolfa–Tabriz Railway and its extension to Sharafkhaneh on Lake Orumiyeh. Armenians worked as chauffeurs and low-level administrators. Turkey and southern Europe exported thousands of skilled workers who needed employment during the Great Depression.[78]

The Greeks were stonecutters, the Slovaks were tunnel workers, and a great number of Italians were everywhere as stonecutters, masons, engineers, and supervisors of the workforce. The Scandinavians, Austrians, Hungarians, Belgians, and Swiss worked in managerial positions or as engineers and construction supervisors. Importantly, unlike the presence of foreigners in the oil industry who were concentrated in Khuzestan, Europeans who worked in the construction sector were scattered along railway and highway routes in the western half of Iran, creating multiple sites of interaction between Iranians and foreign workers.

Members of this diverse workforce were treated differently depending on nationality and credentials. In terms of salary, unskilled laborers made six to nine riyals per day, even in the late 1930s, whereas skilled Iranians made fifteen to thirty riyals, and European workers made sixty to seventy-five riyals per day. The manager of each of the twenty lots along the railway route made 7,000 riyals per month, while managers of smaller sections made 2,000 to 3,000 riyals per month. They also enjoyed such perquisites as free furnished housing and transport service that lower-level employees did not enjoy.[79] Engineers and other professionals lived separately from the regular workers' camps, spatially formalizing the hierarchy. They either rented buildings in nearby urban centers or built housing surrounded by interpreters, chefs, servants, and livestock. Local laborers lived in a quarter closer to the entrance of the camps along with guards.[80]

Local inhabitants-turned-unskilled-laborers observed, with some degree of resentment, the preferential treatment that skilled non-Iranian workers received. At the beginning of 1931, Mohammad Zaki Valad-e Ahmad filed a petition to the Majles about his miserable condition. After working for the German-American railway syndicate for two-and-a-half years, he lost his leg at work and was forced to stay in the hospital for half a year, after which he received a prosthetic leg. After this, however, his salary was reduced from 160 qerans a month to eighty, and after another six months, the eighty-qeran salary was discontinued. Claiming that his house would be destroyed in three days if he could not secure money for the debtor, he desperately wrote, "When a German lost an arm, they [the syndicate] would give him seven hundred tomans [7,000 qerans] and even give him a job. But however much I, a guardian of four people, three sisters and one mother, petition to the syndicate, they do not reply."[81] The presence of the

multinational construction crew sharpened the demands of Iranian laborers as they became aware of the different contractual statuses between themselves and non-Iranian workers.

Iranian laborers struggled to survive these trying conditions in a number of ways. Employing the same tactics as European workers, or possibly in tandem with the Europeans, Iranians sometimes protested on construction sites to have their grievances heard, necessitating the dispatch of soldiers.[82] They also complained to Kampsax's claims department, which handled disputes not only between workers and contractors but also between subcontractors and contractors.[83] Furthermore, following suit with the agriculturalists, they petitioned the Majles, the Ministry of Roads, municipal governments, and Kampsax, demanding that state institutions take concrete actions to alleviate their problems—which included overpriced water, the dreadful quality of bread, and the delay of payment.[84] Occasionally, they directly petitioned the shah himself, as Lor laborers did through the military government of Lorestan in 1934.[85]

The exposure of tribesmen to the labor practices of construction sites did not necessarily translate to a linear transition of tribal populations into the permanent working class. By 1938, railway construction in Lorestan had been completed. Some Lor laborers transitioned into semiskilled work in the IRO,[86] but many others lost employment since the completed railway did not create enough employment opportunities to absorb tribesmen into the permanent workforce. In response, unemployed Lors raided trucks carrying merchandise, causing deterioration of rural security in the late 1930s.[87] The practice of raiding continued to block the flow of commodities after August 1941, when the Anglo-Soviet invasion of Iran led to the forced abdication of Reza Shah, the weakening of central authority, and the return of exiled Lor tribesmen from Khorasan. Thus, the containment of tribal mobility through infrastructural development was far from complete. The construction of the Trans-Iranian Railway created an unequal yet interdependent relationship between the Pahlavi state and some Lor tribes like the Papis by creating employment in return for a semisedentary life. While this wage labor relationship ensured the comparatively smooth circulation of people and goods between Tehran and the Persian Gulf via Lorestan, it collapsed once the state lost its ability to keep tribal laborers on payroll.

REORIENTING TRANSNATIONAL LABOR FLOWS

The enormous scale of construction projects in the early Pahlavi period required an extraordinary number of laborers. About 6,000 laborers worked on railway construction in Khuzestan alone as of March 1931.[88] At the peak of construction, according to one estimate, about 40,000 to 50,000 men were employed for the project, with 90 percent of them recruited locally.[89] The scale of infrastructural development was such that wage payments to laborers caused a constant shortage of silver currency in all other provinces in the mid-1930s.[90]

In narrating the history of IRO employees, existing accounts start with the dispatching of young Iranians to Europe and the United States to study railway engineering and related fields at the beginning of the Reza Shah period.[91] The narrative then moves on to describe the birth of rank-and-file railway workers. This account starts with the establishment of various technical schools to train railway workers, beginning in 1936. The first training program consisted of a six-month course in motion. The industrial school (*honaretan-e rah ahan*) that opened in 1940 incorporated a year of on-the-job training in the curriculum.[92] By early 1946, 3,580 workers had completed twenty-two kinds of training courses that were typically offered as two-hour classes taken twice a week. The courses included such diverse subjects as driving, crane operation, equipment repair, construction, accounting, and police work. In addition, four hundred students graduated from the three-year industrial school and joined the workforce.[93]

This timeline may encapsulate the Pahlavi state's efforts to indigenize the workforce, but it omits other stories that do not fit the Trans-Iranian Railway narrative as a national project implemented by the Pahlavi state. To get a fuller picture of the project, we need to pay attention to multiple regional circulations of labor in Iran's surrounding areas. As Nile Green points out, northern and southern Iran historically belonged to different "arenas," or fluid, mutable spaces of social interaction. Taking a *longue durée* approach, Green identifies the Inner Asian Arena and the Indian Ocean Arena as the two spaces that linked Iran to broader networks of circulation.[94] In addition, familial, commercial, and migration networks closely linked northern Iran to the Caucasus and Russia, illustrating Green's insistence on the mutability of arenas. Historiography gives us a good sense

of Iranian labor migration to the Caucasus during the last few decades of the nineteenth century, when the oil boom in Baku took off. Many Azeris from northwestern Iran migrated to Baku as wage laborers and came back to Iran on the eve of the Constitutional Revolution, bringing ideals of social democracy.[95] The pattern of transnational labor migration in the nascent railway industry illustrates the continuation of the transnational flow of labor in the Caucasus after the Constitutional Revolution.

We also know that many Indian workers joined the Anglo-Persian Oil Company, forming a distinct middle strata of the oil workforce that was neither European nor Iranian, making Abadan a "tripartite city."[96] The case of the railway industry not only illuminates the continuation, and even intensification, of this trend but also sheds light on the role of the APOC in functioning as a gateway to industrial work among Iranians of southern Iran. In short, the Trans-Iranian Railway project, which relied on preexisting flows of labor, reoriented transnational labor flows before creating a national workforce.

As was the case with the oil industry, the Pahlavi state did not conceal its desire to indigenize the workforce.[97] The Iranian government pressured foreign construction companies, as exemplified by a 1929 notification issued to the American firm Ulen & Company that read, "Only Persian subjects are eligible for jobs and contracts in the Railway. Should Persians not be available to fill up technical appointments then foreigners will be engaged but not without special permission first being obtained from the Governor-General [of Khuzestan]."[98] While pressuring foreign companies, the Pahlavi state also attempted to indigenize skilled workers, including locomotive engineers and various types of mechanics and technicians. From the early 1930s, the central state began training children in recently suppressed tribal areas, such as Turkoman children in Bandar Shah. At first, the number of students in these technical schools was modest. There were only seventy students in Bandar Shah, thirty-one in Tehran, and forty-seven in Khorramabad.[99] A limited number of students also received training in Europe in subjects such as locomotive engineering. They were, however, at least in the eyes of European and American engineers, utterly incompetent, particularly given the need to operate the railway system in the difficult mountainous terrain that the Trans-Iranian Railway penetrated compared to the relatively flat terrain associated with some European railway systems.[100]

Among foreign workers, Indians comprised a significant force. India had an established history of exporting its abundant labor force to the Persian Gulf region.[101] For example, Indian railway workers played a significant role in the functioning, maintenance, and administration of Iraqi railways until the 1920s due to the lack of trained Iraqi staff.[102] Throughout the 1920s during the mandate period, however, Iraq reduced its reliance on Indian workers, eliminating contracts with both skilled and unskilled Indians.[103] Although no evidence exists to connect Indian labor migration directly from Iraq to Iran, many Indians, along with some Iraqis, filled positions in the Iranian railway industry when employment opportunities in Iraq began to diminish.

After Trans-Iranian Railway construction started in the late 1920s, this demand for qualified industrial workers, as well as locomotive engineers, increased. Due to the paucity of qualified Iranian personnel, the recruitment of Indian and Iraqi locomotive engineers, clerks, mechanics, and other requisite personnel became an absolute necessity for Iran's nascent railway system.[104] Recruitment took place through the APOC and Iranian consulates in India. In theory, the APOC was in charge of putting qualified drivers in touch with Iranian consulates in India. Then Iranian consulates were to work in liaison with the Ministry of Finance to get approval for the employment of foreign drivers. For the APOC, which was under pressure from the Iranian government to eliminate non-Iranian labor progressively, Iran's need to recruit Indians for the railway system would strengthen its claim that the oil industry, like the railway industry, still needed a large number of foreign workers.[105]

By the late 1930s, however, Indian and Iraqi personnel, especially locomotive engineers, had become aware of the disadvantage of working for the IRO. Consequently, "most of the Parsee drivers originally engaged" left, unless they had arrears of payment due to them. The 1937 attempt to recruit Iraqi locomotive engineers failed miserably with only one or two successful contracts.[106] The most pressing issue was the difficulty with remittance, partially due to the control of currency exchange by the Iranian state and its overvaluing of the riyal.[107] Furthermore, locomotive engineers faced constant blackmailing by repair-shop workers, who took advantage of the penalty system in order to supplement their meager incomes. In this system, the IRO fined locomotive engineers when engines required repair

due to the alleged fault of the engineer. It resulted in locomotive engineers having to bribe repair-shop workers to avoid both authentic and inauthentic accusations made against them. To alleviate these problems and attract Indian labor, one third of the 1,400–1,500 riyals of monthly salary was made in rupees, and Indians were to receive a free deck passage from India, free medical care, and allowances for rent.[108] As the comparatively favorable deal offered to Indian locomotive engineers suggests, the IRO desperately needed to hire non-Iranians because of the highly specialized skill required to operate a train.

In other mechanical and technical jobs such as carpentry, blacksmithing, welding, and so forth, however, the IRO could employ a larger percentage of Iranian workers because the skills and expertise required in these jobs were not as specific to the railway industry as locomotive engineering. Therefore, in these fields, it seems that the construction and operation of the Trans-Iranian Railway in its early days relied not only on foreign workers from Europe and Iran's neighbors but also on workers who had gained relevant work experience in other minor railway systems in Iran and in the oil industry in Khuzestan.

A series of articles called "Get to Know Railway Workers" (*Kargaran-e rah ahan ra beshnasid*) from *Mardan-e Ruz*, the IRO newspaper, provides a glimpse of the origins of these first railway workers, who started working in railway construction and operation in the late 1920s and the 1930s. I collected twenty-six of these minibiographies from the series. Admittedly, the number of samples is insufficient to make a conclusive argument. Also, many employees featured in the series were in their forties and fifties and occupied supervising positions as foremen and masters (*ostad*) within particular units or divisions of railway-related factories. Thus, they were typically in positions to supervise less experienced, newer employees who joined the IRO during the Allied occupation between 1941 and 1945. Still, the samples allow us to get a sense of common life trajectories among early railway workers during the interwar period.

The articles were based either on oral interviews or written answers to questionnaires. Except for one locomotive-engineer trainer, all workers were mechanics and technicians with various specialties such as wagons, locomotives, and boilers. Unlike the organization's managers and engineers in the same period, most came from lower socioeconomic backgrounds.

Of the twenty workers who mentioned their fathers' occupations in the interviews, seven came from peasant families. Others came from various lower socioeconomic family backgrounds, including craftsmen, bakers, and laborers.

The lack of formal education as well as their experience of child labor also signaled a lower socioeconomic background compared to IRO managers and engineers. Six of them had finished primary education, and three had attended school after the establishment of the Pahlavi Dynasty in 1926. Some were illiterate, and one interviewee, Mohammad Jalilzadeh of a North Division factory in Bandar Shah, mentioned that he often asked his children to read such newspapers as *Mardan-e Ruz* and *Rahbar*, a Tudeh newspaper.[109] Two others mentioned acquiring literacy through adult classes in Persian offered by the IRO.[110]

The life stories and previous work experiences of these individuals illuminate how the first generation of railway workers emerged. For workers from northwestern Iran, the proximity to Turkey and Russia and the Russian-built Tabriz–Jolfa Railway provided opportunities for exposure to industrial work before the Trans-Iranian Railway project. Among the twenty-six workers, eight of them came from Azeri-speaking regions in the northwest such as Tabriz and Ardabil, to which the first railway line did not even extend.[111] Most other workers came from areas in which the Trans-Iranian Railway operated, such as Khuzestan, Tehran, and Mazandaran. The overrepresentation of workers from Azeri-speaking regions during the interwar period, despite the absence of railway lines there until the 1940s, suggests the existence of an industrial workforce in northwestern Iran prior to the Pahlavi period.[112] Five of them worked either for Russian-owned businesses in northern Iran or in the Caucasus or Turkey prior to joining the railway industry. For instance, Mohammad Jalilzadeh was from Sarab, a small city between Tabriz and Ardabil. He moved to Russia in 1916 when he was ten years old to escape wartime poverty in Iran and worked there as a laborer (*'amaleh*). After becoming a foreman (*sar 'amaleh*) in Russia, he returned to Iran in 1934 to work on the Trans-Iranian Railway construction as a blacksmith. Three of the interviewees from northwestern Iran worked for the Tabriz–Jolfa Railway, constructed by Russia from 1913 to 1915, prior to moving to the Trans-Iranian Railway. For instance, after training and working as a chauffeur in Azerbaijan, Bala Fuladsaz traveled

TABLE 1 Railway Workers' Profiles.

Name	Age	Education	Father's Occupation	Birthplace	Division	Previous Work Experience
Mohammad T.	50	Primary education	Samovar maker	Tehran	Tehran Blacksmith	Samovar making
Mahmud S.	41	Teachers' college	Peasant	Tehran	Tehran Carpenter	Carpentry
Farj S.	31	Secondary education	Merchant	Tabriz	Tehran Technician	None
Akbar Q.	29	Secondary education	?	Tabriz	Tehran Welder	Factory jobs
Hoseyn R.	30	Maktab (tradition-al primary school)	Shoemaker	Kazerun	Tehran Repairman	Railway construction and the APOC
Shahbaz J.	50	Primary education (5 years)	Merchant	Korus, Semnan	Tehran Factory worker	Railway construction
Ali and Aziz Q. (brothers)	46 and 47	?	?	Hamadan	Tehran Repairmen	Skoda, the APOC, bridge construction
Vahhab Z.	51	None	?	Khalkhal	Tehran Repairman	Mechanic job in Anzali, railway construction
Fath Ali B.*	appr. 50	None	?	Azerbaijan?	Tehran Wagon repairman	Railway construction, the Tabriz–Jolfa Railway
Hoseyn S.	52	None	Carpet weaver	Tabriz	Tehran Locomotive-engineer trainer	Peasantry, factory, the Tabriz–Jolfa Railway
Bala F.	52	None	Peasant	near Tabriz	Arak Repairman	Chauffeuring, the Turkish Railway, the Tabriz–Jolfa Railway
Eskandar R.	51	None	Merchant	Ardabil	North Welder	Mechanic job
Mohammad J.	40	None	Laborer	Sarab	North Boilermaker	Laborer in Iran and Russia

Hasan S.	23	None	Baker	Sari	North Boilermaker	Railway since age 10
Badir F.	54	Primary education	Peasant	Ahvaz	South Factory worker	the APOC
Qasem N.	41	Primary education (4 years)	Civil servant	Ahvaz	South Mechanic	the APOC, railway construction
Neʿmatollah M.	43	Primary education	APOC employee	Ahvaz	South Factory worker	the APOC
Ali D.	43	None	Peasant	Ahvaz	South Mechanic	the APOC, chauffeuring
Ali B.	46	Primary education	Peasant	Hendijan, Khuzestan	South Factory worker	the APOC, railway construction
Ali Reza V.	43	Primary education (3 years)	Peasant	Chahar Mahal Bakhtiari	South Repairman	the APOC, railway construction
Rajabali M.	50	None	Peasant	Isfahan	South Factory worker	Peasantry, the APOC
Baqer S.	appr. 44	None	Baker	Isfahan	South Toolmaker	Artisanship, the APOC (mechanic)
Reza A.*	48	?	?	Khuzestan?	South Factory worker	the APOC, road building, employment in Poland
Baqer P.	88	None	Weapon maker	Dezful	South Factory worker	Weapon making, railway construction
Hoseyn N.	28	Limited primary education	Carpenter	Dezful	South Repairman	Railway since age 9

Based on twenty-six articles in *Mardan-e Ruz*. Divisions of the IRO at the time included North (Bandar-e Shah), Tehran, Arak, and South (Ahvaz). The birthplaces of two workers (indicated by asterisk) were not mentioned in the interviews, but considering that they started to work in Azerbaijan and Khuzestan respectively when they were around fifteen years old, they were probably from these regions.
Source: "Kargaran-e rah ahan ra beshnasid" (Get to Know Railway Workers), *Mardan-e Ruz*, 1946.

to the Ottoman Empire to work for the Anatolian Railway in 1911 before his employment by the Tabriz–Jolfa Railway.[113] As these examples suggest, the mobility of children from poor families resulted in their gaining industrial work experience in neighboring regions outside Iran before the Trans-Iranian Railway project commenced. When the construction of the Trans-Iranian Railway started in the late 1920s, these individuals joined the ranks of semiskilled Iranian workers.

Some Iranian laborers, particularly those in Russia, even acquired the crucial skill of driving locomotives, which afforded them upward social mobility. Hoseyn Sayyar, a locomotive-engineer trainer in the Tehran Division, worked in agriculture from age seven to seventeen in his native Tabriz before moving to the Russian Empire in 1911 to acquire technical skills. He worked for a silver-making factory in Vladikavkaz in Ossetia for three years before returning to Iran to work for the Tabriz–Jolfa Railway first as a switchman and then as a conductor. After turning twenty-five, he started to take private lessons in the Persian and Russian languages. Then he moved to the Soviet Union and received a diploma in driving locomotives from the Russian Railway. Once again, Sayyar returned to Iran in 1925 to work for the Tabriz–Jolfa Railway, which the Soviet Union ceded to the Iranian government based on a 1921 treaty. He joined the Trans-Iranian Railway in 1931 and became a locomotive-engineer trainer, a position with the monthly salary of approximately 4,700 riyals, significantly higher than other industrial workers in the mid-1940s.[114] As Sayyar's example indicates, Iran's nascent railway industry was supported by mobile labor from northwestern Iran that frequently crossed borders for educational and employment opportunities, a labor pattern that in turn encouraged those on the socioeconomic fringes to move upward economically.

While railway systems in the Caucasus and Anatolia gave migrant workers from northwestern Iran exposure to industrial work, the APOC served as a gateway to industrial work for early railway workers in southern Iran. Among the twenty-six interviewed workers, eleven worked in Ahvaz, where the South Division headquarters was located. Most of them were from Khuzestan, especially Ahvaz and Dezful, with the exception of two Isfahanis and one worker from Chahar Mahal Bakhtiyari. Nine of them, all in their forties and fifties, started to work for the APOC in the 1910s as teenagers and gained experience as mechanics before joining the railway industry.[115] For example,

Baqer Simkesh of the South Division was born in Isfahan around 1902 to a poor baker's family. At the age of seven, he started working in Isfahani bazaar workshops to develop filing and engraving skills. Several years later he moved to Tehran, finding employment at the mint and later at an arsenal. His next move was to Khuzestan to work for the APOC as a mechanic. He continued employment there until joining railway construction in 1931 to build tunnels for the southern line. A life trajectory such as Simkesh's is consistent with Touraj Atabaki's finding that the APOC workforce expanded in the 1910s, as individuals from cities such as Dezful and Isfahan, which did not lie in the immediate vicinities of APOC operations, began to be employed.[116] With a decade or more of APOC work experience, workers like Simkesh gained valuable skills and expertise as mechanics and technicians. Some even received formal training at the APOC. For example, Ne'matollah Movaffaq, whose father was a carpenter employed by the APOC, began his training at the APOC technical school as a twelve-year-old boy in 1915 and continued working in the oil company until 1931. He worked in a South Division factory in Ahvaz after joining the railway industry. As these examples demonstrate, many early railway workers in southern Iran had gained industrial experience working in the oil industry during the 1910s and 1920s—and in some cases moved between oil and railway industries multiple times depending on employment opportunities.[117]

While technical schools in Tehran inarguably played a significant role in creating Iran's railway workforce, evidence suggests that in both northern and southern Iran, the nascent railway industry was bolstered not just by foreign workers but also by Iranian workers who had gained industrial experience within and outside Iran's borders. The geographical mobility of these workers also corresponded to their upward mobility within the IRO organizational hierarchy. They experienced a gradual transformation from unskilled construction laborers to semiskilled or skilled mechanics specializing in a particular division of the railway industry. Thus, the Trans-Iranian Railway project, which aimed to direct the national flow of people and goods—establishing Tehran as its central hub—hinged on transnational circulations of labor in the borderlands and connected various parts of Iran to different regional mobilities. Rather than simply connecting Azerbaijan and Khuzestan to Tehran, the project tied Azerbaijan to the flow of labor in the Caucasus, Russia, and Anatolia. It also tied Khuzestan to the flow of labor

along the Persian Gulf, at least until Pahlavi state policy made boundaries more rigid and temporarily clogged the transnational circulation of labor.

* * *

The three examples discussed above illustrate how building the Trans-Iranian Railway created both connections and disconnections on local, national, and transnational scales. The project, along with contemporary infrastructural projects, achieved these dual effects by promoting mobilities selectively. It fostered types of mobility that were conducive to a capitalist economy while inhibiting other types of mobility, most notably tribal mobility. Even tribes employed on the railway project, like the Papis, had their mobility monitored and repurposed to prevent their hopping construction sites or disappearing in order to prioritize farming or animal husbandry. The goal was not to immobilize tribes. Rather, it was to create tribal laborers whose mobility would conform to the logic of production. They were expected to become reliable wage laborers with a predictable, routinized daily pattern of movement to and from the construction site. Thus, through the transformation of everyday mobility among construction workers, the Trans-Iranian Railway project began to reorganize the movement of the nation far in advance of the railway's opening.

The national project reorganized movement beyond national borders. Despite the early Pahlavi discourse that represented the railway as the unifier of the nation, construction of the railway produced a massive flow of both Iranian and non-Iranian workers into Iran, creating little pockets of foreign communities along the railway route. Early operators of the railway, both Iranian and non-Iranian, also flocked to Iran in search of employment. Contrary to the image presented in the official discourse, in which modernity emanated from Tehran thanks to the Trans-Iranian Railway, mobilities produced by the project were multidirectional, originating in multiple locations, often not even going through Tehran. The scales and directions of individual movement stimulated by the railway project were beyond the effective control of the Pahlavi state. Consequently, inhabitants along the route exercised mobilities in numerous ways, destabilizing the official vision of nationalizing space through the railway project.

5 Death on the Persian Corridor

AT 11:35 P.M. ON JUNE 17, 1945, a northbound train entered Markaz-e Garm Station near Andimeshk. When the locomotive of the train was temporarily separated from the railway cars so as to drop water for local consumption, the rail car connector of the train snapped apart. Because the station stood on a sloping site, the cars, many of which were loaded with fuel oil, started to roll downhill until they derailed, causing a spark. This spark instantly ignited the fuel oil and the fire quickly spread. In addition to the fourteen rail cars carrying fuel oil, the train included four roofed freight cars carrying 201 fourth-class passengers. All four cars containing passengers caught fire. The IRO investigation concluded that twenty-three people lost their lives, while 118 individuals were injured.[1] According to the IRO's official history, published three years after the accident, the IRO incurred total damages amounting to 2.5 million riyals.[2]

The arrival of the railway age meant the arrival of the mass accident age, an age characterized not only by the scale of accidents but also by a collective fear of accidents spread through the print media.[3] Relying primarily on newspapers and literature,[4] scholarship tends to pay attention to catastrophic railway accidents that evoked dystopic visions of technology among the reading public, like the disaster in Markaz-e Garm.[5] But as Brian Larkin discusses in the case of media infrastructure in contemporary

Nigeria, disruptions to infrastructural systems are not extraordinary events; they are a part of everyday life, and one that generates new infrastructural practices.[6]

This chapter examines railway accidents from two angles. The first, and primary, angle concerns technocratic visions of how to produce steady, speedy, and safe movement in the face of frequent railway accidents. During the first decade of railway operations in Iran, accidents occurred very frequently, constantly threatening the official narrative of the New Civilization's technological mastery and, by extension, casting doubt on the legitimacy of the Pahlavi state. Although no statistical data on the number of accidents is available before 1941, the IRO counted 3,848 accidents between 1942 and 1947, causing at least 469 deaths and 889 serious injuries.[7] The majority of victims were members of railway maintenance crews as well as stokers and locomotive engineers. Most of these accidents caught little public attention, but railway accidents were certainly part of everyday life for employees in the railway industry.[8] In light of the frequency of accidents, the fundamental problem for technocrats was this: the completion of the Trans-Iranian Railway created the potentiality for speedy movement, but the flow of people and goods by train was frequently disrupted by railway accidents and a host of other causes, creating a significant gap between theoretically attainable speed and actual speed.

Both Iranian and European technocrats often identified ignorance (*nadani*), negligence (*gheflat*), and carelessness (*bi ehtiyati*) on the part of railway workers as the main culprits.[9] Their complaints were similar. European technocrats of the 1930s complained about how "Persian boys" had only six months of training in Europe,[10] while Iranian technocrats of the 1940s lamented that Iranian workers "landed in technical jobs without any prior knowledge. Many recent employees [did] not even have literacy."[11] Aside from the practical problem of the loss of life and property, Iranian technocratic leaders bore the additional burden of proving to their Euro-American counterparts, who maintained a paternalistic attitude toward Iranian technocrats and workers, that Iranians could operate a railway system on their own. They viewed workers as the most serious obstacle to achieving that goal.

The second perspective in this chapter pays attention to workers themselves. Mimi Sheller notes that, as a complex sociotechnical system that

depends on expert forms of knowledge, mobility infrastructure is "vulnerable to failure, disruption, and cascading disasters when small things go wrong."[12] Given that vulnerability is built into the system itself, it is noteworthy that technocrats ontologically isolated the "human factor" and found exclusive fault with it.[13] It was not out of the ordinary to attribute railway accidents to workers, particularly to "native" labor. In nineteenth-century Egypt, a British newspaper report blamed "the Arabs in charge" for causing a railway accident that killed the crown prince.[14] In the late Ottoman Empire, railway companies' accident prevention largely focused on "encouraging good behaviour among their employees," implying the companies' assumption that workers' behavior greatly contributed to accidents.[15] At the same time, however, scholarship on accidents in industrial settings has illustrated how accident prevention measures evolved in broader legal, economic, and cultural contexts, shifting the culprits from workers to railway companies.[16] Considering that different groups have been found accountable for railway accidents depending on historical contexts, what can we tell from debates on accidents in early Pahlavi Iran about the desire of technocrats, who possessed the ultimate authority to determine what made speed dangerous and how to tame it, and the experience of railway workers, who became the objects of technocratic supervision?[17]

In essence, accident prevention measures introduced by technocrats were meant to produce predictable mobility in the workplace, which was a precondition to producing rail mobility on a national scale, illustrating the interdependency of different forms of mobilities.[18] In the same way that redirecting tribal mobility to labor mobility was considered essential for maximizing productivity, railway workers' physical movement, including micromotions required to follow specific procedures, had to become standardized and routinized in order for machinery to operate precisely and produce high-speed movement. Only then would the movement of people and goods transported by train become steady and free of unexpected disruptions. In order to achieve this goal, technocrats had to introduce a variety of measures such as the distribution of safety manuals and the implementation of psychological tests. Workers were not necessarily passive objects of reform, however. I will suggest that at least some workers possessed sufficient knowledge of the technological system but did not share the technocrats'

goal. This contestation over accident prevention signaled a "technological society" in the making, one which demanded "a mind and a body able to meet the exacting demands of new flexible work routines, new technologies and emerging environmental hazards."[19]

THE COMING OF THE ALLIES

This process unfolded against the backdrop of the Allied occupation. In August 1941, Anglo-Soviet forces invaded Iran and forced Reza Shah to abdicate in favor of the twenty-one-year-old Crown Prince Mohammad Reza. For the next four years, Mohammad Reza Shah (r. 1941–79) cooperated with the Allies and their war efforts. Following the invasion, Anglo-Soviet forces took control over what they called the Persian Corridor; this included all transportation routes from the Persian Gulf to the Soviet Union, such as harbors, highways, and railways. Between 1941 and 1945, Anglo-Soviet forces, later joined by the Americans, operated the Persian Corridor to transport lend-lease materials to the Soviet Union in order to assist Soviet war efforts against Germany. The Soviet Union controlled the railway north of Tehran. The British controlled the railway south of Tehran until they delegated control of the southern line to the Persian Gulf Service Command (renamed the Persian Gulf Command in December 1943; PGC hereafter), an American Army service command, bringing British and American railway workers and engineers to Iran.[20] Thus, railway operators during the occupation were multinational, mainly Iranians, Americans, British (including Indians), and Soviets. The arrival of Allied engineers restricted the power of Iranian railway experts, as the IRO retained only limited control over railway operations, including key aspects such as drafting safety regulations, ensuring security along the route, and handling labor relations.

Traffic volume surged rapidly during the occupation. Before Anglo-Soviet forces invaded Iran, the Trans-Iranian Railway was capable of hauling 200 tons per day. In the initial phase of the occupation when the British controlled the railway, the Soviet-aid cargo alone reached 790 tons per day. During the period of American operations from the spring of 1943 until the end of the occupation, the daily average of Soviet-aid freight was 3,397 tons.[21] By the end of May 1945, when the Americans had begun the process of returning control of the railway to the IRO, the Trans-Iranian Railway

had transported 2,997,592 long tons of cargo to the Soviet Union.[22] The extraordinary number of accidents in the 1940s noted above should be viewed in light of this sudden increase of traffic volume.

THE PROMISES OF SPEED

Attitudes toward the speed of mechanized modes of transport were deeply ambivalent in early Pahlavi Iran, characterized by the hope of technoscientific progress and the fear of speed's impact on physical and mental health.[23] The ambivalence was also characterized by the gap between the potentiality of speed and the actuality of tardiness and destruction. In this section and the next, I will juxtapose this gap, which frustrated advocates of the New Civilization and made technocratic intervention urgent.

With the 1938 grand opening of the Trans-Iranian Railway, it became possible to travel from Tehran to Baghdad in approximately fifty hours, at least in theory if not in reality. One could travel twenty-five hours from Tehran to Ahvaz by train, eight hours to Basra by car (accompanied by a waiting period at the Basra station), and, finally, seventeen hours from Basra to Baghdad by train.[24] This was a substantial shrinking of space considering that the same trip had taken four to five days in the mid-1930s. By car, it took three to four days from Tehran to Khorramshahr (due to a security curfew requiring all cars off the highway after sunset), one hour from Khorramshahr to Basra, and eighteen hours from Basra to Baghdad by train. Travel time also depended on the availability of motorized vehicles (for hire) along the way. Around 1920, the same trip had taken as long as twenty-eight to forty-two days by animal-powered transport.[25] The potential for high-speed travel had increased exponentially.

Infrastructural development, such as construction on the Tehran–Mashhad and Tehran–Tabriz railway lines, continued well after the completion of the Trans-Iranian Railway. Other mechanized modes of transport filled the new roads built in early Pahlavi Iran. In Tehran, there were 1,581 personal automobiles in 1932, as opposed to 564 in 1926. In addition, there were 893 taxis, 1,957 trucks, 223 buses, and 371 motorbikes. In Tabriz, Mashhad, Isfahan, and Shiraz combined, there were 544 personal automobiles, 759 taxis, 973 trucks, 41 buses, and 111 motorbikes.[26] During the peak of the Allied occupation in the second half of 1943, an average of 1,634 trucks were assembled in Andimeshk weekly, most of which were transported to

the Soviet Union by drivers of various nationalities.[27] Thus, even without personally traveling by train or car, Iranian urbanites could feel acceleration through the changing material reality they witnessed in the streets, where mechanized modes of transport joined horse-drawn carriages, donkeys, and pedestrians.

The sense of acceleration was amplified visually in the press. In 1940, the Ministry of Roads began to publish a monthly magazine, *Nameh-ye Rah*. Illustrations on the front cover often showed automobiles, trains, and steamships moving forward in the same direction, embodying the simultaneity of Iran's transport revolution in the early Pahlavi period (fig. 9). The speed of these mechanized modes of transport was conveyed through lines representing waves and wind. The speed of a train, for example, was depicted by long, wavy lines of smoke blowing back almost parallel to the motion of the train. In short, the magazine's illustrations captured visually the marvels of speed.[28]

Furthermore, day after day, the Iranian press reported on the opening of new railway stations and roads, celebrating infrastructural development and the consequent acceleration of movement as a fait accompli. These newspaper articles reflect multiple aspects of popular technological imaginations at the time. Of particular notice was their increased attention to clock time. The author of an *Ettela'at* article recalled his trip from Hamadan to Tehran in 1920 and contrasted it with a subsequent trip from Babol to Rasht in 1933.[29] Describing the more recent trip by car on well-maintained highways, he made sure to mention that the entire trip took only eight hours, including a two-hour rest stop for drinking tea. On the other hand, he described the 1920 trip in a horse-drawn carriage along bumpy dirt roads, mentioning carriage breakdowns, overnight stays at putrid stables, and unpleasant travel companions with whom he had had to share the carriage. With regard to the travel time, he simply stated that it had taken more than twenty days. As in this *Ettela'at* article, it became increasingly more common in early Pahlavi accounts of automobile and railway trips to specify departure and arrival times, emphasizing how speedy the journey was and also how the journey went as planned.[30] For example, one account in *Nahid* notes the author's departure by car from the Qazvin Gate in Tehran by car at 11 a.m. with the intention of having lunch in Karaj and reaching the city of Qazvin by day's end. Later in the article, readers discover that the author did indeed

FIGURE 9 The front cover of Nameh-ye Rah in 1941–42. Source: *Nameh-ye Rah* 2, no. 1 (1941).

have lunch in Karaj and reached Qazvin one hour before sunset, thanks to the excellent graveled road and beautiful bridges, a notable change from the sorry state of the Russian-built road three years before.[31]

With the proliferation of modern technologies in early twentieth-century Iran, advocates of the New Civilization increasingly viewed time as a finite commodity to be saved wisely and consumed efficiently, arguing for Iran's need to accept that "time is money" if it were to achieve European modernity.[32] By attending to the amount of time required to travel highways by car and by contrasting the travel experience in early Pahlavi Iran with the recent Qajar past, authors of these accounts stressed how much traveling had accelerated. Furthermore, travel had also become trouble-free and predictable, allowing them to plan ahead and determine future time arrivals by using clock time. Clock time had the crucial function of quantifying the exact amount of time it took to travel to prove that no time was wasted by unexpected delays. In contrast, past experiences of poor road conditions and carriage breakdowns had obstructed steady movement to their destinations. Travelers had been unable to plan journeys with precision because they had had no way of knowing how much precious time they would "waste" along the way.[33]

However, these accounts did not always illustrate realistically the details of accelerated movement and predictability of technological traveling. Numerous contemporary accounts complained that new roads often became impassable, slowing down movement due to a variety of circumstances, including poor road maintenance, rural insecurity, rain and snow, and the unavailability of motorized vehicles—even on main highways such as

the Tehran–Qom, Tehran–Ahvaz, and Tehran–Mashhad roads.[34] Camels, donkeys, sheep, and goats also decelerated movement, blocking roads where motorized vehicles were trying to pass, especially during tribal migration seasons.[35] Railway operations were disrupted frequently for a host of environmental reasons, including floods, drifting sand, landslides, and heavy snow.[36] In short, the existence of clocks, cars, and trains did not necessarily mean the acceleration of movement unless coordinated with other factors.

For example, transport problems during the first decade of railway operation in the northern Khuzestani station of Salehabad—the temporary railhead of the south line in the early 1930s—resulted from the diverging goals of different state institutions. Despite the opening of the railway station in 1930, Salehabad did not immediately transform into a transportation hub where rail and motor traffic harmoniously converged. In order to promote the use of the railway, the government ordered that all garages for trucks be moved from Ahvaz (Khuzestan's hub for motor traffic) to the new railhead in Salehabad, which stood "in the midst of a vast plain, for the most part uncultivated, but covered generally as far as the eye can reach by a rank growth of high grass."[37] The government also imposed restrictions on motor traffic between Ahvaz and Salehabad, despite complaints from local merchants about the higher cost of transportation by rail.[38] Thus, the state policy of promoting rail traffic necessarily compromised the mobility of truck drivers. Without proper storage facilities in Salehabad, workers had to leave unloaded goods out in the open during the early years. To make matters worse, military authorities sometimes commandeered trucks for sporadic campaigns against tribes during the 1930s. Truck owners avoided Salehabad for fear of being commandeered, leaving goods waiting for transportation to the north for days and weeks, during which pilferage and rain often damaged the loads.[39] The sight of wasted consignments of sugar sitting outside the station signaled vulnerability in the infrastructural system, a system at the mercy of any dissonance that might arise in the complex nexus of institutions and environments. Even in the age of highways and railways, acceleration was not guaranteed unless political, social, and environmental factors aligned to allow smooth functioning of the infrastructural system.

More than mere description, early Pahlavi accounts of journeys printed in the press reveal a desire to move forward without disruption and with formidable speed in order to make daily life predictable, and thus

organizable, through the use of clock time. Official Iranian publications from this period promoted the notion that modern Iranian citizens should organize physical movement in everyday life by taking advantage of scientific knowledge in areas such as proper hygiene, exercise, and clothing. For example, a series of cartoons in the official yearbook *Salnameh-ye Pars* recommended numerous daily routines, including exercising for a few minutes after getting up; leaving for work early enough to avoid harried commuting; keeping calm and waiting for the next scheduled bus when one misses a bus; taking a brief rest after lunch. These recommendations to routinize movement and organize the limited amount of time within each day did not make sense unless one could plan one's movement throughout the day. This required a constant production of speedy movement by infrastructure. If individuals could not organize their everyday lives based on dependable infrastructure—that is, on the consistent flow of people and goods at all times—they would not be able to use time economically.[40] In short, Iranians would continue to waste precious commodified time. Technocratic experts needed to ensure that infrastructure like the Trans-Iranian Railway would accelerate movement, save time, and contribute to the creation of a technological society in Iran.

THE PERILS OF SPEED

Acceleration also caused death and destruction. Railway accidents began to occur almost as soon as sections of the Trans-Iranian Railway opened. For example, at least two major railway accidents took place between May and August of 1932 in Khuzestan, killing four and seven people respectively.[41] Railway accidents destroyed both life and property, as indicated by petitions filed by landowners in order to receive compensation for the destruction of farms and orchards.[42] Combined with travelers' eyewitness accounts of railway and highway accidents, it was clear that the age of speed brought with it an age of mass accidents that killed and injured large numbers of people. The lethality of trains and cars became a matter of public concern.

Press coverage played a key role in amplifying fear of speed. By the mid-1930s, strict censorship did away with sensational coverage of railway accidents, along with all reports that threatened the official Pahlavi state narrative. That narrative, celebrating the conquest of nature through

technology, would continue until censorship finally loosened with Reza Shah's abdication. Newspapers such as *Ettela'at* and *Mardan-e Ruz* regularly covered railway accidents from late 1941 onward. These articles typically consisted of one brief paragraph, but their significance was clear read alongside numerous other articles about railway accidents. On a daily basis, articles reported the death of camels and cows as well as the demise of their owners. The victims had continued using paths and grazing pastures now intersected by the iron path of a railway track.[43] In one case, an entire herd of cows had wandered into a tunnel and was hit by a train, causing significant disruption due to the numerous vultures attracted to the scene.[44] Other articles reported accidents that paralyzed the railway system, destroyed property, and resulted in the injury or death of workers, bystanders, and passengers. For example, on a single day in January 1945, two unrelated railway accidents occurred, killing two and three railway workers, respectively—as well as a separate incident in which many individuals were injured. Yet another accident report that same day cited that an automobile had been destroyed.[45] On July 11, 1945, while only one railway accident occurred, three separate fatal automobile accidents were recorded.[46] The sense of simultaneity and the collectivity of experience expressed in press coverage deepened social anxiety during the 1940s.

As the fear of accidents became widely shared, especially toward the end of the occupation, the emerging generation of Iranian technocrats intensified their attempt to assuage it. During its first thirteen years of existence since 1935, the IRO had eleven directors, many of whom came from aristocratic families and received education and training in civil engineering in the Ottoman Empire, Russia, or Europe before the Pahlavi period.[47] In contrast to that older generation, the younger technocrats of the 1940s were products of Reza Shah's policy of sending students abroad to train as civil engineers, particularly railway engineers.[48] They received higher education and training in Europe and the United States, including with the Swiss Railway, the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation, and the Ford factory in Michigan.[49] By the mid-1940s, and to the chagrin of European and American engineers who considered Iranians too inexperienced and lacking sufficient technical knowledge, Iranian technocrats in their thirties and forties came to dominate IRO managerial positions. Thus, their professional rise coincided with the anticipation of the complete return of the

Trans-Iranian Railway to Iranian control, an event popularly perceived as the recovery of Iran's economic sovereignty. Seeing the railway as the most precious national asset that they were tasked to rebuild, and its success as a model for all state institutions, these young technocrats sought to restore public confidence in the safety of the railway.[50]

Restoring public confidence was particularly important because, once the war was over and the weak Pahlavi state regained full control of infrastructure from the Allies, there would be fewer restrictions on highway travel. The weakened Pahlavi state under Mohammad Reza Shah would not be able to reinstitute the kind of restrictions that his father's state had imposed before the occupation. Motor traffic was more competitive. Traveling from Tehran to Qom by train cost at least twenty-seven riyals as opposed to eight riyals by car. IRO management sought, therefore, to promote rail travel as much safer, even though more expensive, than by automobile.[51]

In doing so, they ascribed the hazards of railway journeys to specific conditions created by the Allied occupation. According to this argument, the occupation caused the prioritization of war needs, the use of freight cars for passenger traffic, the rapid increase of traffic, and the ignorance of Allied personnel regarding Iranian railway regulations, all of which compromised the safety of railway operations.[52] In fact, three years after the Markaz-e Garm accident, Mojtaba Malakuti, a French-educated railway engineer of the IRO, noted the Allies were responsible for 62 percent of railway accidents during the occupation period.[53] By making these arguments, the IRO tried to deflect accountability to the Allies and reassure the public that safety would soon be restored to rail travel. In point of fact, the Markaz-e Garm accident had taken place during the transfer of complete authority of railway operations from the American PGC back to the IRO. Therefore, Iranian technocrats argued that specific perilous conditions created by the occupation, conditions that had contributed to frequent accidents, would soon come to an end. Safety in tandem with speed would soon be restored under Iranian leadership.

To make speed safe, the IRO needed to diagnose railway accidents meticulously and identify their specific causes. Speed itself was not considered inherently dangerous. As the director of the Accidents Division, Mojtaba Malakuti defended the organization's efforts to curtail accidents: "No enterprise is perfect at the beginning. There are always initial shortcomings, but every employer has strived to address them and has evolved the enterprise

in a gradual manner."[54] Rather than viewing railway accidents as inevitable consequences of speed, technocrats like Malakuti often stressed the possibility of overcoming the lethal force of speed through human endeavor. The technocrats conceptually separated danger from speed. Essentially, what linked the two issues were malfunctions within the complex sociotechnological assemblages that comprised rail infrastructure.

DIAGNOSING ACCIDENTS

In its early years, the IRO lacked a standardized process for investigating accidents. During the 1930s, as was the case regarding other types of industrial accidents within the IRO, a local ad hoc committee comprised of an engineer, a doctor, a financial advisor, and a representative of the contractor would investigate railway accidents.[55] A separate institutional mechanism for investigating railway accidents gradually developed in response to the surge of accidents in the early 1940s. Particularly for the Allies, it was crucial to investigate accidents because accidents posed "a serious obstacle in the accomplishment of [their] mission" by disrupting the flow of lend-lease materials to the Soviet Union, which frequently resulted in "the loss of a valuable Soviet cargo by fire."[56]

The High Commission of Accidents, the first centralized government entity to investigate accidents, was established in 1942. Its primary function was to make final decisions on who and what caused accidents based on reports prepared by the Accidents Office, in collaboration with the Allies' accident investigation committees. However, as an American report acknowledged, this entity suffered from the Allies' reluctance to cooperate with the IRO as an equal partner—as well as a tendency to exculpate their own personnel and place blame on Iranians.[57] In response, at the end of 1943, the IRO established an independent investigative commission, the Accidents Division (*bakhsh-e savaneh*), consisting of seventeen technical experts from different divisions of the IRO.[58] Railway experts working in the Accidents Division wielded significant influence. Not only were they authorized to identify the causes of accidents, they determined who incurred penalties and who was eligible for compensation. Furthermore, they shaped the direction of accident prevention programs. The expertise of these Accidents Division members shaped the increasingly standardized procedure for handling railway accidents.

In developing standardized procedure, technocrats categorized causes of accidents into distinct realms such as "technological" and "human," and solutions to perceived problems were built on these categories. An IRO annotated list of major railway accidents that occurred between 1942 and 1947 gives us a glimpse of the methods employed. The list was compiled by Malakuti based on accident investigation reports prepared either by the IRO's Accidents Division or Allied engineers.

Five of the accidents were classified as accidents caused by technological inadequacies of the Trans-Iranian Railway. However, categorizing these accidents as "technological" had the effect of obscuring the inseparable political context in which the railway was built under Reza Shah. During the construction period, Reza Shah had prioritized spending resources on materials for structures such as iron bridges and station buildings, while turning down requests for approval of repair factory construction and the purchase of rolling stock.[59] He also insisted on replacing non-Iranian skilled workers with Iranian workers despite the shortage of qualified Iranian mechanics, slowing down the maintenance of locomotives, which deteriorated their load capacity by almost half.[60] The priority that Reza Shah placed on displays of national pride diverted investment from certain safeguards and other crucial technological aspects. While the legal requirement for equipping rolling stock with air brakes—and commensurate legal procedures for enforcing these requirements—occurred at the turn of the twentieth century in Britain and the United States, only 12.5 percent of Iranian rolling stock had air brakes as late as 1943, often causing the coupling to snap apart.[61] Only toward the end of the Allied occupation had the percentage of rolling stock equipped with air brakes reached 70 percent.[62] Thus, the Allied occupation created a new political context in which the state of Iran's rail infrastructure gained a global significance, justifying rapid technological investment.

One of the nineteen accidents listed on the 1942–47 report was attributed to an act of sabotage.[63] In fact, intentional criminal acts such as theft, pilferage, and sabotage caused numerous accidents in the 1940s. In the context of economic hardship during the Allied occupation, local inhabitants as well as Allied soldiers frequently stole equipment and other materials to garner extra income on the black market.[64] Theft and pilferage sometimes resulted in serious consequences, since the mere snatching of copper wire from telephone poles could paralyze the communication system of the

single-track railway.[65] Along with local inhabitants, disgruntled railway workers placed rocks on the rails, tampered with air brakes, and removed signal wires, telegraph lines, tie plates, and screw spikes. Especially in the case of railway workers, such acts were possible because of their intimate knowledge of rail infrastructure. For example, one accident report mentioned a rail car coupling that was fixed to the track with a coupling screw and a piece of wire. When a moving train hit the fixed coupling, rail service was temporarily halted but there was "no serious damage."[66] Another report mentioned "a rock about 20 inches in diameter placed between the rails," which caused minor damage to the engine of a cowcatcher.[67] Workers used their knowledge of the railway system as a weapon; they planted the right level of disruption on the right spot at the right time to maximize disruption with minimal destruction. These acts did not necessarily intend to wreak havoc in terms of material destruction and human lives; instead, they were apparently intended to interfere with the punctuality of arrivals and departures. Perpetrators were known to loiter near the crime scene in clear view of the railway crew but just far enough away to elude capture.[68] In short, precisely because railway operations required the perfect coordination of a complex, geographically expansive technological system, the railway was "vulnerable to failure, disruption, and cascading disasters when small things go wrong," to repeat Mimi Sheller's quote from the beginning of this chapter.[69] Railway workers were potentially capable of taking advantage of such vulnerabilities.[70]

In response to such minor yet sufficiently troublesome disruptions, the Allies, particularly Soviet and Indian soldiers, increased surveillance both on the trains and along the route, especially near bridges and tunnels, which often became the targets of sabotage.[71] Likewise, the PGC blacklisted civilians who had been dismissed for theft, pilferage, and accidents.[72] Aside from these measures to restrict access to rail infrastructure and therefore to prevent sabotage, the Allies tried to pressure local communities to bolster surveillance of their own members by imposing collective punishment. In parts of Lorestan and Khuzestan, they fined the entire village near the site of sabotage and jailed its headman, arguing that pilferage and sabotage were classified as "acts hostile to the Allied Forces or Allied Forces' property."[73]

Interestingly, while the annotated list attributed eleven out of nineteen accidents to the perceived ignorance, negligence, and carelessness of

Iranian and non-Iranian operators of the railway, none of the nineteen major accidents were attributed to passengers. Certainly, workers' speeding, overloading, lax maintenance, and intoxication contributed to many accidents. However, as other reports mentioned, there were also "rushed passengers who did not wait to ascend or descend until the train stopped completely" and "careless pedestrians who walked on the rail or on the railway cars without paying attention to the sudden movement of trains and locomotives."[74] Indeed, in an effort to acknowledge passenger liability, the IRO included the following in its 1948 official history: a photograph of a decapitated body on a bloody railway track accompanied by a caption that explained how the "careless pedestrian" walking on the track brought the tragic fate upon himself.[75] Nevertheless, these accidents were not included on the list of major accidents because they typically involved passenger fatalities but incurred little damage to the railway system itself. By contrast, the list included three accidents pinned on railway workers that, although causing no human deaths, had cost the IRO half a million riyals or more.[76] Thus, the criteria for compiling statistics on accidents, and defining what counted as a "major" accident, were not only the number of deaths and injuries. Also considered were monetary costs, as both the Allies and the IRO needed to estimate the cost of accidents for budgetary purposes and determine how best to allocate limited resources during and immediately after the war.

The fact that eleven out of nineteen major railway accidents were attributed to workers' behavior may be misleading in terms of gauging the overall competence of the railway workforce. Decisions that technocrats made in identifying guilty culprits in their accident reports were shaped by a multitude of considerations. What solutions were possible given budgetary constraints? What solutions did not interfere with their institutional priorities? What solutions aligned with technocrats' vision of their role in society? The next section explores these considerations through the case of the Miyandasht-Khosravi accident, one of the eleven accidents categorized as caused by worker negligence.

REFORMING BODILY MOVEMENT

At 6:30 p.m., January 16, 1943, a freight train and a mixed passenger/freight train, both with joint American-Iranian crews, collided between Miyandasht Station and Khosravi Station and killed sixteen people,

including the American locomotive engineer. The collision was the first major railway accident since the American Military Railway Service (MRS) had taken over operations of the railway's southern line from the British Transportation Department at the beginning of 1943.[77] Following the accident, the Allies' investigation committee produced a fifty-six-page report. It consisted of a brief description of the accident, a series of transcribed interviews with seventeen Iranian railway workers and seven American members of the MRS, followed by a diagnosis of the accident and a set of recommendations. While the report briefly mentioned the absence of searchlights on locomotives and the use of brakeless railway cars as contributing factors, accident investigators largely glossed over these technological issues. Instead, they asked interviewees for precise information regarding what each of them had done on the day of the accident. A plethora of contradictory statements ensued as interviewees tried to avoid responsibility. Nevertheless, the report constructed a coherent narrative: the accident had happened because workers' daily practices of railway operation deviated greatly from how they *should* operate the railway system.

American investigators asked many questions, with some workers receiving more than fifty questions. They were also highly specific. For example, some of the questions directed at the probationary assistant station master of Miyandasht included the following: "When train No. 152 was passing through the station, where were the two pointsmen?" "Did you notice whether they had lamps with them or not?" "What kind of lamps are used by the pointsmen at the station?" "You stated that the relieving station master picked up a lamp which was outside the office near the steps. How did this lamp come to be there?" The relieving station master of Karun received similarly specific questions: "When you picked the lamp up what color light was it showing?" "When you picked up the lamp which was near the station office, in which direction was it showing white, and in which direction green?" "From where the lamp was standing, could the green light have been seen by the driver of an approaching train?"[78] By directing these specific questions at workers, investigators attempted to reconstruct the actions of each worker and evaluate meticulously the efficiency of every motion he made and its compatibility with the rules and regulations of railway operations.

The investigation committee's ultimate recommendation was to quite literally routinize workers' physical movements in order to ensure precise

operations of machinery. The committee concluded that workers had neglected various safety measures, including the line-clear ticket method, commonly used in single-track railway systems to avoid collision. The correct ticket issuance procedure was deliberately cumbersome, requiring multiple levels of authorization from different individuals and communication among workers. Many workers did not go through this proper procedure. Some issued tickets without authorization; others reused invalid tickets; still others did not fill out necessary information on the ticket; a few of them did not even know the correct procedure. Deviating from the complicated procedure of authorization, workers had developed their own practices locally and spontaneously, speeding up day-to-day operations of the railway system. From the technocratic investigators' perspective, however, in order to make speed impervious to worker error, it was essential to strengthen centralized management and standardize work procedures through education and training.

To achieve these goals, a Persian-English bilingual booklet regarding railway regulations was circulated among multinational workers in 1944. The booklet laid out exactly what workers must do in different circumstances at work. In addition to prohibiting actions such as climbing over or crawling under railway cars and smoking near inflammables, it instructed workers on precise bodily movements they had to make in operating the railway system. This included showing the exact order of arm movements in sequenced drawings to send hand, flag, and lamp signals and describing the length of a whistle sound to convey different meanings to distant workers (fig. 10).[79] The series of actions required to issue a line-clear ticket was also reiterated. In effect, the booklet prescribed a standardized sequence of movements in an abstract manner in order to eliminate various motions that workers made habitually in specific contexts of everyday life. By doing so, technocrats hoped to make the physical movements of individual workers uniform and predictable, molding them into reliable yet replaceable mechanistic components within the larger infrastructural system.[80]

Despite its seemingly abstract nature, the rationale of the booklet was indeed context-specific, rooted in the circumstances created by the Allied occupation. As a multinational workforce with different institutional experiences, miscommunication due to language barriers was a critical consideration. Most Iranian workers did not speak English. Being new to

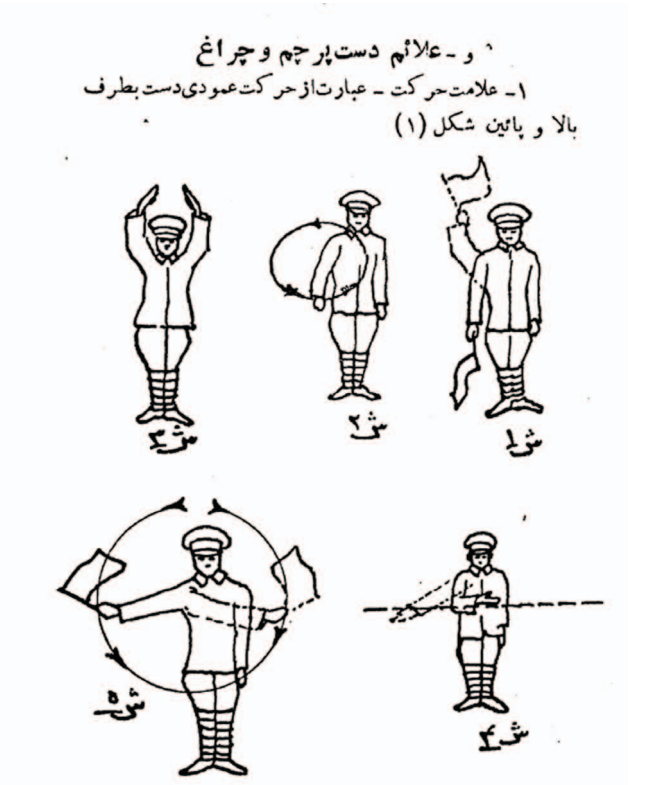

FIGURE 10 Instructions for flag signals. Source: Bongah-e Rah Ahan-e Dowlati-ye Iran/Military Railway Service, *Moqarrarat-e ʿOmumi/Rules and Regulations*, 9.

the Trans-Iranian Railway, Allied railway men had little understanding of local regulations and did not even know the abbreviations of station names as their trains passed through these stations along the route. Allies from the United States, the British Empire, and the Soviet Union were not the only newcomers. Many Iranian employees of the IRO were hired during the occupation to meet the skyrocketing demand for rail traffic. Due to the shortage of qualified workers, the IRO was forced to place new employees in important positions, offering them on-the-job training. Among the seventeen Iranian workers interviewed after the Miyandasht-Khosravi accident, only five had work experience of more than ten years. Six had worked less than a year. The relieving stationmaster at Miyandasht had ten months of

work experience, while the probationary assistant stationmaster was a fresh graduate of the railway school in Tehran with only six months of IRO experience. Both the multinational workforce and its lack of experience were conditions created by the occupation. By publishing work procedures, technocrats attempted to address these issues and leave little room for worker inexperience to disrupt the movement of the trains.

Budgetary considerations during the occupation also shaped the type and extent of solutions that accident investigators suggested. Particularly because Allied forces intended to operate the Iranian railway only for the duration of the war, long-term technological investment was an attractive yet costly option. Both the Allies and the IRO often opted for less costly options such as restricting operations to daylight hours, for example, to address the absence of searchlights on trains. In this sense, overemphasis on workers' behavior itself was a byproduct of the occupation.

Most importantly, even work procedures that technocrats viewed as deviations were conditioned by the occupation. The American investigation committee's report on the Miyandasht-Khosravi accident shed light on how workers were pressured to keep the railway running without delay in order to meet wartime demands. An Iranian conductor of one of the trains explained that he had drawn back from insisting a ticket be reissued as the procedure required for fear of increasing delays and being penalized for those delays.[81] Whether by fines or imprisonment, railway workers were often penalized for delays, mechanical breakdowns, and accidents, depending on the seriousness of the offence.[82] The harsh penalty system contributed to an attitude of prioritizing speed over safety, illustrating that workers' bodily movement never existed in abstraction. Rather, it was always embodied in specific conditions, inevitably deviating from technocratic visions that disregarded contexts.[83]

ACCIDENT-PRONE WORKERS

The emphasis on reforming workers' bodily motion fell short in creating a safe Trans-Iranian Railway. The concept of "accident proneness" was a crucial component of early twentieth-century safety movements in Europe and the United States. This concept essentially posited that some individuals had a greater tendency to cause accidents than the average person. By the 1930s, identifying these vulnerable individuals and isolating them

from potentially dangerous situations became a major objective to ensure industrial and, later, traffic safety.[84] In the case of Iran, psychotechnical tests and cognitive evaluations did not gain the same level of popularity as they had in Europe by the mid-twentieth century. This was primarily due to the serious labor shortage during the occupation and the limited degree of professionalization in the field of psychology. Nevertheless, experts advocated for a rigorous application of accident-proneness theory in the Iranian transport industry, particularly in the nascent railway industry.

A. Mirsepasi, the French-educated director of Tehran's asylum, was the prime advocate of this theory in early Pahlavi Iran.[85] "The Mental Tests of Drivers" (*Azmayesh-e Ruhi-ye Ranandegan*), a series of his *Nameh-ye Rah* articles, started with the general assessment that "industrial and scientific progress is like a double-edged sword." In the case of the railway, according to Mirsepasi, it had enabled one to travel from Tehran to Ahvaz in only twenty-four hours instead of one month, practically making one's life twenty-nine days longer. At the same time, however, Mirsepasi argued that this same rapid mode of transport had taken a toll on the mental and physical health of locomotive engineers and other railway employees. According to the statistics he cited, 80 percent of automobile accidents occurred due to various mental causes, while only 20 percent were due to technical issues. Applying this data to railway accidents, Mirsepasi urged state authorities to implement neural and mental tests with regard to hiring locomotive engineers in order to prevent employing neurologically and mentally ill-suited individuals and to evaluate the mental conditions of employees under stressful circumstances.[86]

Following this call for action, Mirsepasi's articles employed various theories and anecdotes to explain how mental characteristics and conditions impacted individuals' ability to control speed as well as how some individuals were inherently unsuitable to work for the railway industry. In some cases, a medical condition such as epilepsy, syphilis, or schizophrenia could exclude applicants from employment. In other cases, applicants' suitability could be properly evaluated by testing whether they had undesirable mental characteristics, including oversensitivity, periodic psychosis, instability, selfishness, pessimism, jealousy, untruthfulness, or vengefulness. In the United States, Mirsepasi wrote, such experts identified these characteristics by using psychotechnics in an effort to study how different applicants reacted to

external environments. Mirsepasi was particularly interested in identifying individuals who showed extreme reactions during the tests. Because such reactions were a sign of their lack of mental balance, they would be likely to show extreme reactions while operating locomotives, and so endanger lives and properties. According to Mirsepasi's suppositions, human emotions swing between two seeming opposites such as comfort/anxiety and confidence/diffidence. In order to handle their fear of speed, operators of rapid modes of transport often conflated their personal capabilities with the qualities of machinery, thereby developing an inflated sense of mastery, which could manifest as recklessness just at the wrong moment. Moreover, they could develop a sense of detachment from their surroundings as a natural mechanism to sooth anxiety, leading to an excessive focus on self and a negligence regarding their surroundings.[87] Because individuals with extreme reactions on the mental tests would be more likely to fall into such mental states, they were more likely to trigger catastrophic accidents.

One's proclivity for such reactions was not the sole factor in measuring the risk for accidents. The fatigue and stress of interpersonal relationships could also reduce workers' ability to make judicious, split-second decisions. Alcohol, opium, and hashish could impact their mental states significantly, and thus even healthy operators who passed the mental tests needed monitoring.[88] In short, Mirsepasi believed that programs to raise awareness and train inexperienced workers were not enough to contain the dangers of speed. A psychiatric approach would eliminate high-risk individuals from the IRO. Though it remains unclear how much the IRO incorporated his proposals in its hiring practices, the Sanitation Division did offer treatment to opium-addicted employees anonymously.[89] Mirsepasi's proposals illustrate how experts of new disciplines attempted to introduce mechanisms for minimizing speed-related tragedies. In so doing, they disseminated their particular interpretations of what made speed dangerous, necessitating further monitoring of railway workers.

* * *

While early Pahlavi Iran celebrated the phenomenon of speed, the opening of the Trans-Iranian Railway did not accelerate movement automatically. Intertwined sociopolitical, technological, and environmental factors frequently disrupted the movement of people and goods, threatening

the dreams of creating an integrated national economy and homogeneous citizenry. In particular, railway accidents posed a menace to high-speed movement as they epitomized the destructive force of velocity and haunted the popular imagination. To ensure steady, speedy, and safe movement, technocratic experts of the IRO, along with Allied engineers, gradually formalized the mechanism to tame speed through various accident prevention programs. In doing so, rather than seeing speed as inherently dangerous, they pointed to the behavior of railway workers as the primary cause of most accidents, then went on to attempt to standardize the physical movement of workers so that they would function with precision as parts of the larger infrastructural system. This institutional framework imparted authority to technocratic experts as the sole mediators between technology and human behavior.

Debates about accident prevention illustrate how reforming microscale mobilities such as workers' physical movements was part and parcel of the broader vision of producing macroscale mobilities such as travel and migration. These debates posited that steady and safe production of speed would be jeopardized without technocrats' intervention to transform the unpredictable movement of railway workers. To produce mobility for an integrated national economy and a unified citizenry, those who operated infrastructure needed to internalize a form of mobility that was conducive to productivity. This assertion of authority over workers' bodies shaped not only technocrats' self-perceptions as the producers of safe speed but also workers as objects of technocratic reform.

Nevertheless, workers were not ignorant objects of experts' social engineering. In committing sabotage, workers used their knowledge of how the technological system worked. In fact, it was precisely because they knew how it worked that they could disrupt railway operations. Also, in not insisting a ticket be reissued, the Iranian conductor was perfectly aware of the required procedures. He chose not to follow them for fear of being penalized for the delay, which ironically contributed to the Miyandasht-Khosravi accident and led to his dismissal. As limited as they are, these examples indicate to us that workers possessed more knowledge than technocrats gave them credit for. They simply used their expertise for very different purposes, whether to express frustrations or to avoid penalty. In fact, just as Iranian technocrats began to assert their leadership vis-à-vis the Allies by articulating

their vision for postwar railway operation, rank-and-file Iranian railway workers began to articulate their demands, citing the sacrifices they had made during the occupation. The next chapter turns to this story of Iranian railway workers during the 1940s by examining how a differentiated national workforce came into being.

6 Workers of the Victory Bridge

THIS CHAPTER EXAMINES the processes of homogenization and differentiation among railway workers, asking how they actively produced and maintained difference through exercising mobility.[1] To explore this question, I analyze the legacy of the "Victory Bridge" (*pol-e piruzi*), a phrase that was popularized both by the IRO and its employees in the postwar period. The phrase was meant to celebrate the Trans-Iranian Railway's vital role in transporting war material during the Allied occupation, but its exact meaning was heavily contested. Who sacrificed more for the war? What should count as a sacrifice? To whom did the legacy belong? Different answers to these questions within the IRO elucidate how local, national, and transnational scales of movement and competing narratives of such movement shaped the formation of Iran's railway workforce, differentiated according to rank, geography, ethnicity, and nationality.[2]

The transformation of railway workers was illustrated by the way in which they wrote petitions.[3] On February 27, 1946, *Mardan-e Ruz* printed a petition collectively submitted by one hundred railway workers to draw attention to the financial hardships they faced after the end of the occupation. Addressed to Mohammad Reza Shah, it requested that a recently revoked perquisite be reinstated; the perquisite would have paid railway workers a bonus timed to help them cover expenses associated with Nowruz,

the Iranian New Year. To emphasize their worthiness, the petitioners emphatically argued that they had made tremendous "sacrifices" (*fedakari*) for the path to freedom and that it was thanks to their sacrifices that the Trans-Iranian Railway had gained the name of "Victory Bridge."[4]

This petition was markedly different from a 1936 petition submitted by Shams Ali Shamshiri, one of the many amputees who lost limbs on railway construction sites. In 1932, he lost his left arm when dynamite exploded while he was working as a tunnel construction worker in Mazandaran. After the accident, Shamshiri was unable to find work, forcing him to write in desperation to the Majles, addressing its representatives as "the kind fathers" (*pedarha-ye mehraban*). Shamshiri's petition inquired, "Is it fair that in such an era of a just king, the powerful His Highness Great King of Kings Reza Shah Pahlavi, all foreigners benefit from the greatest justice available and enjoy the respect while a dedicated man of the Iranian race (*Irani nezhad*) who lost his arm for his homeland (*vatan*) has been thrown in despair?"[5]

The most significant difference between these two petitions was the manner in which petitioners argued for better treatment. Like other petitions of the Reza Shah period, Shamshiri spoke directly to the sentiment of national belonging; he criticized the differing quality of treatment between foreign and Iranian workers. However, he did not try to justify his position by referencing his inherent rights as an Iranian citizen. Rather, following the established tradition of petitioning, he pleaded for justice from the omnipotent shah and from those benevolent implementers of his justice, the Majles. His petition pleaded for their intervention to fix the malfunctioning system perpetuated by intermediaries such as the local government, subcontractors, and the railway consortium.[6] In other words, Shamshiri's petition saw justice as what the shah should be able to bestow upon his subjects. By contrast, the 1946 petition was devoid of any notion of kingly justice. Instead, its language spoke to the rights of men, rights that had been earned and were justly deserved, especially in light of the numerous, consequential sacrifices Iranian railway workers had made during the war. In other words, they demanded their fair share of reward in return for all they had contributed to the national cause.

The two petitions were not isolated cases. The 1931 cabinet, which approved Iran's first social security fund, stipulated that the fund would cover industrial injuries and disabilities in return for the deduction of 2 percent

of workers' wages. Nevertheless, it remained largely unimplemented, forcing workers like Shamshiri to submit petitions to the Majles, often after numerous failed attempts to access compensation from various branches of the local government, subcontractors, and the railway consortium.[7] Like Shamshiri's petition, many petitions submitted by railway workers during the Reza Shah period read like supplications for justice. Another petitioner, posturing as a victimized subject, wrote about his "wretched" (*falak zadeh*) existence and his having no recourse other than to seek help from the Majles, the only "refuge for the oppressed" (*panahgah-e mazlumin*).[8] Postwar railway workers did not focus on victimization. Instead, they submitted petitions openly celebrating the crucial roles they had played during the Allied occupation. For example, a second group petition states, "Many of us served in the scorching heat, in places with horrible weather, behind the boilers of locomotives, in workshops, and so forth, and toiled to cooperate with the Allies and to achieve their ultimate victory."[9] Thus, the self-presentation of railway workers transformed from that of victimized subjects awaiting kingly justice to that of sacrificial citizens demanding justice as their right.

This phenomenon of Iranian workers demanding their rights was not new; historiography illustrates a proliferation of labor unions in post–World War I Iran.[10] In fact, the province of Mazandaran, where Shamshiri incurred injury, had been the stronghold of the Union of Northern Railway Workers since its establishment in 1928; that is, until the brutal suppression of labor unions between 1937 and 1941.[11] The appearance of the language of rights in railway workers' petitions reflected a transformation in the acceptable social convention of petitioning. Whether Shamshiri was an active labor union member or not, in order for his petition to make sense, he needed to conform to petitioning language expectations shared by both the petitioner and the petitioned. Language couched in phrases referencing kingly justice fulfilled that function. But petitions of the post-occupation period no longer relied on servile address to state their cases; rather these petitions articulated railway workers' demands based on their rights as Iranian citizens.

Mohammad Reza Shah's weak hold on power coupled with the post-1941 revival of labor activism partially explains this shift in petitioning language but does not tell the whole story. A broader process of social transformation

among Iranian railway workers was taking place, most notably an increasing intrusion of the IRO into the social life of workers, following a similar development in the oil industry that had accelerated in the 1920s.[12] By providing housing, infrastructure, and leisure amenities, the IRO attempted to create a docile and productive workforce, while labor activists competed for loyalty by providing parallel spaces of socialization for workers.[13] It is important to pay attention to these parallel developments in Iran's two largest industries at the time, particularly given the fluidity of labor mobility between the two industries. In fact, considering that at least some workers had experienced labor politics in the oil industry before joining the railway industry, it is telling that railway workers began to make new demands in petitions around the time when a massive strike erupted in the oil refinery town of Abadan in 1946.

At the same time, specific conditions in the railway industry also shaped social transformation among workers. Undoubtedly, the geographically scattered nature of railway communities across the route limited the scale of the IRO's social engineering; there was no equivalent of the oil refinery town of Abadan in the railway industry.[14] It also ensured that the provincial backgrounds of Iranian railway workers were even more heterogeneous than those of workers in the oil industry.[15] Furthermore, in the same way that industrial work experience during World War II significantly raised expectations for the future among American women and racial minorities, participating in the Allied war efforts shaped Iranian railway workers' expectations for postwar Iran.[16] When the war was over, however, the IRO faced a rapid decrease in traffic and an intensification of competition with motor transport. This forced it to downsize its workforce and eliminate perquisites for employees while trying to maintain workers' loyalty and therefore counter the revival of labor activism. The IRO's expansion of socialization programs should be analyzed in this context. The articulation of workers' rights as political subjects emerged along with such efforts made by the IRO. Railway workers glorified the sacrifices they had made for the Iranian nation, including operating trains along the route and relocating across the nation. Precisely because the railway workforce was scattered along the route, the movement of workers across the nation was ingrained in its origin story and functioned as the basis of their claim to be national heroes who deserved better treatment by the IRO.[17]

EXPANDING THE TRANSPORT WORKFORCE

Historiographically, the occupation period is characterized by economic disruptions as well as political instability. The prioritization of military transport hampered the distribution of food and basic consumption items to the civilian population, causing food shortages.[18] Rapid inflation hit railway workers hard; salary increases could not keep up with it. Although "labor agitation was strictly prohibited" in sectors related to oil and its supply to the Soviet Union,[19] transport workers, especially railway workers, expressed discontent in a variety of ways, including strikes and the pilferage of copper wire from railway telephone lines, metals from repair shops, and lend-lease materials from freight cars.[20] Regardless of the measures taken to ameliorate their living conditions, workers found it extremely difficult to make ends meet.[21] However, the occupation period was not defined by economic disruptions alone. It was also a period of rising expectations among railway workers. The reactivation of the local, national, and transnational flow of labor, the subsequent formation of multinational workers with varying contractual statuses, and workers' relatively strong bargaining power shaped a vision for a postwar future in which Iranian railway workers' sacrifices would be rewarded.

Having faced Iran's inadequate transport infrastructure at the beginning of the occupation, the Allies initiated massive construction projects to expand transport capacities of railways, highways, and harbors. The Soviet Union assumed responsibility for railway lines north of Tehran and highways north of Qazvin; the British initially controlled lines south of Tehran and Qazvin. Railway construction projects included the construction of new tracks in the yards of major stations like Ahvaz, Andimeshk, and Tehran. By the end of 1942, the British had also constructed two new military railway lines, one from Ahvaz to Khorramshahr, and the other connecting the Ahvaz-Khorramshahr line with al-Tannumah, across Shatt al-Arab from Basra. Moreover, workshops, storehouses, and wire installations for telephone and telegraph were constructed along the railway route. Expansion of the two main Persian Gulf harbors of Khorramshahr and Bandar-e Shahpur was also remarkable. While Khorramshahr functioned mainly as an anchorage rather than a deep-water harbor in the early days of the occupation, it underwent a process of transformation, as exemplified by the

enlargement of Sentab Jetty from 400 feet long by 50 feet wide to 3,000 feet long by over 100 feet wide.[22] Bandar-e Shahpur was expanded similarly with a new deep-water jetty. Highways, such as the one that linked Andimeshk with Qazvin, were broadened and paved to handle heavy motor traffic. Parts for the trucks that traversed these roads were unloaded in the two main ports and then assembled in the former General Motors factories in Khorramshahr and Andimeshk. On average 1,634 trucks were assembled per week at the peak of the war; concurrently, driving schools were established in Qazvin, Hamadan, and Andimeshk to tackle the shortage of drivers.[23] As wartime infrastructure projects continued to facilitate mobility, transport capacity from the Persian Gulf to the Soviet Union increased exponentially.

The construction and operation of mobility infrastructure required substantial manpower. The local, national, and transnational circulation of labor transformed the Persian Corridor into a veritable melting pot of workers from diverse provincial and national backgrounds. Aside from the British, Indian, and Soviet soldiers, 30,000 Americans were stationed in Iran and Iraq during the war. Among them, approximately 150 officers and 3,800 enlistees belonged to the American MRS, which controlled the Trans-Iranian Railway south of Tehran.[24] The enlistees typically had garnered experience with American companies such as the Union Pacific Railroad and the Pennsylvania Railroad. The Allied forces also needed a wide range of civilian employees. Nearly 1,000 Polish refugees found employment in the Allied forces as laundresses, cooks, cleaners, and typists before the majority of them departed Iran in 1943–44.[25] Alumnae of missionary schools in Iran found employment as typists.[26]

Still, the Allied forces had to find a much larger pool of construction laborers, railway workers, and truck drivers along the Persian Corridor. Recruitment of civilian construction labor largely fell to the Construction Service of the PGC, but local officials and tribal chiefs also brought in significant numbers of laborers. Many of these laborers were nomadic tribesmen who worked on construction sites for a short period of time before returning to the nomadic life, reflecting recruitment continuity from the preinvasion period discussed in chapter 4.[27] Other employees were sedentary but often abandoned construction sites, prioritizing harvesting of crops and thus causing frequent fluctuation in labor availability. Between May and October 1943, the number of Iranians employed by the Persian Gulf

Service Command (known as the PGC after December 1943) increased from 18,000 to 44,000, excluding foreign workers and employees of the IRO.[28] The IRO itself numbered 8,000 employees before the occupation. This number increased to 17,000 by the beginning of 1943 and more than doubled to 36,000 employees by 1945. Of this total, more than 3,000 were graduates of the three-year technical school opened by the IRO in 1940. Regardless of their province of origin, they were often assigned to southern Iran, where the labor shortage was particularly acute.[29] Overall, approximately 80,000 Iranian civilians were employed in the transport sector during the occupation, with workers from various provincial origins operating mobility infrastructure side by side with the multinational Allied forces.

The high demand for wartime civilian labor created competition among major employers along the Persian Corridor, particularly in transport centers like Khuzestan. For example, although the occupation forces had forged an agreement with the AIOC not to poach workers, in March 1943, an Arab recruiter employed by the American Labor Officer at Khorramshahr was spotted by the AIOC plant in Abadan, shouting to Arab oil laborers across the fence about the opportunity to work for the US Army.[30] Likewise, the Russian Motor Pool at Khorramshahr poached a large number of truck drivers from the American Motor Transport Service by offering higher wages as well as privileges like operating an unlicensed passenger service and reselling dates purchased near Khorramshahr in northern Iran.[31]

Competition to acquire labor also occurred transnationally. Various branches of the Allied occupation forces in Iran, the British military base in Basra, and oil companies competed to recruit labor across the Persian Gulf region. The Arabian-American Oil Company was accused of attempting to recruit laborers in Basra, including those who had already been hired by the British authorities.[32] The Persian Gulf Service Command recruited Iraqi labors to work in Khorramshahr and transported them daily by truck across the Iran-Iraq border. This practice continued until the Iraqi governor voiced strong complaints, citing a labor shortage in Iraq due to the British military presence, the fear that Iraqi laborers might contract typhus in Khuzestan, and the suspicion that Iraqis used employment by the American Army to evade conscription.[33] In response, although the idea of recruiting labor from the vicinity of Basra was not abandoned, the bulk of labor recruitment shifted to Bushehr, particularly at the peak of the labor

shortage during harvest seasons. Bushehris were valued because, since their climate was comparable to that of Khorramshahr, they were widely believed to tolerate the outdoor conditions better than others. And their employment brought none of the legal and diplomatic difficulties associated with cross-border movement.[34] Nevertheless, Iraqi civilian employees seem to have remained ubiquitous on the Persian Corridor, including in Khuzestan, Lorestan, Hamadan, and Tehran.[35]

Retention of labor became as difficult as recruiting it during the wartime labor shortage. Workers increasingly expressed grievances via measures like boycotting work, mass desertion, and strikes. In his autobiography, Morteza Ahmadi, a singer/actor who worked at the Tehran locomotive repair factory during the occupation, gives a glimpse of how these actions were organized. He recalls giving a performance of a song called "I Am a Worker" (*kargaram man*) in front of railway workers at a theater. The combination of his appearance—his work clothes with stains of oil on his face and hands—and the lyrics of the song written by an actual railway worker depicting the plight of Iranian railway workers in strong terms such as "oppression" (*zolm va ta'addi*) immediately galvanized distressed workers. They organized a strike, demanding a higher wage, the provision of two work uniforms per year, and payment for overtime. All demands were accepted.[36] This was not the only case of the Allies being forced to change their labor policy to appease workers; in response to labor strikes, the PGC also reformed the rationing system and prevented distributors from diluting rations with foreign material.[37] If only temporarily, the wartime labor shortage gave some degree of leverage to workers of the transport sector.

Yet another complicating factor was the existence of multiple contractual statuses among workers. Labor status depended on the specific employer and on the employment start date, since salary was calculated based on regulations current at the time of hiring. Widely differing contractual statuses among workers created resentment. If all workers were cooperating with the Allies to defeat injustice, oppression, and dictatorship, how could the PGC allow pervasive inequality and unfairness among them? These resentments sometimes erupted in protest. In April 1943, one-third of the skilled roundhouse workers in Arak quit their jobs. It turned out that workers who had been employed since the preoccupation period were paid based on a rate set in 1941, while new workers were paid according to a new rate that

reflected the rapid inflation during the occupation. Since the former group of workers was making 500 riyals (sixteen dollars) per month while the latter was making 1,800 riyals (fifty-seven dollars) for the same job, many of the former group staged a boycott. Similarly, when the MRS was unable to find enough labor to reconstruct the Ahvaz-Khorramshahr railway after it was washed out by a flood, it expanded rations to daily wage laborers in the vicinity, which in turn required the granting of the same privilege to IRO employees south of Ahvaz. In 1944, five hundred Tehran silo workers went on strike because those who were supervised by the Americans received thirty riyals per day while those under Russian supervision were being paid forty riyals per day.[38]

Toward the end of the occupation, workers started to frame their demands in different terms. They began to highlight their sacrifices and rights when making demands to the PGC. For example, in December 1944, Gholam Reza Ali Abadi in Andimeshk complained to the US Army Command about the termination of his contract due to his prominent role in organizing protests among workers. In his letter that condemned the treatment of Iranian workers by Americans, he noted, "We Iranians were always helping the Allies and sacrificing ourselves for them. . . . The U.S. Government and people defend the rights of the workers, but in our school everything was against modern civilization." In demanding justice from the PGC, he continued, "We hear that this war and all the great expenditures are for defense of the rights of the workers and for checking oppression and extortion."[39]

Workers were not always successful, as the PGC sometimes targeted protest ringleaders and fired them as "agitators": Morteza Ahmadi was transferred out of the repair factory after the successful strike. Nevertheless, labor shortages, especially in Khuzestan, and the reality of differing contractual statuses among workers occasionally led to positive outcomes. Taking advantage of their relative bargaining power, Iranian workers were able to hold occupation forces accountable for the ideals they claimed to represent. Since Iranian workers had been assured that the sacrifices they were making served the broader purpose of defending workers' rights, they exercised those rights by making demands to their employers through strikes and other measures. Also, by logical extension, they anticipated that in a postwar order they would reap rewards for having protected workers' rights. As

we will see, the language of sacrifice became increasingly popular around 1945 as the IRO popularized the legacy of the Victory Bridge to unite its workforce.

THE MAKING OF RAILWAY MEN AND THEIR FAMILIES

The occupation accelerated the IRO's paternalistic approach toward workers. After the war, the IRO inherited housing facilities and various recreational spaces that had been built for Allied personnel. In the last few years of the Reza Shah era, although very limited in scope, the IRO began to provide housing for its employees, as well as clubs, sports fields, and educational institutions intended for training future Iranian railway workers. Students, workers, and railway men from different divisions of the IRO in different geographic locations socialized together by participating in organization-wide sporting events such as soccer and bicycling. The IRO justified the existence of these social programs and facilities by citing the larger impact railway workers would have on society as a whole. Graduates of the IRO institutions would convey to their relatives not only the importance of technological knowledge but also the important role of sports and leisure in the lives of healthy modern citizens.[40]

The IRO's measures fit a broader pattern. During World War I, the ideal of industrial health had gained momentum in Britain as a strategy for securing efficiency and maximum output in factories. In this ideal, promoting workers' health became "the fundamental basis or key ingredient in successful industrial production." The services offered went beyond creating a sanitary work environment. Various measures were taken during World War II, such as establishing canteens with nutritious food and providing entertainment like mobile cinemas and music concerts to workers.[41] In 1920s Iran, corresponding to the shift in the responsibilities of large corporations and the central state vis-à-vis workers in Europe, the APOC and the Pahlavi state embraced "reluctant paternalism" and implemented social policies, including education, public health, and entertainment, in subsequent years.[42] While the IRO suspended the collection of club fees from employees due to the discontinuation of railway clubs (*bashgah-e rah ahan*) during the occupation, the PGC established athletic and recreational facilities at railway camps.[43] By improving the living conditions of American enlistees, the PGC attempted to boost their morale and keep their productivity level high.

By the late 1940s, the American Khuzestan Development Program in the postwar period also undertook similar social programs.[44] The expansion of social programs by the IRO in the post-occupation period hinged on an ongoing national and global trend toward expanding the role of corporations and governments in workers' social lives.

The development of a permanent camp in Sar-e Bandar near the harbor of Bandar-e Shahpur exemplified the increasing role of the employer in workers' lives during the Allied occupation. In Sar-e Bandar's initial construction up to 1943, grass shacks and tents accommodated 2,000 people. By mid-1944, Iranian workers had increased to 4,000, including 1,700 workers for the railway and another 1,700 employed on the jetties. Combined with their families, the population of Sar-e Bandar grew to approximately 8,000.[45] Residents used the railway to commute to the harbor. They also relied on the railway for daily transport of food items into town, including fresh meat, vegetables, and fruits. Such items had been unavailable in railway camps before the occupation, resulting in the prevalence of scurvy among workers who relied heavily on dried and canned food.[46] Because emerging technology made refrigerated railway cars possible, essential commodities were consistently available to workers and their families.[47] The town also became equipped with latrines, bathing facilities, and a sanitation infrastructure with 150 sanitation squads. The operation of transport infrastructure relied on the creation of urban infrastructure for its operators.

Sar-e Bandar was not the only location of a worker camp along the Persian Corridor. The development of such permanent towns was a common phenomenon in transportation centers with facilities like large railway workshops and truck assembly factories. The case of the Arak Division in central Iran illustrates how the IRO expanded its educational programs and recreational facilities in the postwar period, often by converting structures that Allied forces had left behind. In the Arak Division, which extended from Qom Station to Dorud Station in Lorestan via Arak Station, few institutions and facilities for workers existed during the Reza Shah period. The division was primarily rural, with the Shiʿi pilgrimage site of Qom and the emerging industrial city of Arak being the two major stations equipped with railway facilities such as depots, power plants, and water refineries.[48] With the exception of some training courses, institutions and facilities for railway workers and their families were seriously lacking prior to the occupation.

After the war, the Arak Division developed adult Persian literacy courses for employees, training over two hundred workers in early 1948.[49] Numerous other railway institutions and facilities opened within the Arak Division and became important parts of workers' social lives. The expansion of facilities was not necessarily a top-down process, as indicated by a letter sent anonymously by a worker to *Mardan-e Ruz*. He complained that despite the resumed collection of fees from employees for the operation of railway clubs, the IRO had shown few tangible results, unlike many large organizations elsewhere in the world as well as Iranian institutions such as the Iranian National Bank and the AIOC. These institutions boasted excellent clubs that constantly held company-wide sports competitions, tea dances, and other worker-centered events. The letter argued that railway clubs would be essential for creating an environment in which railway workers could mingle with each other, even with those outside their immediate workplaces and divisions. This way, it was hoped that workers would develop a sense of belonging to the IRO regardless of their province of work. Moreover, by commingling through sports, cultural events, and other forms of leisure, workers could improve their physical and mental health and contribute to the IRO productively.[50]

Two former American military camps were converted to sanatoriums for railway employees and their families in Arak and Qom, and another in Qom was converted to a railway club. A larger club that opened in Arak enjoyed over a thousand members and such recreational facilities as a cinema, bar, buffet restaurant, and furnished salon with a radio and newspapers.[51] New facilities tended to include salons, sports fields, and party rooms. Facilities in Arak paled in comparison with large railway stations such as the ones in Tehran and Ahvaz, which provided separate clubs for various groups within the IRO such as graduates of the industrial school, engineers, accountants, technicians, and locomotive engineers. Yet the railway club in Arak still boasted sporting facilities for soccer, wrestling in both traditional Iranian and Greco-Roman styles, and swimming. Workers practiced various sports, and during the organization-wide competitions held by the IRO, they competed with workers from other divisions, or even with students of the railway industrial school.[52] By creating these spaces of socialization, the IRO tried to create a harmonious and productive workforce that could maintain and operate railway systems without the Allied presence.

The IRO's new facilities catered not only to workers but also to their families. Former American military camps connected with railway stations in Arak and Qom were converted to residential buildings and housed over a hundred families in Arak and over fifty in Qom. Churches for Allied soldiers were converted to mosques in early 1948 and opened with names of Iranian railway workers who had lost their lives in work-related railway accidents.[53] Elementary schools for workers' children were also established. These schools were often named after prominent individuals who had played an important role in the development of Iran's railways—a reminder to employees and their families of their unique history. The elementary school in Arak, converted from an American military barracks and opened as Varnus School in 1945, was named after the former general manager of the IRO.[54] Likewise, the elementary school in Qom, also converted from a former American barracks, opened in early 1948 as Sani' al-Dowleh School. In the same year, an elementary school opened in the small Lorestani town of Azna. This was the Pirniya School, named after Hasan Pirniya, a prominent statesman of the Reza Shah period. The opening of schools in small railway towns indicated a rapid expansion of educational institutions for children of railway workers.[55]

These educational, housing, and recreational facilities were different from temporary camps, the black tents that had popped up along railway routes during the construction period. Construction camps in places such as Keshvar in Lorestan and 'Abbasabad in Mazandaran had been created only as temporary environments. Workers moved to the camps unaccompanied by their families and moved out as soon as their work was done, shrinking construction towns back to their original size.[56] In contrast, permanent facilities were predicated on the assumption that railway workers would stay in one location for an extended period of time with their nuclear families. As noted earlier, the mobility of workers continued to pose logistical problems during the occupation, as they frequently disappeared to prioritize seasonal migration and the harvest season. The mobility of their family members proved equally problematic. The Allies often failed to compensate families of victims of fatal workplace accidents simply because they were unable to locate the family members—usually because they had promptly returned to their tribes to receive financial protection.[57] By settling workers and their families in permanent housing and providing them with spaces

for socialization, the IRO could theoretically not only monitor and control workers more effectively but could also address practical issues such as compensation more efficiently. Moreover, such settlements created an environment in which workers turned to their employer for food, health care, schooling, and leisure, and thus they encouraged a strong sense of dependency and belonging.

By the time World War II ended, workers had become habituated to the paternalistic policies of their employers, and therefore workers actively sought IRO involvement when attempting to improve their living and working conditions. They demanded proper housing with water and electricity as well as safe transport between their housing and workplaces. Workers also insisted that the IRO ensure distribution of food for an appropriate price all along the railway routes.[58] Likewise, workers at Andimeshk Station, who relied on food service provided by IRO-contracted vendors, petitioned when the vendors tampered with measurement scales to inflate the prices of basic food items such as bread and meat.[59] Ahvaz Station workers demanded that a bus be purchased to carry them from Ahvaz Station to their living quarters, which stood more than three kilometers from the station, since walking that distance in the scorching summer of Khuzestan would be impossible.[60] Because the maturation of the IRO as a paternalistic employer occurred so late, the specific implementation of the IRO's housing and socialization programs resulted partly from workers' demands rather than the other way around.

The late development of the railway system in Iran explains why living quarters and social facilities for railway workers arrived several decades later than in oil company towns like Abadan and Masjed-e Soleyman.[61] And, unlike oil workers, railway workers were not concentrated in Khuzestan but were scattered all across the railway route in smaller settlements. Therefore, the scale of "social engineering" for railway workers was also relatively limited. In the burgeoning Khuzestani transport hub of Andimeshk, for example, the absence of secondary schools as late as the early 1950s meant that children had to attend school in Dezful, a nearby historical center of northern Khuzestan. Every morning, a bus transported railway workers from Dezful to their workplace in Andimeshk while Andimeshki students were taken to their Dezful schools using the same bus.[62] Housing for railway employees was equally limited. Managers, officials, and skilled workers in

Andimeshk lived with their nuclear families in company housing (about sixty units). However, most rank-and-file workers, including those workers who were Lors, Bakhtiyaris, Dezfulis, Arakis, Borujerdis, Isfahanis, and Bushehris, did not have IRO-provided housing. Like many oil workers who lived outside the planned city due to housing shortages, they lived in the crowded Sakhteman neighborhood on the west side of the railway track, making the emerging railway town of Andimeshk a bifurcated city divided according to socioeconomic status.

Railway town environments may have impacted railway workers' family structure in much the same way that oil company towns shaped their workers' families. The spatial arrangement of residential buildings in oil company towns privileged the nuclear family, with the adult male being the sole economic agent in the household while the wife was deprived access to traditional economic activities such as maintaining livestock and weaving carpets.[63] Similarly, in Andimeshk, while women of Sakhteman continued to maintain livestock at least until the late 1950s, they did not possess weaving looms, unlike women of nearby Dezful.[64] In fact, out of the twenty-six railway workers interviewed in the *Mardan-e Ruz* series "Get to Know Railway Workers" (*kargaran-e rah ahan ra beshnasid*), twenty-four of the men were the sole breadwinner of a monogamous nuclear family without any supplementary sources of income, with the number of their children ranging from one to nine.[65] Though not the only factor contributing to the creation of these working-class nuclear families, the IRO's housing and socialization facilities may have consolidated the ongoing process. As we will see shortly, the ability to provide for one's wife and children constituted a fundamental pillar of the interviewees' notion of manliness.

THE LEGACY OF THE VICTORY BRIDGE

The IRO's efforts to socialize their workers into the world of a modern industry took place in a peculiar circumstance following the end of the occupation. By the beginning of 1945, traffic through the Persian Corridor had dropped considerably. By July, the PGC had left Iran and returned the Trans-Iranian Railway south of Tehran to the IRO. In April 1946, Soviet forces also returned railway lines north of Tehran to the IRO; with the war over, there was no need to transport lend-lease materials to the Soviet Union. Restrictions on the use of highways by civilian traffic were also

lifted. The rate charged for motor transport fell rapidly. These factors created a sense of imminent crisis in the railway industry. The IRO responded by downsizing, the result of which was a massive layoff of approximately 12,000 employees, or one-third of its workforce, between 1945 and 1946.[66] The IRO encouraged its employees to take up positions elsewhere, most notably in the AIOC. Since both the oil industry and the railway industry operated widely, the positions potentially open to employees of the IRO were comprehensive—including blacksmiths, mechanics, sanitation investigators, surgeons, pharmacists, nurses, and telegraph operators. A *Mardan-e Ruz* article reporting on the employee transfer agreement expressed appreciation to the Ministry of Roads for initiating a dialogue with the AIOC while hoping that the oil company would make good on its agreement to help "workers who contributed to and sacrificed themselves for the victory of the Allies."[67]

As might have been expected, the IRO faced deteriorating morale among underpaid employees who witnessed their coworkers being laid off en masse. Demoralized workers became notorious for supplementing their income through theft. *Mardan-e Ruz* articles occasionally addressed the widely shared public perception that railway workers engaged in the theft of equipment, passengers' personal belongings, and freight. For example, a poetically written article from 1946 reminded readers of the crisis that the IRO was facing in the postwar period. It pointed out that the reason no one wanted to use the railway, preferring trucks instead, was not just the increased availability of motor traffic. It was also because they knew "trains get derailed, railway cars get burned, and items get stolen."[68] The article rhetorically asked if the reader would expect merchants to let the railway handle their merchandise when the IRO did not even admit its responsibility for theft, nor did it compensate for merchandise damaged in accidents.[69]

Facing a crisis of morale, the IRO needed to inculcate employees with a sense of loyalty to the organization despite an increasing inability to deliver on its promise of socioeconomic mobility. To a certain degree, the creation of social facilities functioned to foster this sense of belonging and to enhance workers' loyalty. But the IRO also needed to articulate what the organization represented. With this objective in mind, the IRO attempted to construct a collective memory of the organization in a new way.

Such an opportunity presented itself in 1947, when the IRO celebrated the twentieth anniversary of the beginning of the Trans-Iranian Railway project. To commemorate this occasion, official ceremonies were held, a railway museum was opened, and a history of the Iranian railway industry was published. Predictably, these commemorations served as opportunities for Mohammad Reza Shah to display his authority over the Iranian railway system for the first time. The ways in which the young shah asserted his authority emphasized continuity with his father's rule and portrayed the occupation period as a temporary aberration from the Pahlavi effort to achieve national progress. By stressing a return to normalcy, the young shah attempted to derive legitimacy from his father's reign. For example, during the 1947 opening ceremony of the railway museum in Tehran, Mohammad Reza Shah stood next to a column with an inscription that read, "Thanks to the capability of His Majesty Reza Shah Pahlavi, the first pickax to build the Trans-Iranian Railway hit the ground here on Mehr 23, 1306." Thus, the continuation of Reza Shah's legacy was symbolically displayed through Mohammad Reza Shah's presence on exactly the same spot, exactly twenty years later. The scene was disseminated through photos taken during the ceremony, along with an exhibition of other photographs of the royal family and the Trans-Iranian Railway. Within one month of its opening, 25,000 adults and school children had visited the exhibition.[70]

The role of the IRO and its employees in the Allied war effort was also commemorated, constructing and propagating a new historical narrative. In 1948, as part of the twentieth anniversary celebrations, the IRO published *Rah Ahan-e Iran* (Iranian Railways), authored by Mojtaba Malakuti, director of the IRO's Accident Division. The book was the first comprehensive history of the IRO in the post-occupation period; the previous official history entitled *Rah Ahan-e Sarasar-e Iran* (The Trans-Iranian Railway) had been published by the Ministry of Roads in 1938.[71] The two narratives were different in a significant way. In the official narrative of the Reza Shah period, the only "Iranian people" mentioned were taxpayers, who made significant sacrifices by consuming the exorbitantly priced tea and sugar monopolized by the state to fund the railway project. The 1938 book printed a speech given by Reza Shah during the Trans-Iranian Railway's inauguration ceremony. Without mentioning workers specifically, the shah said, "I am truly satisfied

with the Iranian people, who were prepared for the reform of the country from the bottom of their hearts and paid the expenses for railway construction with pure hearts because they recognized that this policy would be the cause of happiness and progress for Iran."[72]

In contrast, the post-occupation narrative stressed the role played by Iranian railway workers. The 1948 book praised them at length and urged them to shout proudly to the Allies, "Your victory owes to our efforts and sacrifices" (*fath-e shoma marhun-e zahmat va jafeshaniha-ye ma ast*). It also featured photos of the "martyrs of the railway" (*shohada-ye rah ahan*)—Iranian railway employees who had lost their lives while working under Allied occupation, describing them as individuals who "made the Iranian Railway famous worldwide as the Victory Bridge." No mention was made of Allied personnel who had suffered the same fate. To honor the sacrifices of these Iranian workers, in addition to paying compensation to their families, schools and mosques along the route were named after them, such as Alimorad Sharifi School in Damghan.[73] The IRO's newspaper *Mardan-e Ruz* also stressed the role of Iranian railway workers in the operation of the Victory Bridge.[74] To celebrate the institutional legacy more explicitly, in mid-1946 the newspaper's series "Get to Know Railway Workers" (*kargaran-e rah ahan ra beshnasid*) changed its name to "Get to Know the Foundations of the Victory Bridge" (*payehha-ye pol-e piruzi ra beshnasid*). Thus, in tandem with creating spaces for socialization, the IRO's publications in the postwar period cultivated a sense of an "imagined community" of Iranian railway workers. Non-Iranian workers were effectively erased from the postwar narrative altogether.[75]

In stressing the legacy of the Victory Bridge, the IRO tried to depart from a historical narrative in which the Trans-Iranian Railway belonged only to Reza Shah and to anonymous members of the national community who had contributed to its construction regardless of their desire to do so. The new narrative centered around the occupation experience, during which Iranian railway workers, more than anyone else in Iranian society, contributed to the victory of the Allies and to the subsequent liberation of their homeland. Furthermore, through repeated references to achievements made by Iranian railway workers who shared the same goal during the occupation, it attempted to evoke a postwar sense of pride and unity among its workers.

The frequent call for unity was sometimes accompanied by criticism of divisiveness. A 1946 *Mardan-e Ruz* article deplored the fact that, despite the arrival of peace, divisions had intensified among its employees. Stressing that the railway was a national asset and that a railway crisis would inevitably culminate in a national crisis, the article urged divisive groups to "leave personal motives aside" for the sake of the vast majority of neutral IRO employees.[76] The "divisive groups" referred to in the article included the communist Tudeh Party and its sympathizers within the IRO. The IRO's promotion of the Victory Bridge legacy was also an attempt to tackle the rise of the Left in post–Reza Shah Iran.

After the abdication of Reza Shah, labor activism underwent a rapid resurgence, in many cases with the involvement of the newly established Tudeh Party. By 1943, the MRS was seeing an increasing number of strikes due to the rapid expansion of labor unions.[77] Through national integration and active recruitment, the membership of the Central United Council of the Trade Union of Iranian Workers and Toilers reached 335,000 during its heyday in 1946.[78] Labor activism in the railway industry followed a similar path. Particularly in northern Iran, locomotive engineers, many of whom had prior industrial experience in the Soviet Union, played a disproportionately important role in organizing workers.[79] By mid-1944, various workers' organizations that had emerged separately were integrated nationally as the Union of Railway Workers (*Ettehadiyeh-ye Kargaran-e Rah Ahan*).[80] The union established twenty-two circuits (*howzeh*), each of which initially consisted of twenty to twenty-five members, and, not surprisingly, membership rapidly increased. Within a few years, branches of the union were established even in smaller communities of railway workers such as Garmsar.[81]

The Union of Railway Workers engaged in a wide range of activities. It invited representatives of unions from other industries to cultivate unity among workers across industries. It also collected donations for unemployed workers, gave out free tickets to film screenings, and offered adult literacy courses. Its events and activities effectively offered alternative spaces of socialization separate from the workplace and other environments provided by the IRO. Consequently the union rapidly strengthened its position among workers in the postwar period, creating an alternative focal point of loyalty among workers facing an uncertain future in the railway industry.

The popularity of the union and the Tudeh Party forced the IRO to respond to demands made by disgruntled workers. Particularly concerning was the involvement of the Tudeh Party, as labor strikes occasionally escalated into confrontations between Tudeh militants and local police.[82] To placate workers, the cabinet of Ahmad Qavam approved Iran's first comprehensive labor law in 1946.[83] Toward the end of 1946, however, Qavam moved to suppress the Left within the IRO. He purged the top echelon of the IRO, individuals considered too conciliatory toward the Tudeh Party, including the director of the IRO itself and the director of its Northern District, the section between Bandar-e Shah and Firuzkuh. Then he appointed Khosrow Hedayat as the new director of the IRO. The appointment of the Belgian-educated railway engineer from the prominent Hedayat family—and a member of Qavam's Democrat Party—was met with hostility and ultimately culminated in violent confrontation. In November 1946, Tudeh elements within the IRO announced a general strike in the entire Northern District and demanded not only that Hedayat be dismissed but that the ousted director of the Northern District be reinstalled. Strikers were brutally suppressed by the army, and ringleaders of the strike were arrested. Thereafter, in order to curtail labor activism, the new director of the Northern District banned union-related signs in railway facilities.[84]

It was the controversy over Hedayat's appointment that had originally inspired the *Mardan-e Ruz* article condemning divisive groups in the IRO. The article concluded by arguing that in order for the IRO to unite and prosper, political divisiveness within the organization needed to stop so that Hedayat could focus on his job.[85] Therefore, challenges posed by the revival of labor activism and the rise of the Tudeh Party necessitated an IRO response meant to promote the success story of a united railway workforce. By claiming the legacy of the Victory Bridge collectively as a united organization, the IRO tried to redirect worker loyalty back to the organization and to discredit the increasing Tudeh influence. Tudeh was portrayed as a divisive entity that would weaken the national asset, which in turn would threaten the future of postwar Iran.

"MARRIAGE IS A GRAVE SIN FOR THE POOR"

As evidenced by the petitioners at the beginning of this chapter, railway workers themselves also made frequent references to the legacy of the

Victory Bridge. By claiming ownership of the legacy, workers participated in crafting the new historical narrative. Like the IRO's narrative, the workers' narrative valorized their sacrifices and contributions as playing a crucial role in bringing victory to the Allies and ending the occupation of their homeland. However, the conclusion that workers drew from the legacy diverged from the IRO's interpretation. Workers felt entitled to be rewarded for their particular sacrifices; hence, workers' references to the legacy in the petition served as justification for demanding extra pay.

Nonetheless, not all workers had equal claim to the legacy. A hierarchy existed; that is, the greater the worker's sacrifice, the more qualified that individual was to receive rewards from the dwindling IRO resources. Lowest in this hierarchy were foreign employees. After all, if the Victory Bridge legacy was about sacrifices made for the Allied victory in order to achieve national liberation, how could foreign employees fit the narrative? As discussed in chapter 4, many Indian and Iraqi locomotive engineers had already left Iran by 1941. A number of other foreign workers hired during the occupation had also departed by the end of the occupation. Those who remained during the postwar period felt increasingly unwelcome. Iranian railway workers were emboldened by the Allies' departure, which significantly altered their day-to-day operation of railway infrastructure. For train crews, there were no longer American crews keeping an eye on them. For mechanics in workshops, there were no longer American supervisors making sure Iranian workers did not pilfer materials at the entrance. The end of the occupation was very tangible for rank-and-file workers of the IRO.

Indeed, as soon as Allied forces were gone, Iranian railway workers turned attention to eliminating any foreign interference with, or possession of, the railway system. Immediately after the return of lines south of Tehran to Iranian hands in 1945, an article in *Mardan-e Ruz* celebrated the departure of the occupiers by declaring that the IRO, "a national asset," had been returned to them. It also encouraged "every patriotic and conscientious Iranian to protect this asset sincerely and love it like one's own house."[86] Others were more explicit in rejecting the presence of foreign employees. One IRO engineer denounced foreign employees of the IRO for having caused much harm because of their lack of qualifications, demands for higher salaries, incompetence in management, and cronyism.[87]

While this engineer had his European counterparts in mind, middle-income semiskilled workers from neighboring countries also became targets of criticism and exclusion. They particularly suffered from the combination of deteriorating economic conditions in the 1940s and their ineligibility for certain benefits. For example, six foreign workers, headed by the Indian locomotive driver Manuchehr Rostamji, submitted a complaint to the Majles about their benefits. According to their letter, they had worked on railway construction and operation even before the establishment of the IRO in 1935. They complained that, despite their long service and commitment, they were not eligible for subsidies to purchase bread—simply because of their foreign citizenship. Their sacrifices were not being rewarded on account of their nationality. With monthly salaries ranging from 1,200 to 2,000 riyals, it was impossible to feed their entire families.[88] Thus, with the increasing maturation and assertiveness of the indigenous workforce, semiskilled foreign workers like Rostamji felt compelled to start a new life elsewhere, even after spending almost two decades in Iran. In effect, the post-occupation period struck a final blow to the multinational workforce and severed the transnational connections that the Trans-Iranian Railway project had fostered for two decades. The railway workforce of postwar Iran was becoming national.[89]

Schisms among IRO employees were based not only on rank, contract, and nationality. Iranian employees of different provincial backgrounds also competed for ownership of the Victory Bridge legacy. The division between "natives" (*bumi*)—the local population—and "nonnatives" (*gheir-e bumi*)—Iranians from more distant provinces—started to surface in railway workplaces toward the end of the Allied occupation. This was particularly serious in such cities as Arak in central Iran and Andimeshk in southern Iran, both of which served as centers of rail transport with depots and repair factories, and both of which had experienced an influx of workers from other Iranian provinces. In 1943, given the labor shortage during the occupation, nonnative employees from other provinces working in southern Iran's brutally hot climate began receiving monetary benefits as incentive for working in such difficult conditions. Yet the benefit was canceled in late 1944 as traffic along the Persian Corridor began to subside and the Allies started to discuss the gradual discharge of civilians.[90] In 1945, in response to this cancellation, workers at the Andimeshk Station, depot, and

locomotive repair factory filed petitions to the Majles—petitions printed in newspapers such as *Ettela'at* and *Rahbar*, the organ of the Tudeh Party. The petitioners' complaints hinged on two points. First, they tried to justify keeping the benefit in place given their significant contribution to the Allied war efforts. They stressed having worked "night and day to fulfill their duty and play an important role for the goal of furthering the Allies' progress" despite the poverty and harsh climate they had endured, as well as the lengthy separation from their families. Given the higher salary of foreign employees, they rhetorically asked, "In a condition like this, how are we supposed to work next to foreigners and Americans at the factory?" Second, they accused Tehrani officials of making decisions "while sitting in perfect comfort behind a desk," being unable to imagine the harsh summer of southern Iran.[91] Whether these petitions impacted policymakers or not, the benefit was reinstalled soon thereafter.

The debate did not end there. In a separate petition printed in *Mardan-e Ruz* a month later, native workers of the south complained that the benefit constituted discrimination against native workers vis-à-vis nonnative workers. Their argument made several points. First, both native and nonnative workers had contributed equally to the war effort. Second, both native and nonnative workers needed the same amount of money to make ends meet. Third, both native and nonnative workers experienced the same scorching summer. Then why were their sacrifices measured differently?[92] The IRO responded to the complaint by citing the law that stipulated the distribution of the benefit as an aid to struggling workers and asserted that local populations of southern Iran had higher tolerance for heat and humidity.

The antagonism between native and nonnative workers illustrated that, among workers' movements across multiple geographies, movement across provinces within the national territorial space became the most celebrated scale of mobility: it symbolized the highest level of sacrificial citizenship.[93] Transnational migrant workers who had relocated to Iran were placed completely outside the postwar narrative of national liberation, losing their long-standing status in the IRO. The hardship of Iranian workers who only moved within southern Iran was trivialized in considering the distribution of limited resources. In contrast, Iranian workers who moved long distances across the nation were more valorized than others. But despite the emphasis

on southern Iran's brutally hot climate in the debate, there was another reason for glorifying movement across the nation: family.

In 1946, *Mardan-e Ruz* printed a letter from railway workers in Arak. The workers noted that they had been living "away from families for four years" to operate the railway and argued that they felt entitled to "go back to their home regions" or receive a higher salary.[94] The movement away from family to an unfamiliar city was a key component in narrativizing their experience of the occupation and encapsulating the profoundness of their sacrifices. Because they had endured separation from families during the occupation, they considered themselves to be more entitled to receive rewards—even more entitled than native workers from the south who had not moved across the nation. If the IRO's housing and socialization programs were indeed predicated on the assumption that workers were heads of nuclear households, shouldn't the organization reward workers for making the ultimate manly sacrifice of moving away from their families?

Railway workers often incorporated marriage and family into their life stories to express disillusionment with their postwar socioeconomic circumstances and to implicitly or explicitly critique the IRO leadership. When "Get to Know Railway Workers" featured Eskandar Ranjbaran, a fifty-one-year-old welder in Bandar-e Shah factories, he talked about his difficult childhood in Ardabil. Born into a modest merchant family, he received no education until he took adult literacy courses through the IRO late in life. He started working when he was eight, eventually manufacturing samovars in his native city. His life took a drastic turn when he left his family and relocated to the new port city of Bandar-e Shah in 1931 to take advantage of railway construction there. Living in a tent in malaria-ridden Mazandaran to work in the railway industry had not been easy. During the early phase of railway operation, he had been involved in a tragic accident when his train crashed into a mountain. Over the next twenty days, he and his fellow workers had tried to recover pieces of the locomotive and bodies of the victims. The nightmarish experience remained vivid in his memory. After all the sacrifices that he had made along with thousands of other Iranian railway workers, however, Ranjbaran's present life remained difficult. With a monthly salary of 2,300 riyals and various benefits, which would probably bring his total salary to around 3,500 riyals, he had to support nine family members. No other source of income was available.

He considered marriage a man's obligation, but it was a difficult financial commitment.[95]

As Ranjbaran's interview illustrates, many railway workers' self-narration in "Get to Know Railway Workers" had three distinct components. First, many workers had been born into poor families so that they ultimately left their hometowns to seek better economic opportunities. Leaving their familiar homes to work on railway construction at places like Bandar-e Shah was more than a spatial move to an unfamiliar geography. For these workers, it was also a mental move that marked the beginning of the profound sacrifices they would make throughout their careers as railway men; it also marked the beginning of the upward socioeconomic mobility it seemed to promise.

Second, many interviewees celebrated the valor of railway workers in creating the Victory Bridge legacy. As one worker stated, "My biggest attachment as a worker to this company comes from our contribution during World War II in advancing the Allies' cause and our gaining the name 'The Victory Bridge.'"[96] Particularly for old-timers like Ranjbaran, the Victory Bridge finally gave a name to all of the sacrifices they had made for the national railway since the construction period had begun. Interviewees often cited the grave physical dangers they had exposed themselves to in order to build and operate the railway. Some, like Ranjbaran, vividly recalled witnessing terrible accidents as defining moments while working on the railway. The experience of accidents, including witnessing the deaths of fellow workers, rescuing the injured, and suffering injuries in the rescue process, captured the essence of their sacrifices.[97] Thus, the intensity of physical danger inherent in Iran's largest national industry formed the basis of a peculiar masculine self-image. Again, workers participated in constructing the Victory Bridge legacy around their own very personal sacrifices.

Finally, after describing their sacrifices, they discussed marriage and family. As Ranjbaran's interview typified, railway workers emphasized their difficult economic circumstances. They stressed that they were the sole breadwinners for their families. As such, they claimed that they struggled to make ends meet, sometimes by having to take second jobs, eating mostly bread and vegetables, or even by receiving financial support from their own fathers.[98] Having embraced a middle-class nuclear family ideal, they valued its hallmark of sending children to modern schools, stressing

that they prioritized expenses for their children's education.[99] This was at the expense of spending in other areas. Lamenting the difficulty of supporting a family of four with his monthly salary of 3,000 riyals, one worker asked rhetorically, "With my income and the kind of expenses that I have, what kind of leisure could I enjoy? It's not even enough to buy newspapers, which is like food for the brain. How could I be interested in cinema, theater, music and so forth?"[100]

Nonetheless, workers were in unanimous agreement about the general desirability of marriage as man's essential duty (*vazifeh*) and service (*khedmat*).[101] Claiming that marriage was obligatory and that whoever did not get married was committing a grave sin, one worker asserted, "Marriage is the basis of population growth and the foundation of family."[102] Others qualified their general statements about marriage, as one worker noted, "From a religious perspective, being single is a major sin. For state employees like us, however, being single is better since we have such a low salary."[103] Yet another worker went even further by stating, "In Iran, marriage is a grave sin for the poor but a blessing for the rich. Either case, one should get married."[104]

Taken altogether, despite the purported goal of introducing a diverse yet united Iranian railway workforce, self-narrations in "Get to Know Railway Workers" had a subversive subtext. They revealed workers' deep ambivalence resulting from the gap between the masculine ideals their line of work embodied and the emasculating reality of not earning sufficient money to provide for their families. They were unable to secure a comfortable life for their children, and some had to rely on parental financial support. The argument was always the same: as workers who had created the Victory Bridge legacy, they felt entitled to be rewarded. But in postwar Iran, railway workers' dreams of upward socioeconomic mobility as the patriarchs of nuclear families remained largely unfulfilled. Ironically, they had embraced middle-class nuclear family values implicit in the housing and socialization programs promoted by the IRO only to become acutely aware of the impossibility of living up to those values. For that, they blamed the IRO leadership while trying to prove that they were more sacrificial than all other railway workers. Thus the contestation over who truly owned the legacy of the Victory Bridge had both unifying and fragmenting effects among railway workers. As events soon proved, the

issue fostered differentiation within the IRO's national workforce on the eve of the mass political movement that erupted during nationalization of the oil industry.

* * *

The legacy of the Victory Bridge became fundamental to the founding narrative of the Iranian railway industry. As with any foundational narrative, individuals with differing agendas and needs challenged its meaning. Various groups of railway workers claimed authentic ownership of the legacy and provided ample evidence of their right to do so. The railway workforce during the Allied occupation depended on the local, national, and transnational movement of people—including nomadic tribes, graduates of the technical school, and Iraqi workers. In the end, however, it was the national-scale movement of "nonnative" Iranian workers that became most highly celebrated as the symbol of sacrificial citizenship.

The shift of petitioners from victimized subjects pleading for kingly justice to sacrificial citizens demanding rights as political subjects and productive members of the economy reflected the expansion of mass politics in the 1940s. This understudied decade was more than a postlude to Reza Shah's authoritarian modernization and a prelude to Mohammad Mosaddeq's oil nationalization. Particularly during the occupation, the intensified movement of workers as well as foreign soldiers and refugees created new sites of interaction, shaping Iranian railway workers' expectations for the future. The interactions among heterogeneous groups who encountered each other through railway infrastructure during the occupation fostered new contestations, articulations of the self, and formation of subjectivities.

7 Traveling Citizens

IN LATE 1945, shortly after American control of the Trans-Iranian Railway's southern line ended, Mahmud Daneshvar arrived at Tehran Station to start his two-year journey across Iran with the intention of getting to know his "dear compatriots" (*hammihanan-e 'aziz*).[1] He encountered various travelers and others during the railway journey to Andimeshk, his first destination. The southbound train was filled with "many poverty-stricken, hungry people in shabby clothes going on a pilgrimage to Karbala,"[2] womanizers who slyly claimed extra seats so that they could offer them only to well-dressed women, and a freeloader who was hiding in the bathroom to avoid ticket inspection. When the freeloader was caught, he bribed the railway crew, who were known for taking bribes to supplement their meager incomes. Entering his compartment, Daneshvar found ample evidence of theft: lamps, knobs, and drawers were missing. He was dismayed over the disgraceful conditions on what was supposedly a national symbol of progress.

On the journey, the train entered tribal areas of Lorestan, where the local inhabitants were now unemployed following the completion of the rail line. Outside his window, Daneshvar witnessed many beggars on the platform, prompting him to compare them to monkeys in India that were

An earlier version of chapter 7 has been published in *International Journal of Middle East Studies* as "The Vernacular Journey: Railway Travelers in Early Pahlavi Iran, 1925–50."

fed by railway passengers. But he added, "They [monkeys] would not jump over others' heads and shoulders and fight over food [like the beggars]." At Andimeshk Station in Khuzestan, he stepped off the train and talked to a porter. The porter asked him whether he was a "northerner," which dumbfounded him since such words as "northerner" or "southerner" meant nothing to him: he considered himself only an Iranian.[3]

In the mid-twentieth century, people with different appearances, behaviors, and modes of life occupied the Iranian railway space, newly created public spaces such as stations, platforms, railway cars, and tracks.[4] Coming from a salaried Tehrani middle-class background, Daneshvar recorded his frustration with what he perceived to be improper uses of those spaces by other occupants. They were not traveling for the right reasons. They did not have a proper understanding of respectable gender relations. They did not abide by the law. They did not have a national identity. They even unlawfully invaded the railway space to beg. From Daneshvar's perspective, other occupants of the railway space did not live up to the image of the New Civilization propagated by the Pahlavi state. This was a puzzling outcome, given the many years of campaign—most especially through the burgeoning Iranian press—which had attempted to disseminate a proper understanding of how the modern Iranian man and woman should use the railway space.

This chapter explores the discourses and practices of railway journeys that ultimately created travelers like Daneshvar as well as the other occupants of the railway space he encountered. Existing scholarship on railway journeys, particularly in colonial India, elucidates how railway journeys provided "shared rituals" and engendered a sense of national belonging in contradistinction with the colonizer, while simultaneously producing difference among the colonized through categories such as class, gender, and religion.[5] The key context of many existing studies is imperial encounters, whether they took place in the imperial capital or the colony.[6] Exemplified by different forms of racial discriminations and exclusions that the colonized faced,[7] the railway space functioned as what Mary Louise Pratt called a contact zone, or a social space in which cultures interacted in asymmetrical power relations.[8] Within this broader imperial context, studies of railway journeys focus on the political contestations over travelers' practices of movement in the railway space.

In addition to examining travelers' experiences of the railway space, this chapter asks another question, a deceptively simple one that has not

received sufficient attention: Where did railway travelers go? Scholarship on railway journeys does not pay much attention to this question, assuming the national scale of movement among travelers. Being a belated railway project, however, the Trans-Iranian Railway produced movement differently. It linked various parts of Iran to regional infrastructural networks of transport; passengers traveled to all sorts of destinations, using multiple modes of transport, both near and far. Some traveled by train to sell local produce at nearby provincial stations, others to visit the Caspian Sea for vacation, still others to connect with political and religious communities that transcended the nation. Thus, travelers' destinations mattered as much as how they experienced the railway space.

In considering the multiscalar and multidirectional movement of travelers, this chapter weaves together two stories. One revolves around the hopes and fears of mobilities produced by the railway project, which typically assumed a Tehran-centered national scale of movement as the ideal. The other investigates stories of individual experiences of mobilities, which took place in various locations, in and outside of Iran. By juxtaposing these stories, it argues that the production of travelers' mobilities resulted in highly differentiated traveling publics who came to identify with local, national, and transnational communities simultaneously.

TAMING THE DANGER OF MOBILITY

In 1925–26, the newspaper *Khalq* printed a serial novel titled *The True Dream* (*ro'ya-ye sadeqeh*). Set ten years into the future, the serial was presented as a travelogue written by an Iranian man returning to his homeland after a decade of living in Europe. The story begins with the protagonist traveling by ship from Baku to the Iranian port of Bandar-e Pahlavi. On the deck, he witnesses a group of young Iranian students dressed in European clothing and behaving graciously, just like European passengers. These particular youths remind the protagonist of his experience a decade earlier when he had left for Europe on the same ship. During that journey, he had witnessed what seemed to him a ludicrous sight: Gilani and Mazandarani pilgrims with dyed beards, long hair, and sangria-colored fingertips. The pilgrims had claimed virtual ownership of the deck space, spreading their *sofreh*, a piece of cloth set on the floor during meals and on which to place food, and eating their lunch there.[9] The stark contrast between these pilgrims of the 1920s and the students of the 1930s

reassured the protagonist of Iran's progress during the first decade of Reza Shah's rule.

Throughout the novel, infrastructure plays a fundamental role in furthering Iran's progress, enabling the protagonist to witness visual evidence of that progress. After touring Gilan by car to see factories, dams, and ports, the protagonist boards an electric train from Rasht to Qazvin to continue sightseeing. He finds the railway facilities impressive, including magnificent railway stations, a clean and attractive restaurant, and food cars on the train.[10] Once the train departs Rasht Station, he enjoys the panoramic views of the Iranian countryside—terrain that had been arid and uncultivated but which is now marked by pasture and fertile farms where mechanized agriculture is practiced. He marvels at the two-story houses and new roads that connect the villages to the railway line. Instead of donkeys, mules, and camels, now he sees carts and cars traveling the new roads—transporting village products such as fruits and vegetables to railway stations, from which they are taken to processing factories and to domestic and international centers of consumption.[11] Thus, along with roads, the railway is portrayed as a crucial vehicle connecting the Iranian countryside to the national economy and to the global capitalist economy.

Even more splendid to the protagonist is the cultural transformation reflected in his compatriots' behavior. During the ten years that he has been away, his fellow Iranians have embraced European cultural institutions such as cafés, restaurants, cinemas, and theme parks, where men and women in European-style clothing mingle with each other during their leisure time.[12] Notably, the cultural transformation of Iranians manifests in the railway space. No one engages in disorderly conduct or talks too loudly.[13] The orderly behavior of passengers is matched by the appropriate behavior of child peddlers at Qazvin Station. These children, who used to be naked beggars, are now dressed in clean uniforms, selling souvenirs like textiles as well as food and drinks to train passengers.[14] Thus, in this fictional account of Iran's near future, nothing reflected Iranian local customs except for the souvenirs. The transformed Iranian culture and the railway journey that took place within that cultural milieu reproduced how European travelers were imagined to experience a railway journey in first-class railway cars. In this fantasy, undisrupted orderliness governed the railway space, epitomizing what Michel de Certeau called "a perfect

actualization of the rational utopia."[15] In short, the serial novel encapsulated the optimism repeatedly shared in the Iranian press at the beginning of Pahlavi rule. At the same time, however, Iran's bright future depicted in the novel made sense only by acknowledging that, as of 1925, Iranians behaved in public spaces like the Gilani and Mazandarani pilgrims the protagonist had witnessed. Thus, the novel's stark contrast between the un-Europeanized Iran in the present and the Europeanized Iran set in the future revealed the urgent desire among advocates of the New Civilization, many of whom belonged to the modern middle class, to reform Iranian behavior in existing public spaces.

With the creation of new public spaces, the Iranian urban landscape experienced many changes, a process that began on a limited scale in the late nineteenth century. New public spaces, including places such as cinemas and cafés that gave access primarily to paying customers, became an integral part of the urban landscape in late Qajar and early Pahlavi Iran. Concomitantly, the spatial structure of Iranian cities changed. New paved streets flanked by tree-lined sidewalks such as Pahlavi Street, which connected the city with Tehran Railway Station in the southern outskirts, extended from new squares that gradually replaced old city gates.[16]

Just when capitalist modernity was creating socioeconomically homogeneous neighborhoods stratified by class in Tehran, the production of new public spaces as well as the introduction of new modes of transport fostered interactions among "strangers" without social bonds who moved across neighborhoods. These encounters often frustrated the emerging modern middle class because of the perceived failure of the masses to embrace cosmopolitan culture properly and thereby transform their essence. While this class valued the cinema for its capacity to educate the general population, they were frustrated with the behavior of Iranian audiences at cinemas, particularly when fights occurred or when small children were in attendance.[17] Likewise, they were disturbed by how people used streets with no apparent awareness of the public nature of the space. An *Ettela'at* article complained about fruit sellers who spread out their watermelons and other fruits, coffee houses that set out their tables and benches, carpenters who piled wood, car repairers who amassed broken cars, and others who displayed whatever they sold in the public space.[18] To the chagrin of modern middle-class Iranians, they had to endure encounters in public spaces with figures like

those pilgrims who had appeared in the serial novel. The enhanced urban mobility of early Pahlavi Iran generated anxieties over unwanted encounters with a misbehaving population that developed its own everyday practices for using new public spaces.[19]

Frustrated with the ubiquity of this "misuse" of public space, the Iranian press called for inculcating the population with correct behaviors apropos of different public spaces. An *Ettela'at* article concluded that people were obviously unfamiliar with "social duties and responsibilities" (*vazayef va takalif-e ejtema'i*). Thus, the article argued that, in addition to legal measures and efforts by police departments and municipal governments, Iran needed to educate people that "sidewalks were for the general public," not part of their stores or playgrounds.[20]

The construction of the Trans-Iranian Railway took place in this broader context of the production of new public spaces and the simultaneous creation of new sociality spearheaded by an emerging modern middle class.[21] Perceiving the railway as the ultimate symbol of Iran's technological modernity produced by Reza Shah, they initiated discussions around the nature of the future railway space even before ratification of the railway construction bill in 1927. The railway system would offer untold opportunities, superseding beyond imagination the existing tramway environment.

ANTITHESIS TO THE TRAMWAY SPACE

When the Pahlavi Dynasty was established in 1925, the only existing public transportation in Tehran was the tramway system. From Tehran, one could take an eight-kilometer steam tramway to the shrine of Shah 'Abd al-'Azim. There were also four lines of horse-drawn tramways within the city, which were opened in the late 1880s by a Belgian company. Since the steam tramway's opening, however, and despite frequent accidents and the occasional protests they triggered, it had garnered much excitement among the population,[22] and "traveling on it was considered one of the most popular recreations."[23] But by the early Pahlavi period, the ubiquity of improper behavior in and around steam and horse-drawn tramway facilities began to draw the attention of the Iranian press. Writing to *Ettela'at*, an expatriate Iranian even claimed that the horse-drawn tramway had replaced "the clothes and hats and the varicolored turbans" as the most serious harm to the prestige of Iran in Europe.[24]

Iranian behavior around tramway facilities greatly deviated from the idealized image depicted in *The True Dream*. In particular, advocates of the New Civilization feared the display of religiosity and domesticity in the public space by the masses, subverting the orderliness of the space.[25] In contrast to the imagined railway passengers in European attire, most tramway passengers were pilgrims who boasted long beards and complete veiling, which led to a *Nahid* article's deploring, "God forbid! We get on the railway car with clothes for sitting in a palanquin, donkey, or mule!"[26] When these passengers arrived at the tramway station, they followed the gender segregation of station facilities. While waiting for the tram, they listened to female dervishes who attracted a large audience among local youths by reciting eulogies in praise of Ali and Hoseyn.[27] In addition, the tramway space swarmed with beggars, including the blind, crippled, and deaf, as well as unauthorized water sellers, dry-fruit sellers, and all sorts of peddlers.[28] Contrary to the expectations of the New Civilization that equated being modern with Weberian "disenchantment," which assumed the linear process of rationalization and secularization in a modern society, the ritualized wailing and begging of the poor sensibly symbolized Iran's "enchanted" tramway space of wonders and miracles.[29]

The tramways also deviated from the idealized image in terms of patterns of consumption. Instead of eating a continental breakfast at the station, Iranian passengers ate the traditional dish of *kalleh pacheh*, a stew of sheep's brain, eyes, and tongues. Instead of smoking cigarettes, Iranian passengers smoked long pipes (*chopoq*) while sitting on the rails.[30] Furthermore, rather than bags and packages, tramway passengers carried commodities on board that reflected their domestic life, such as samovars, water pitchers (*aftabeh*), or a carrying pole with an earthen jar and a jug on either end. These colorful items, including the ubiquitous *sofreh*, made Tehran tramcars visibly dissimilar to European ones.[31] Collectively, these commodities made the un-Europeanized cultural orientations of Iranians acutely apparent.

Chaos reigned inside the tramcars, in much the same way as it did in and around the stations. Instead of sitting comfortably, Iranian passengers, even those with first-class tickets, were crammed into crowded cars, where one either had to stand on the running board and hug the pole firmly to avoid falling off the train, or sit on an already seated passenger.[32] When passengers finally managed to sit, they started eating seeds and spitting

out their shells, all of which created a "carpet of seed shells" on the floors. Then, each time the train stopped, whether at a station or due to one of the frequent derailing incidents, new passengers invaded the car, pushing and shoving, adding to the chaos.[33]

Local youths further exacerbated this disorder. As the tram departed the station, they would climb on the windows and hang off the sides, sometimes resulting in tragic decapitation accidents. Or, to avoid ticket inspectors and police officers on the tramcars, they would disguise themselves as passengers. When the inspectors and officers were gone, they usurped the entire tramway space as their playground, sometimes playing tag by wriggling between other passengers' legs or under women's chadors.[34] In view of such behavior, advocates of the New Civilization saw no resemblance between traveling by Tehran's tramways and their imagined European railway journey.

Their anxiety was grounded on the perceived misbehavior of the masses. The stakes were particularly high in the case of the railway space because the Trans-Iranian Railway symbolized Iran's prestige in the global technological order. The railway promised ease of travel and the propagation of modernity. In theory, the notion of increased numbers of Iranians traveling should have been welcome, giving rise to the potential for a more homogeneous nation. But the increased mobility of the "ignorant" masses and their entry into the railway space threatened to jeopardize, if not sabotage, its ideal orderliness. Without reforming and regulating the social behaviors of future passengers, the Trans-Iranian Railway would fail to fulfill its promise.

DISENCHANTING MOBILITY

The solution to this conundrum was the railway traveler prototype, which could serve as an example for potential railway travelers to follow. The prototype was constructed in and by the Iranian press. However, it was not intended to reach its stated target of reform—the masses—directly. Rather, the prototype was meant to ignite fear among the emerging modern middle class, who comprised the majority of Iranian newspaper readers.[35] The ensuing collective anxiety would stir them to action: they would travel in order to propagate national consciousness and, most importantly, to set an example of proper behavior for the masses. Thus, the values embedded in the railway traveler prototype, including the proper behavioral

code in the railway space, functioned for the middle class as a marker of difference between themselves and the "ignorant masses."[36]

The construction of the prototype took place in the broader context of the celebration of mobility afforded by infrastructural development. In the early Pahlavi period, journalists such as *Nahid*'s Ibrahim Nahid and *Ettela'at*'s Abbas Mas'udi enjoyed the privilege of traveling, often accompanying the official government retinue, on new portions of highways and the railway *before* their opening to the public, in order to witness, record, and propagate the supposed progress achieved by Reza Shah. For example, when the construction of the Mazandaran Road was completed in 1926, *Nahid* ran a series of articles discussing the experience of traveling on the new highway via motorized vehicle. The first article began with the official retinue's departure from Tehran on the new highway, praising it as the conveyor of civilization, sanitation, education, and economic prosperity. The article quickly moved to contrasting travel on the new highway by car with a journey to Mazandaran undertaken by Rostam, one of the heroes in the *Shahnameh*, the tenth-century poet Ferdowsi's epic poem that narrates pre-Islamic mythohistory. Rostam had traveled slowly on horseback, arduously crossing "mountains that reached the sky, deep cliffs and valleys, formidable rivers, and swamps," where he saw thousands of bones and skulls. By contrast, the automobile traveled efficiently from Tehran to Mazandaran in only ten hours. The new highway, made possible by amazing technologies, had dispelled all the traditional obstacles and hardships the legendary hero had had to overcome.[37]

However, natural obstacles were not the real threat, either to Rostam or to Iranian travelers. The real threat was revealed by another article in the series. This article began by introducing Mazandaran as the "India of Iran"—presumably because of the comparability of the province's significance within Iran to India's significance within the British Empire. After describing natural phenomena such as malaria-laden mosquitoes and large forest flies that drowned horses and mules in a bloodbath, the article lamented that the great wealth of Mazandaran remained unexploited because its inhabitants were incompetent and uneducated. According to the article, these inhabitants were the ignorant (*babuha*), the "Eskimos," of Iran. While noting recent changes such as a modern school for girls and a dispensary, the article bemoaned the ignorant and superstitious nature

of Mazandaran's inhabitants, citing the head-cutting mourning ritual of 'Ashura. To reinforce this notion, the article included an anecdote about one of the Muslim "Eskimos" of Armenian descent in the gorge of 'Abbasabad, where Rostam had confronted the White Demon in the *Shahnameh*. Failing to distinguish between mythology and history, the villager swore to God, saints, and the Prophet that Rostam had passed along this road. When *Nahid*'s reporter remained unconvinced, the villager insisted that he would bring a letter from the village mullah (*akhund*) with local saints' fingerprints to prove the truthfulness of his claim. The article decried this superstitious behavior, lamenting how descendants of Armenians that Shah Abbas had brought to Iran in the sixteenth century had become part of the ignorant.[38] Just as Rostam's real foe proved to be the White Demon, not the harsh natural environment, the real threat to progress in Mazandaran was not the formidable landscape. Automobiles and highways could overcome that obstacle. Rather, the real threat was the ignorance of people unable to distinguish myth from history, relying on an equally ignorant village mullah to decide for them what was factual.

The *Shahnameh* analogy acquires yet another layer with the subtle self-positioning of the journalist/traveler. The *Nahid* article ended by juxtaposing two cartoons: the first is a scene from the *Shahnameh*, with Rostam encountering the White Demon at the gorge of 'Abbasabad (fig. 11), and the second is the opening ceremony of the Mazandaran Road at the gorge of 'Abbasabad in 1926 (fig. 12). The scene from the *Shahnameh* portrays Rostam and his horse Rakhsh looking up at demons sitting on top of the cliff on the other side of the passage. The caption reads, "The gorge of 'Abbasabad, or one of the Seven Stages of Rostam! The demons (*divha*), or the ignorant ones (*babuha*), are throwing stones at Rostam and Rakhsh." The opening ceremony scene depicts an automobile traveling a wider graveled highway. Attached to the car is a flag that says, "Mountains have been cut. Long Live the New Civilization!" On the side of the highway, a government official joins construction workers celebrating the opening of the road.[39] By likening the ignorant ones (the inhabitants of Mazandaran) to demons that Rostam confronted in the *Shahnameh*, the journalist/traveler who confronts the villager's ignorance and superstition acquires a heroic status equivalent to that of Rostam. Just as Rostam travels the narrow gorge by horse to defeat the demons, so does the journalist/traveler defeat demons of ignorance by

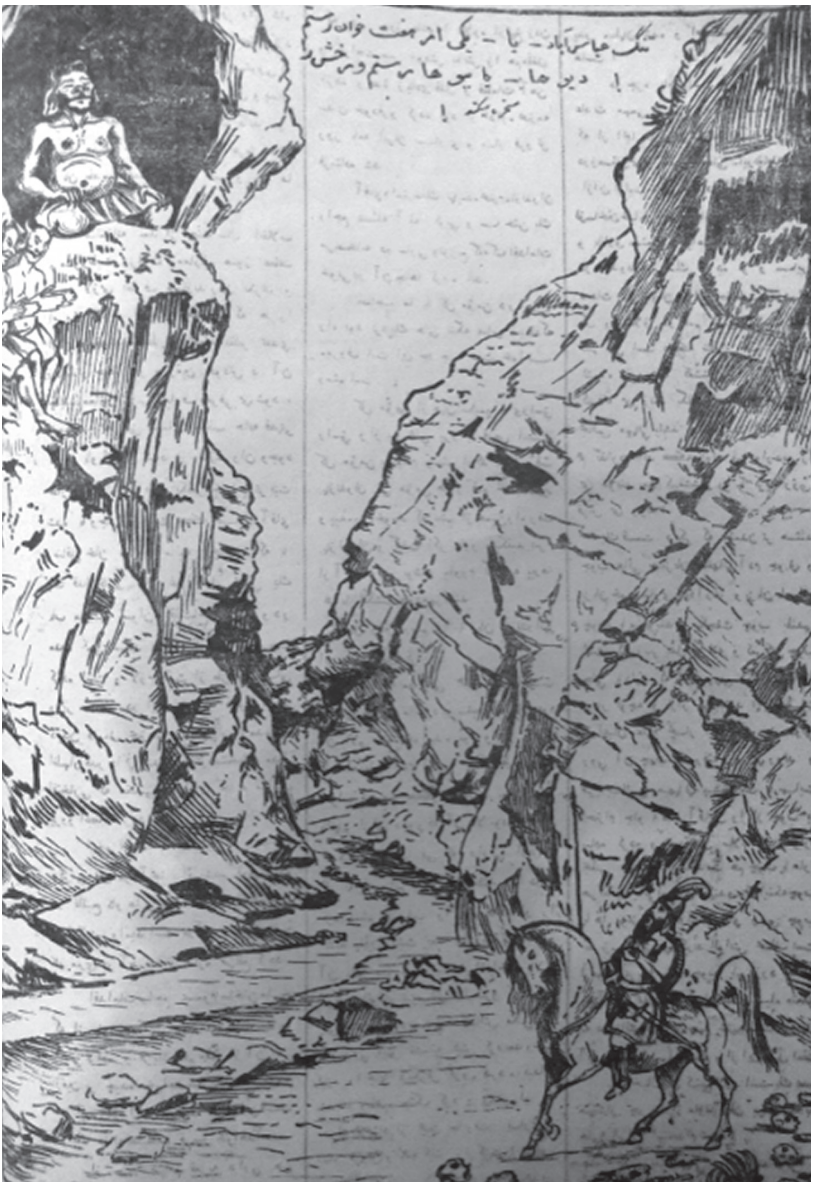

FIGURE 11 Enchanted ʻAbbasabad. Source: Nahid, July 27, 1926.

traveling the highway to Mazandaran in his car. As the flag on the automobile proclaims, the highway will carry the New Civilization to areas hitherto inaccessible, or barely so. However, the highway alone is not enough. In order for this national civilizing mission to succeed, Iran needed figures such as Rostam, citizens willing to travel to remote places, confront ignorance, and promote civilization. In short, the celebration of mobility under the New Civilization was not just about the expanding reach of state power, which was made tangible through material structures such as new highways and the Trans-Iranian Railway. For the disenchanted New Civilization to take root, the nation needed rational urbanite Iranians who would travel to the countryside and spread their customs, tastes, and codes of behavior.

The frequency with which travel experiences were reported increased during the 1930s, when the Trans-Iranian Railway, along with new highways, was opened portion by portion from both the northern and southern termini, eventually connecting in central Iran. When combined with the travel accounts presumably sent by readers, so many accounts of railway journeys appeared in the press that it was as if the nineteenth-century trend of writing travelogues (*safarnameh*) had been revived.[40] In this sense, through newspapers, along with official events celebrating the progress of railway construction and the railway facilities themselves,[41] imagining a railway journey became embedded in the everyday life of a broad segment of Iranian society.

In addition to specifying proper behavior in the railway space, these narratives in the Iranian press shared a pedagogical goal of explaining why Iranians *needed* to travel. The railway traveler prototype was not a pilgrim. Rather, he was a tourist who traveled around his homeland. As one journalist noted, "When the Shah does not sit behind the curtain, princes, ministers, prominent political and military figures, journalists, and even ordinary citizens should not sit behind the curtain. They should learn closely with their open eyes and ears about the present and past conditions of the country. Namely, they should go to see all the places in the country."[42] Traveling would also allow Iranians to "mix and blend" (*ekhtelat va amizesh*). As more Iranians traveled and mingled with those from other provinces, they would familiarize themselves with the customs and ways of life in different regions of Iran. Such a transformation would be beneficial "both for individuals and the country," and the interactions among Iranians would have

FIGURE 12 Disenchanted ʻAbbasabad. Source: *Nahid*, July 27, 1926.

positive impacts on "commerce, industry, agriculture, ethics, and public behavior."[43] In short, the railway project was expected to redirect pilgrim mobility to tourist mobility.

Journalistic travel accounts did not simply introduce conditions and customs of faraway regions to their readers. Rather, by providing vicarious experience of the provinces, they were meant to serve as inspirations for future travelers on how to travel around Iran by train. They encouraged newspaper-reading citizens to prepare for their own journeys and to prioritize fostering a national consciousness through direct interactions with their compatriots at railway destinations. In turn, local populations at the destinations would be exposed to ideas and customs of their more civilized compatriots. In other words, the railway traveler prototype would be a missionary of civilization, disenchanting the railway space and inculcating nationalism across Iran. Rail infrastructure was not simply a visual manifestation of the New Civilization. It was also a tool to propagate it through traveling citizens.

WHO GETS TO TRAVEL?

After its 1938 completion, the Trans-Iranian Railway became a fundamental means for intercity travel, whether as part of daily travel from one village to another or by enabling a special occasion such as a vacation or pilgrimage. However, the Trans-Iranian Railway did not simply produce mobile populations who traveled by train. Rather, it unevenly redistributed mobility to various inhabitants along the route. The context of the Allied occupation was crucial in the production of such mobilities and immobilities. Between 1943 and mid-1945, in addition to freight traffic, the southern line of the Trans-Iranian Railway transported 16,000 Iranian military passengers, 14,000 Polish war refugees, 40,000 British troops, and 15,000 Russian ex-prisoners of war in special trains, as well as 80,000 British military personnel in regular passenger trains.[44] Therefore, excluding American personnel, the railway south of Tehran carried 165,000 military passengers in approximately two-and-a-half years. To prioritize the war needs, civilian use of the railway was restricted. A typical civilian-military mixed train between Tehran and Ahvaz allocated 140 of the 320 available seats to the Allies, who used first-, second-, and third-class cars. Iranian civilian passengers typically used third- and fourth-class cars.[45] Consequently, even though there

were exclusively civilian trains, the overall capacity for civilian traffic was reduced significantly and made movement harder for ordinary travelers. Because spreading the ideals of the New Civilization was predicated on the assumption that the railway would enhance the mobility of its missionaries, the occupation jeopardized the fundamental goal promoted in the official discourse.

Another challenge posed to civilian mobility was the increasing unavailability of motor transport to civilian passengers during the occupation. In addition to the Allies' prioritization of military motor traffic, this problem was exacerbated by the Japanese invasion of rubber-producing Southeast Asia and the subsequent disruption of rubber supplies to the Allies. As rubber supplies dwindled, tires and other parts necessary to vehicle roadworthiness became less available for civilian use.[46] Having paid exorbitant prices for tires and other parts, bus drivers often overcharged, resulting in the prohibitively high fare for motorized vehicles compared to the railway fare, which remained relatively stable.[47] In effect, despite the expansion of mobility infrastructure during the occupation period, many civilians were made less mobile.

The immobility of Iranian civilians was aggravated by the Allied policy of controlling ticket sales based on the number of available allocated seats—rather than the existing practice of limitless ticket sales regardless of seat availability.[48] While the Allies intended to prevent overselling through this policy, it forced desperate Iranian travelers to compete fiercely with each other to obtain tickets, especially during busier times of the year such as Nowruz. In particular, the sale of fourth-class tickets started only one day prior to departure, resulting in a swarm of passengers pushing one another to get to the front of railway ticket counters.[49] In response to Allied policy, Iranian travelers who had used both Iranian and Iraqi railways complained about the restricted ticket sales in Iran, citing that the Iraqi railway did not have such restrictions.[50] Possibly due to these complaints, stations continued to oversell fourth-class tickets. Thus, just as nineteenth-century Iranian travelers developed an understanding of the railway space through railway journeys abroad, transnational journeys informed Iranians as to the type of service their national railway system ought to provide. Likewise, just as railway journeys in Iran's surrounding regions informed nineteenth-century Iranian understandings of rail infrastructure, the source of inspiration for mid-twentieth-century Iranians was not restricted to Europe. Iran's regional connections played a vital part.

Local residents became increasingly frustrated with the unavailability of tickets, particularly at smaller stations that sold a very limited number of seats. In 1945, residents of Firuzkuh, a county between Tehran and the Caspian Sea, wrote to the general manager of the IRO, protesting the imposition of a hefty fine for fare evasion, which was quadruple the original fare for a ticket.[51] The petitioners attributed the petty crime of fare evasion to the unavailability of train tickets in the area, pointing out that whereas Firuzkuh Station should sell at least twenty tickets—for in addition to visitors, 30,000 residents in Firuzkuh's forty-six villages needed to travel—only four tickets were allocated to the station. For inexplicable reasons, even those four tickets occasionally were not sold.[52] Therefore, while the Iranian press often characterized fare evasion as symptomatic of disorderliness among the masses, local villagers pointed out the specificity of the situation; that is, during the occupation, they were left with no other choice than to travel without tickets. In other words, what modern middle-class travelers witnessed and recorded as evidence of the misbehavior of the "masses" could have been local villagers' responses to everyday realities resulting from wartime occupation.

Even among those who successfully procured tickets from ticket counters or through the black market, travelers in fourth-class cars had to persevere in serious discomfort and danger. What the IRO called "fourth-class cars" were essentially roofed freight cars. Although travelers who used these cars did not leave their own records, accident reports occasionally exposed the discomfort and danger that their travel experience entailed. For example, after the catastrophic accident near Andimeshk, its accident report revealed that fourth-class cars were perpetually congested beyond the official car capacity of forty passengers per car. Moreover, the doors of the cars remained open for the duration of the trip in order to provide ventilation in the windowless freight cars, which risked the lives of passengers as trains moved across the mountainous terrains of northern and western Iran. Not surprisingly, the majority of casualties in railway accidents were fourth-class passengers.[53]

Although concerns over safety persisted, fourth-class cars alleviated the shortage of tickets sold, especially to civilian passengers. Extra fourth-class cars carried more than 25,000 passengers between February 21 and March 20 of 1944. Between March 1943 and March 1944, fourth-class

cars transported 194,249 passengers, while first-class cars carried 3,289, second-class cars carried 32,828, and third-class cars carried 421,697. In total, third- and fourth-class passengers comprised almost 95 percent of railway passengers.[54] Thus, in the specific context of the Allied occupation, mobility was unevenly distributed among military personnel and civilians, and the quality of that mobility was based on class of travel, placing Iranian civilians with less economic means at the bottom of the hierarchy.

THE MICROCOSM OF THE HETEROGENEOUS NATION

Since its establishment, the IRO had demonstrated deep concern about public misbehavior in the railway space, including petty crimes like freeloading and violations of minor regulations.[55] This concern followed on the heels of criticism from journalists who had written about disorderly behavior in tramway spaces in the 1920s. Unlike the tramways, however, the IRO as a state institution had the authority to impose a specific behavioral code on occupants of the railway space through codified regulations. But despite the repeated publication of these regulations, ongoing eyewitness accounts of disorderly behavior and petty crimes indicated not just the inability of the IRO to regulate the space. Eyewitness accounts also testified to a heightened anxiety shared among the modern middle class about the nature of national community as embodied in the railway space.

For example, in 1940, the Ministry of Roads gazette printed an article entitled "Duties of Railway Travelers" (*vazifeh-ye mosaferin-e rah ahan*) and urged passengers to use railway facilities properly. In addition to raising issues such as equipment that malfunctioned due to inattention, the article criticized passengers for bringing prohibited items onto passenger cars rather than checking them to be transported in a separate car.[56] Despite luggage regulations, passengers continued to break rules.[57] One passenger hid headless geese, which were clearly prohibited in the regulations, in his package, an approved kind of luggage, and put it on the luggage rack above his seat. Shortly after departure, blood started to drip over other passengers and created a carpet of blood on the floor. Likewise, Mazandarani passengers came onboard with baskets of lettuce and oranges rather than checking these items and transporting them in a separate car as required.[58] Since railway employees were known for their susceptibility to bribery, passengers caught freeloading or bringing prohibited items on board often tried

haggling with or even bribing them to avoid penalty fees.[59] Importantly, the article argued for the proper use of the railway space by likening it to one's house. As with ownership of their homes, Iranian citizens had paid to build the Iranian railway system with their own money. The article concluded by urging those who considered themselves more civilized to set examples for other passengers who needed to make themselves, and Iran, worthy of railways.[60] Therefore, by stressing the prevalence of disorderly conduct and by stipulating the railway's role as a national asset, the article tried to remind its readers of the need to continue their civilizing mission and to reform the very nature of the railway space as a valued embodiment of the nation.

During and immediately after the occupation, rail travel continued to offer travelers a distinctly unique experience, evoking a sense of national belonging among the communal occupants of the railway space. In 1948, ʻAla al-Din Mirmirani, an Iranian communist, arrived at Tehran Station with the intention of leaving Iran via the Caspian Sea to enter the Soviet Union. Before boarding the train, he asked himself: "Where are you going? Aren't you one of these people? Didn't you grow up among these people? Why do you want to abandon all your love of Iran?"[61] As he observed his fellow Iranians bidding each other farewell on the platform, and as he shared a compartment with his compatriots who offered him food (*taʻarof*) and chatted amicably, he felt that he was leaving the familiar world for an unknown utopia. The railway space symbolized a national community with which Mirmirani strongly identified, of which he was a member, and yet it was the same railway space that made his departure from that community possible, allowing him to join global comrades.

Other travelers focused more on the differences among the occupants of the railway microcosm. Mahmud Daneshvar, introduced at the beginning of this chapter, was particularly disdainful of Lor beggars on the platforms. The end of railway construction deprived Lor laborers of their employment, forcing some of these men to beg for money and food from passing railway travelers. By continuing to haunt the margins of railway environments on platforms of unpatrolled rural stations, the beggars became integral to the divisions and hierarchies within the railway space that railway travelers witnessed through train windows. As a result, travelers often recorded the presence of beggars in the railway space. On a ski trip to northwestern Iran in the late 1940s, Najmeh Najafi, whose enthusiasm for railway journeys was

noted in the introduction of this book, also witnessed beggars, mostly children, descending on the platform "like a swarm of locusts" at every station until she reached her destination.[62] Thus, modern middle-class occupants of the railway space in mid-twentieth-century Iran constantly faced the creeping presence of the poor even when they bought seats in exclusive first- and second-class cars.[63]

Furthermore, as Daneshvar's comment on womanizers suggests, male modern middle-class travelers perceived themselves in opposition to those without a proper understanding of respectable gender relations. Following the 1936 royal decree that banned veiling in public, commingling of men and unveiled women in public spaces became unavoidable, making it essential to define the exact behavioral code for both men and women through press campaigns.[64] For example, in its 1936–37 issue, *Salnameh-ye Pars* elaborated for forty pages on the appropriate social etiquette that men and women should adhere to in public space, specifying what to wear on various occasions, including during a trip.[65] It also discussed proper male-female interactions in the streets. Men were advised to walk on the left side of a woman and engage in conversation with a female acquaintance only when she initiated it. Women were advised to greet by tilting their heads and continuing to move on rather than engaging in lengthy conversation.[66] Notably, women were also advised to avoid walking the streets at all unless they had good reason to do so, while such restrictions on "excessive" mobility were never applied to men.[67] In other words, the unveiled woman's mobility was celebrated as a vital component of being modern so long as it was carefully monitored, controlled, and even curtailed.

The 1936 ban on veiling lapsed after Reza Shah's abdication, and the fear of sexual impropriety in public space intensified in the new context of the Allied occupation. During the occupation, the perpetual congestion of trains often caused Iranian civilians to share cars where Allied soldiers were seated, forcing an exchange between soldiers and passengers.[68] In these confined spaces, tensions between the Allies and Iranian civilians were magnified. Indeed, from the Iranian viewpoint, Allied soldiers had "invaded" their railway space as well as their national space and had failed to comply with accepted cultural norms. Various complaints were filed by Iranian passengers regarding Allied soldiers' behavior—ranging from consumption of beer on station platforms to their entry into the Iranian buffet car.[69] But

it was primarily the fear of sexual encounters between Allied soldiers and Iranian women that transmuted the railway space into a microcosm of the occupied nation. Male Iranians faced the humiliating reality that they could not assert their guardianship of women.

In 1944, Ahmad Dehqan, the editor of *Tehran-e Mosavvar*, wrote to the American Transportation Office to complain about a recent incident that had been brought to his attention. On August 8, the wife of an Iranian officer had been traveling by train from Arak to Tehran at her husband's request. When American and British military police officers discovered she was not carrying an identification card, they decided to interrogate her in a special compartment, which was near many seated Indian soldiers. Seeing that the Iranian train crew objected to her separation in the compartment, Dehqan's informant asked an Iranian employee why they were so insistent. At that point the employee referred to another incident that had occurred in a northbound train to Tehran the previous night. In that train, two ticketless women had been caught standing in the aisle of the third-class car. The Allied military police officers took them to a compartment and kept them there overnight, raising suspicions of sexual impropriety among the Iranian crew and passengers, none of whom could stop the military police officers or monitor the women. The Iranian employee sharing this event with Dehqan's informant explained that they did not want to repeat the same incident. Since the Allied officers had insisted on taking her to the compartment, and perhaps also anxious about the nearby Indian soldiers, the wife of the officer left the train at Qom "to protect her virtue." To Dehqan, it was outrageous that the Allies had taken away "all the authority and power from the Iranian agents" and created a situation in which the people of Iran, whose "deep afflictions" enabled the construction of the railway, could not travel on it without being disrespected.[70] The report of this alleged incident intensified an ever-present fear shared among Iranian men, including passengers, the railway crew, and journalists, of being unable to control women's sexuality in the confined railway space. Nor could they stop the occupiers or protect the motherland from foreigners.

Iranian men's fear stemmed from their awareness of the thriving sexual economy along the railway route. Prostitutes were frequently spotted on the Ahvaz-Khorramshahr military line, traveling in the late evening from Ahvaz to the vicinity of the American military camp, where they met with American soldiers in the desert near the camp and returned to Ahvaz the

next morning.[71] In this way, the railway facilitated mobility among prostitutes and, as a result, deepened Iranian sexual anxiety. While the Allies attempted to control prostitutes' mobility in order to protect their soldiers from venereal disease, Iranian authorities hoped to control the phenomenon under the pretext of protecting the sexual honor of Iranian women, and by extension, the nation.[72] From the perspective of Iranian males occupying the railway space, their inability to prevent Allied soldiers from pursuing Iranian women sexually replicated the national sociopolitical reality of occupied Iran, in which Allied soldiers who invaded the nation frequently had sexual intercourse with local women, with or without consent.[73] The railway space, then, increasingly reflected the reality of an invaded national territorial space.

Resentment against foreign occupation led to a kind of "Iranian" behavioral code in the railway space. In 1945, Mohammad Arjomand, who had served as personal telegraphist to Reza Shah, traveled from Tehran to the holy shrine cities in Iraq, primarily by train. During his railway journey, he had the pleasant experience of getting to know other Iranian and Iraqi passengers. Yet his trip was not entirely pleasant, for he also encountered the aloof attitude of British passengers, both military and civilian, who "did not speak a word" to him in the small railway compartment where he was seated or in an even smaller car between Ahvaz and Basra.[74] British passengers may have behaved in orderly fashion, like Iranians' imagined European first-class passengers, but this alone did not impress Arjomand. He expected these passengers to chat and share food during the journey, just like Iranian passengers had done. Therefore, encounters with foreign passengers in the railway space led Iranians like Arjomand to assert a vernacular behavioral code, reaffirming their Iranian modern middle-class sensibilities and separating them from the Iranian masses and foreigners alike. As a microcosm of the nation, the railway space in a sense became a site of the struggle for national liberation. The vernacular behavioral code was born out of such assertions of difference among the space's occupants, who were separated by class, gender, and nationality.

SACRED MOBILITY

Although a highly differentiated national community began to take shape in the railway space, it was not the only community being shaped by the arrival of the railway age. Arjomand was one of the thousands of Iranians

who traveled by train to perform pilgrimage during the 1940s. While photographs in IRO publications featured vacationers and business travelers in European clothing, the prominence of pilgrimage traffic did not escape the attention of travelers, who often noted the overwhelming presence of Shi'i pilgrims in religious garments in the railway space.[75] The destination for many of these pilgrims was Qom, where the railway station had been built across the river from the shrine of Fatemeh.[76] Like Arjomand, pilgrims traveling to the 'Atabat in Iraq also took the train to Ahvaz or Khorramshahr, where they found taxis or motorboats to Basra and boarded Iraqi trains to reach the shrine cities.[77] Still others headed to Mecca via Basra or Kuwait, from which exorbitant bus services took them to the Hejaz in approximately twelve days.[78] Iraqi Shi'i pilgrims also entered Iran from Khuzestan to visit shrine cities in Iran.[79] For a brief period during the mid-twentieth century, the Trans-Iranian Railway formed part of an interdependent infrastructural system with other modes of transport and functioned as the main vehicle to carry Muslim pilgrims to holy cities in and outside of Iran.

The volume of pilgrimage traffic was beyond the regular transport capacity of the Trans-Iranian Railway throughout and immediately following the occupation. To address the special needs of holy cities, as the IRO had done during the Reza Shah era, the Allies offered special rail services during peak seasons of travel.[80] In particular, a daily pilgrimage train to Qom was comprised of four fourth-class cars in addition to the regular Tehran-Ahvaz passenger trains.[81] The ever-expanding volume of train passengers to Qom reflected the shrine city's growing popularity during the 1940s, possibly due to its improved accessibility from Tehran following the opening of the Trans-Iranian Railway. Qom's competitors had clear disadvantages. Mass public transport to Mashhad did not develop until the second half of the twentieth century, and traveling to the 'Atabat required travel documents such as a passport and visa (at least in theory if not in practice), not to mention the 'Atabat's significant distance from Iranian urban centers. Thus, while the railway facilitated transnational pilgrimage, it also redirected such pilgrimage traffic to Qom, the rising national center of pilgrimage.[82]

The advent of the railway also changed the seasonal nature of pilgrimage mobility. Until the interwar period, the most common land route from Tehran to the 'Atabat had been through Hamadan, Kermanshah, and Khaneqin

to Baghdad. Traveling without mechanized modes of transport, most pilgrims left Iran in the fall to avoid the scorching summer in the Persian Gulf region and returned to Iran by spring, crossing the snowy mountains of western Iran. Thus September and October were the peak months for Iranian pilgrims to cross the border into Iraq. Indeed, these travel months occasionally reached activity peaks forty times that of slack months.[83] Many Iranian pilgrims certainly preferred traveling to the ʿAtabat for important Shiʿi events such as Ghadir Khom, ʿAshura, and Arbaʿin. But the hot summer often made these pilgrimages to Iraq extremely difficult, if not impossible. In other words, the prerailway temporality of pilgrimage was governed first and foremost by climate.

After the advent of the railway, however, the flow of pilgrimage traffic became much less dependent on the seasons. Iranian pilgrims no longer had to travel in the summer heat for over a month since they now crossed southern Iran and Iraq by train. From Baghdad, Karbala was only seventy kilometers away. During the winter, when pilgrims could not always rely on road transport due to heavy snow in the Zagros Mountains, railway travel became the most reliable mode of transport.[84] Instead of persevering in the snow of western Iran or the heat of the Persian Gulf, pilgrims had to endure only two train rides for a little over forty hours, in addition to car rides (from Ahvaz to Basra) lasting only several hours. As traveling time was reduced, climate became an insignificant factor in travel planning. Between 1938 and 1945, the number of railway passengers during the quietest month was on average 52 percent of that of the busiest month in the same year, signifying that pilgrimage traffic of the railway age had become relatively steady throughout the year. Sometimes summer months proved to be the busiest months of the year. In 1940–41 and 1942–43, the months of Mordad and Shahrivar in the Iranian solar calendar, which correspond with late July to late August and late August to late September of the Gregorian calendar, were among the busiest months. In the railway age, the pilgrimage calendar was at last freed from the restrictions of climate.

Although pilgrimage traffic became more evenly distributed throughout the year, there were preferred months for traveling. In five out of the first seven years of the Trans-Iranian Railway, the months of Esfand and Farvardin, the twelfth and first months of the Iranian solar calendar, were among the busiest, reflecting the importance of Nowruz, the Iranian New

Year. Also, in four out of the same seven years, the months of Muharram and Safar of the Islamic lunar calendar—during which ʻAshura and Arbaʻin take place, respectively—recorded the largest numbers of passengers. In a sense, the temporality of pilgrimage in the railway age became increasingly sacred, governed more by the Islamic calendar than ever before.[85]

In summary, Iran's railway project, which had originally centered on the ideal of propagating a New Civilization, instead became a vehicle that magnified Iran's Islamic observances in public spaces—side by side with vacationers and foreign military personnel. Moreover, the railway made it possible to plan pilgrimage based purely on the religious calendar.[86] In fact, Shiʻi rituals of departure performed before traveling were transplanted to the new railway space. At train stations, passengers walked back and forth three times under a tray on which a mirror and the Qur'an were placed and recited the hadith attributed to Shiʻi imams.[87] The Trans-Iranian Railway produced mass transnational Shiʻi pilgrimage.

IRANIAN, SHIʻI, AND COMMUNIST

Both Iranian and Iraqi state authorities expressed serious anxieties about cross-border movement of pilgrims and attempted to regulate their flow.[88] Facing the lack of freight cars to transport pilgrims during peak seasons, the IRO requested that the Foreign Ministry not issue passports to Iranian citizens.[89] Likewise, on instruction from Baghdad, the Iraqi Consulate in Khorramshahr frequently declined to issue visas to Iranian pilgrims, sometimes citing public health concerns.[90] As visa applications were denied, thousands of Iranian pilgrims were stranded in and around Khorramshahr, taking refuge in large buildings such as mosques and the British Consulate while attempting to find a way to cross the Iran-Iraq border.[91] Overwhelmed by the endless flow of stranded pilgrims, the Iraqi Consul occasionally issued visas at his own discretion,[92] but pilgrims usually needed to find solutions on their own, as illegal border crossers could face one month of imprisonment or a hefty fine of 5,000 Iraqi dinars if caught by the Iraqi authorities. Some pilgrims to the ʻAtabat pretended that their final destination was Mecca in order to obtain transit visas that the Iraqi Consulate issued to Iranian pilgrims going there.[93] More commonly, pilgrims relied on human smugglers to reach the holy cities. The wealthy opted to pay an exorbitant amount of money to cross the Persian

Gulf by boat and reach Kuwait, from which they could enter Iraq.[94] Others bribed gendarmerie officials to cross the border through nearby villages.[95] Still others hired overpriced taxis from Khorramshahr to Basra. In short, pilgrims continued to cross the porous Iran-Iraq border with or without legal documents. Yet state attempts at controlling their movement decelerated their cross-border movement, widening the gap between the potential time it should take to cross the border and the actual time it took to travel. In order to bypass these disruptions imposed on their movement, travelers took advantage of an informal infrastructural network that smuggled pilgrims over the border.

A 1944 article contributed to the popular magazine *Khandaniha* by a recent Iranian pilgrim to Mecca gives a glimpse of how Shi'i Iranians experienced transnational pilgrimage in the railway age. Throughout the article, Haji Mirza Seyyed Ahmad Zovvar laments the injustices many Shi'i Iranians faced in the course of pilgrimage: being unable to obtain an Iraqi visa despite having bribed officials; having to travel in third-class cars because first-class cars were reserved for foreigners; taking refuge in the British Consulate due to the Iraqi Consul's refusal to issue visas; risking their lives to find a way to the 'Atabat or Mecca (one motorboat heading to Kuwait crashed into an oil tanker, drowning seventy pilgrims); being detained for crossing the border illegally, while smugglers operated freely in the borderlands; facing discrimination by Sunnis, as exemplified by the recent beheading of an Iranian Shi'i in Mecca.[96] From his enumeration of difficulties, it becomes apparent that there was no way to neatly distinguish national and sectarian identities. Because it was impossible to reduce the root cause of the challenges to either their being Iranians or Shi'is, the shared experience of hardship during transnational Shi'i pilgrimage was conducive to both national and religious senses of belonging.

Communists also used transnational Shi'i pilgrimage routes in strengthening their network. The Iranian communist Yusuf Eftekhari traveled southward from the Soviet Union to Khuzestan along the railway route to propagate his political belief to workers.[97] Iraqi communists crossed the Iran-Iraq border from Basra to Khorramshahr, sometimes continuing their trips by train to Tehran or even to Moscow, as illustrated by the example of Yusuf Salman Yusuf, the secretary of the Iraqi Communist Party during the 1940s. Not only did he cross the Iran-Iraq border multiple times, but

he also met Iraqi communists from Baghdad and Basra while he was in Khorramshahr.[98] Iranian communists were also linked to this transnational network. Iraqi communists visited the address of Hoseyn Tarbiyat, the representative of the Tudeh Party in Khorramshahr.[99] Tudeh railway workers also sent their representatives from Tehran to Khuzestan and then to the other side of the Persian Gulf to organize labor in places such as Kuwait and Bahrain.[100] The mobility network based on the Trans-Iranian Railway connected communists in Baghdad, Basra, Khorramshahr, Tehran, Moscow, and many places in between.[101]

It is quite possible that some of the thousands of pilgrims who crossed the Iran-Iraq border were also communists carrying political messages. The language of a British intelligence summary may reflect anxiety about this potential. It reports, "The Iraqi Consulate will now issue visas to *bona fide* pilgrims to Iraq," (italics added) indicating the assumption that some visa applicants had motives other than to visit the shrine cities.[102] The political purpose of border crossing did not necessarily preclude the religious purpose. In fact, border crossers could have been both Shi'i and communist, performing pilgrimage while carrying communist leaflets, as Elizabeth Bishop observes in her analysis of Shi'i activism: "it was difficult to determine, among those who thrust for justice, where the Ja'afari ended and the Marxist began."[103] Indeed, the transnational mobilities produced by the Trans-Iranian Railway were conducive to both a heterogeneous national community and transnational possibilities such as the Shi'i community of believers and the communist camaraderie, destabilizing national space from the very moment of its production.

* * *

After disembarking at Andimeshk in late 1945, Daneshvar traveled around Iran for two years at his own expense. He visited areas accessible by train and also more remote areas accessible only by car, donkey, or camel. Passionately motivated to inform his fellow Iranians of their glorious homeland's historical heritage, he meticulously recorded what he saw along the way, from historical sites to natural surroundings. He took careful note of local customs and detailed the reality of overwhelming poverty in cities and the countryside. In addition to faithfully recording what he observed, Daneshvar also tried to convince locals that they were Iranians, not

Dezfulis or Arabs, and he planted the Iranian tricolor flag at the apexes of remote mountains such as Kuh-e Taftan in Baluchistan and Sabalan in Azerbaijan. He even left patriotic graffiti on the walls of the caves at Darband in Semnan to mark his "conquests."[104]

The discourse of the railway before 1938 created railway travelers like Daneshvar, who came to embody the railway traveler prototype in the 1940s. In turn, for the new railway travelers, the presence of heterogeneous groups of Iranians within the confined railway space after 1938 concretized the object of the civilizing mission and enabled the praxis of the mission. The visibility of divisions and hierarchies within the national microcosm of the railway space had a dual effect on the modern middle class: pushing them to identify with occupants of that communal space as their fellow Iranians, and helping them to differentiate themselves from compatriots who needed civilizing guidance.

To repurpose Patrick Clawson's phrase, the Trans-Iranian Railway "knit Iran together," but it also fostered transnational connectivity, most clearly exemplified by mass pilgrimage and communist networks.[105] This new transnational connectivity did not subsume local and national. Rather, mobile citizens simultaneously experienced local, national, and transnational senses of belonging as concrete categories that shaped their mobilities. Through the exercise of everyday mobilities, railway travelers became Iranians, but they could also become Dezfulis, Shiʿis, communists, or possibly all of these at the same time. In effect, in the same way that print technology produced "multiple reading publics" rather than a unified "national reading public" in early Pahlavi Iran, railway technology created multiple traveling publics, who exercised their mobilities within and beyond the nation.[106]

Conclusion

RETHINKING THE SPATIAL FRAMEWORK

The preceding chapters have examined the politics of mobility surrounding the Trans-Iranian Railway project in the broader spatial and chronological contexts of shifting global infrastructural networks between the 1860s and 1940s. By taking this approach, instead of telling a story of Reza Shah's national integration, my goal has been to show the massive reorganization of movement through the project. I have emphasized that, as a belated railway project, the Trans-Iranian Railway relied on preexisting transnational networks in its conception (e.g., Qajar-era travelers in India, the Caucasus, and Russia) and construction (e.g., labor migration in the Caucasus and the Persian Gulf region) and conjoined different parts of Iran to existing regional flows once its operation began (e.g., travelers to the Soviet Union and Iraq). Consequently, the railway produced multiscalar and multidirectional movement. Movement was reoriented not only spatially but also qualitatively; construction, operation, and use of the railway differentiated mobilities based on the New Civilization's ideals of predictability, productivity, and respectability. These processes of uneven redistribution of mobilities set "Iran in motion" and produced differentiated citizens.

It is important to stress that not everything was set in motion. The shift of traffic to the Tehran–Khuzestan railway route to reach the Persian Gulf

contributed to the relative decline of the traditional route that connected Tehran with Iraq via Hamadan and Kermanshah. Likewise, while Qom greatly benefited from its accessibility as a pilgrimage destination, Mashhad was not linked to Tehran by rail until the 1960s. In fact, this book has largely ignored provinces that were not directly touched by the railway project such as Yazd, Fars, and Kerman. As a 1945 *Mardan-e Ruz* article estimated with rather optimistic numbers, "over 50 percent of this country's population has not seen locomotives and trains and perhaps less than 20 percent have traveled by train."[1] The Trans-Iranian Railway, which joined increasingly complex, interdependent transnational infrastructural networks, connected distant places while leaving other places largely unconnected.

We have also seen instances of the railway's disruption of movement. Railway construction redirected the flows of water, dust, and mosquitoes, resulting in the displacement of agriculturalists. The track and tunnels built into narrow cliffs in mountainous regions obstructed pasture lands, compromising the mobility of local inhabitants and their livestock. The state policy of promoting the use of the temporary rail terminal of Salehabad curtailed the movement of motor traffic along the same route. Moreover, rail mobility did not become available to all travelers, especially during the occupation, as the Allied forces prioritized transporting lend-lease materials and military personnel over civilians. In short, stories of mobilities illustrate that the Trans-Iranian Railway project produced hierarchically differentiated mobilities in both intended and unintended manners.

The logic of differentiating mobilities depended on a combination of factors such as scale, direction, form, and purpose of movement. The New Civilization envisioned transforming undesirable forms of mobilities, as illustrated in attempts at transforming nomadic tribes into semipermanent laborers and Shiʿi pilgrims into national tourists. Moreover, to ensure the production of speedy, steady, and safe movement without human error, technocrats attempted to mold railway workers into predictable components of the infrastructural system. They did so by prescribing precise physical motions that workers were required to observe in completing tasks, illustrating that generating the flow of people and things required more than just constructing and maintaining the material structure of the railway. It entailed a comprehensive reorganization of movement, both spatially and qualitatively.

These attempts at molding diverse social groups had only limited success. Because railway construction work was only temporary, it did not necessarily have a lasting effect on local tribes' practices of mobility, as illustrated by the correlation between the end of construction and the resurgence of rural banditry. Likewise, the overwhelming presence of pilgrims in the railway space indicates the limited scale of the production of "missionaries of civilization" through the discourse of the New Civilization. In fact, categories of pilgrims and tourists were never mutually exclusive for many travelers, as exemplified by the case of Mohammad Arjomand, the former state employee introduced in chapter 7; he was a modern middle-class man who toured the nation *and* performed pilgrimage to the ʿAtabat. Workers also deviated from the prescribed physical motions, sometimes knowingly, because those prescriptions ignored the specific contexts of their work in the 1940s: workers had other priorities, such as expressing grievances through sabotage or avoiding penalties for delays.

Attempts at spatially reorganizing mobility witnessed some success by the beginning of the 1950s. This is illustrated most clearly in the case of railway workers. By the mid-1940s, despite their previous histories of transnational migration, Iranian railway workers had developed a strong sense of national camaraderie. Morteza Ahmadi's recollection of sharing all sorts of Iranian food for lunch with other railway workers demonstrated this new connection, in which he characterized his fellow workers as "interlinked chains."[2] This sense solidified in the postwar period, as competing discourses popularized the legacy of the Victory Bridge and highlighted the difference between Iranian and non-Iranian within the workforce. Yet Iranian railway workers did not become a homogeneous group unified by their national identity. Mobility also played a pivotal role in producing difference among them, as they valorized migration across distant provinces as a noble sacrifice for the nation while undervaluing the provincial migration of southern Iranian workers. Thus a differentiated national workforce had emerged by the late 1940s, illustrating the processes of internalizing national space as a spatiopolitical category of utmost significance among railway workers in making a claim for a respectable position.

As implied in the title of this book, *Iran in Motion*, "Iran" as a national spatial unit was by no means static and unchanging in the minds of mobile individuals even after its political articulation. Although the

national railway project was expected to serve the purpose of reorganizing movement and space along the national scale, the nation as a unit was in transition from the very moment of its production. "In transition" does not imply that it was weakened. Instead, mobility put the nation in a perpetual state of being formed through representations and individual experiences. The press coverage of official ceremonies to celebrate the opening of sections of railways and roads was often accompanied by a map that represented where the railways and roads had reached. In addition, descriptions and photographs of tribal women, historical buildings, and environmental features of the newly "reconquered" places conveyed the sense that national space was effectively being expanded as infrastructure penetrated more lands.

On the level of individual experiences, Iran was constantly being shaped and reshaped as travelers moved across space on various scales. As they actively assigned meanings to movement of different scales and forms, their experiences of mobilities, be it traveling for vacation or migrating for work, produced national publics. Rather than a single homogenized national public, it was multiple, highly differentiated national publics that emerged by the late 1940s. Importantly, mobile individuals also encountered categories that transcended the nation such as the Shiʿi world and the Communist network, which became concretized through their experiences of movement. That did not mean that the spatiopolitical category of nation was weakened by encounters with the transnational. After all, individual experience of cross-border mobility was legally conditioned by one's nationality. When a Shiʿi pilgrim complained to an Iranian newspaper about discrimination he faced during his trip to Mecca, the harsh treatment he received at least partially derived from his legal status as an Iranian citizen, although he did not differentiate being an Iranian and being a Shiʿi Muslim. Cross-border mobility also sharpened an awareness of national culture in the railway space, as a communist traveling to the Soviet Union to join comrades was reminded of his Iranianness while witnessing his compatriots' "Iranian" behavior. Thus, the transnational provided new layers of belonging to mobile citizens but did not eclipse their national sense of belonging. Rather, mobilities produced by the Trans-Iranian Railway amplified multiple senses of belonging. Mobile citizens could be Dezfuli, Khuzestani, Iranian, Shiʿi, communist, or all of these things at the same time.

In sum, stories of mobilities do not give us a neat account in which the rise of the nation caused the end of previous transnational connections. Instead, they tell us that the national railway project produced many erratic narratives with unexpected turns depending on the specific spatial and qualitative characteristics of a particular mobility.

RETHINKING THE CHRONOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

A number of historians have studied the Naseri period to the Reza Shah period as a formative period of modern Iranian state and society. Yet most historical accounts end with Reza Shah's abdication in the summer of 1941. It is certainly true that the collapse of the authoritarian regime of Reza Shah significantly changed the political context. It made possible diverse political expressions that were unthinkable before 1941 while also giving rise to political instability, characterized by frequently changing cabinets and political assassinations. And many Iranians abandoned customs that were imposed on them by the state before 1941: many women abandoned forced unveiling, and many nomadic tribes abandoned their imposed sedentary lifestyle. But the impact of state-sanctioned projects under Reza Shah did not dissipate, as Camron M. Amin has pointed out in his analysis of the discourse of gender in the 1940s, which built on debates that had taken shape during the Reza Shah period.[3] By examining how the politics of mobility unfolded during the 1940s, *Iran in Motion* has demonstrated that a state-funded project of the Reza Shah period acquired a path of its own and shaped the sociocultural transformations of post–Reza Shah Iran. Seeing 1941 only as a moment of rupture obscures the contingencies of early Pahlavi projects.

The Trans-Iranian Railway was three years old when the Anglo-Soviet forces invaded Iran. At the time of the invasion, the IRO was in its infancy. Its number of locomotives was extremely limited and its transport capacity even more so. It had few social welfare programs for workers, constraining its ability to shape workers' social life. It did not have a permanent body to investigate railway accidents. Young technocrats trained in Europe and America in the late 1920s needed more experience to reach professional maturation. Given the IRO's compromised authority during the occupation, it is paradoxical but makes sense that the IRO as an organization fully developed during the occupation. In many ways, the Allies continued what the Pahlavi state had begun under Reza Shah and expanded it dramatically.

The Trans-Iranian Railway also developed in unexpected ways during the Allied occupation, shaping workers' experiences of the 1940s. The exponential increase of wartime traffic demanded rapid expansion of the railway workforce, with the number of IRO employees increasing from 8,000 in 1941 to 36,000 by the end of the occupation; it reversed the trend of the late Reza Shah period to indigenize the workforce and it reactivated transnational labor migration. It meant that Iranian workers had sustained interactions with many foreign workers, especially Allied personnel, who relegated Iranians to a subordinate status for the duration of the occupation. The psychological effect of such subordination on Iranian workers, who took pride in operating the national symbol of technological progress, should not be taken lightly. The resentment toward the Allies shared among Iranian railway workers initiated anti-American feeling in Iran prior to the CIA-sponsored 1953 coup that overthrew Mohammad Mosaddeq's government.[4] Moreover, despite the promise of a brighter future made during the wartime, many Iranian workers lost employment in the postwar period, while those still employed faced declining economic prospects as well.

Passengers' experiences were also shaped greatly by the occupation, as travelers mentioned the inaccessibility of first-class railway cars to Iranian civilians due to a prioritization of Allied needs. In effect, the occupation temporarily produced a situation that was akin to that of colonial Asian railways, which placed native populations of extremely different socioeconomic statuses in the same railway cars. Iranian complaints about incidents of bad British behavior and sexual improprieties perpetuated by Allied soldiers in the railway space were based on this specific condition of the occupation. The production of differentiated national publics among workers and travelers took place in this tense moment, marked by the physical presence of thousands of Allied soldiers, the hierarchical relationship between Iranians and the Allies, and their close interactions.

With the beginning of the oil nationalization movement in 1951, Iran became the center of attention in the global process of decolonization. Focusing mainly on politics, historiography views the 1940s as a decade of political instability and relative freedom that paved the way for the mass politics that supported Mohammad Mosaddeq's movement. But to better understand how Iran moved from the autocratic rule of Reza Shah, supported by a small modern middle class before 1941, to the era of popular

politics between 1951 and 1953, historians need to explore political as well as sociocultural conditions during the 1940s more seriously. After all, the oil nationalization movement of the 1950s was not the first time that Iran's economic sovereignty became a contentious issue. That demand had already emerged around 1945, when IRO publications began to articulate that the Trans-Iranian Railway was Iran's national economic asset and to celebrate the recovery of Iran's full control over it. The railway industry arguably provided a rehearsal for Iran's struggle for decolonization that erupted in 1951.

By reconstructing more episodes like the failed dreams of railway workers or the frustrations of travelers suddenly relegated to a colonized status in the new railway space, historians can reframe the history of Pahlavi Iran. That reframing would interrogate longer-term contingent processes in which centralization programs of the Reza Shah period also shaped Iran during the second half of the twentieth century.

IRANIAN RAILWAYS TODAY

With the proliferation of automobiles and development of civil aviation, the importance of rail infrastructure diminished during the second half of the twentieth century. Major bus terminals and airports replaced Tehran Station as key sites of encounter for domestic and international travelers. Nevertheless, the Trans-Iranian Railway continues to occupy a peculiar place in Iran's claim to technological modernity, most recently illustrated by the Islamic Republic's repeated attempts at registering the railway as a UNESCO World Heritage site.[5]

In fact, railway development is an ongoing process. Under the Islamic Republic, and especially following Iran's war with Iraq, the Iranian railway network expanded exponentially. Since the 1990s, the Iranian State Railway has accessed major cities such as Shiraz, Hamadan, and Kermanshah, while it is expected to link other cities such as Bushehr, Rasht, Astara, and Chahbahar in the near future. Moreover, financed by regional competitors, including China, India, and Azerbaijan, the Iranian railway system is becoming connected to railway networks of neighboring countries. Iran's railway boom is occurring on an unprecedented scale.

Railway development continues to be associated with spatial restructuring through the state-led reorganization of the scale and direction of movement. A prime example of an attempt at redirecting movement

toward Tehran was the opening of a railway line between Kerman and Zahedan in June 2009. With the completion of this line, Zahedan, the capital of Sistan and Baluchistan Province, previously linked only to the Pakistani railway system, joined the Islamic Republic's railway network. Provincial institutions celebrated this event as the materialization of the dream of local populations who could now anticipate the growth of commerce and industry in one of the poorest provinces in Iran.[6] The provincial government triumphantly stated that the arrival of a train from Kerman must have thrilled the people of Sistan and Baluchistan "who until now have heard only the whistles of Pakistani trains but have always waited anxiously to hear the sound of whistles from Iranian trains."[7] Referring to the new auditory experience as a harbinger of good things to come, this official statement conveyed the importance of redirecting Sistan and Baluchistan from Pakistan to Iran, facilitating national integration of the province. Precisely because of the deep concern over the presence of Sunni separatism in Sistan and Baluchistan, the province's spatial reorientation had to be proclaimed in official ceremonies like this, while proudly flying the Iranian national flag.

Other new railway projects reflect yet another level of anxiety, that of international isolation. The Islamic Republic is intent on asserting its position as a transport hub in China's trans-Eurasian infrastructural project, One Belt One Road, whose rhetoric is reminiscent of Britain's late nineteenth-century attempt at drawing an imperial space through railway projects. Tasnim News Agency, a media outlet with links to the Iranian Revolutionary Guards Corps, has reported that direct rail service has commenced between Yiwu, a burgeoning global trading hub in southeastern China, and Tehran, characterizing this new service as a major step toward strengthening economic ties between the two countries.[8] IRNA, the official news agency of the Islamic Republic, has recently quoted a Chinese official's statement acknowledging Iran's unique position as an important logistical "passageway" (*gozargah*) in the Middle East and West Asia.[9] Likewise, state-owned Press TV has characterized the project to link Khorramshahr and Basra by rail as a measure to connect Iran with the Mediterranean rail network while connecting Iraq with central Asia, Russia, and China. Importantly, the report also notes that the Khorramshahr-Basra line will facilitate Shi'i pilgrimage between Iran and Iraq.[10]

The Islamic Republic's justification for rail development is in contradistinction with the Pahlavi state's justification for the Trans-Iranian Railway, mirroring the different core aspirations and anxieties of these ruling regimes. The Pahlavi state underplayed pilgrimage traffic in official rhetoric and stressed the need for national integration. In contrast, the Islamic Republic legitimizes railway projects as facilitators of pilgrimage traffic and emphasizes the need to bolster connections with its neighbors and allies. Remarkably, however, both cases illustrate the shared belief in rail infrastructure's power to redirect movement and restructure space globally. Whatever the future holds for Iran's infrastructural networks, the increasing presence of Iranian merchants in Yiwu, after only a few years of direct rail service,[11] suggests that mobile citizens will continue playing a key role in shaping Iran's global connectivity. The scale and direction of their movement across Asia is defined by the route of the railway itself, but what they do with that movement—and what that means—remain to be seen.

Abbreviations

BNA	British National Archives
COWI	COWI Archives, Copenhagen
FO	Foreign Office, National Archives, Kew Gardens, London
IOR	India Office Records, British Library, London
ML	Majles Library, Tehran
NARA	National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, Maryland

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Notes

Introduction

1. The station was later renamed Fowziyeh Station to commemorate Crown Prince Mohammad Reza's marriage to the Egyptian princess Fowziyeh in 1939.

2. "Shahrivar," *Salnameh-ye Pars* 1318 (1939): 70–73, 69.

3. "Shahrivar," *Salnameh-ye Pars* 1318 (1939): 44.

4. Najafi and Jones, *Persia Is My Heart*, 52–53.

5. Najafi and Jones, 54–61, 103–4, 142–57.

6. For more on Najafi, see Rahimieh, *Missing Persians*.

7. David Arnold defines "everyday" to include "merely knowing that cars, trains, and airplanes existed, recognizing them as familiar emblems of modern life on street hoardings, cigarette packets, and matchbox labels, in newspapers, magazines, radio programmes, and films" as well as "incorporating them into conversations, dreams, life-stories, employing them in a technological imaginary that ranged far beyond the practical possibilities of individual possession." See Arnold and DeWald, "Everyday Technology," 10, and Arnold, *Everyday Technology*. For everyday life, see the introduction to Lüdtke, *History of Everyday Life*.

8. Christensen, *Germany and the Ottoman Railway*, and McMurray, *Distant Ties*. For a project funded by global Muslim donations, see Özyüksel, *Hejaz Railway*.

9. For various aspects of early Pahlavi nation-building projects, see Cronin, *The Army and the Creation of the Pahlavi State*; Marashi, *Nationalizing Iran*; Vejdani, *Making History in Iran*; Grigor, *Building Iran*; Amin, *Making of the Modern Iranian Woman*; Chehabi, "Banning of the Veil" ; and Chehabi, "Staging the Emperor's New Clothes."

10. Kerr, *Engines of Change*, 10, 20.

11. Ishida, "First Railways in Egypt."

12. Christensen, *Germany and the Ottoman Railway*, 11.

13. A German-American consortium initially undertook construction, but the contract with them was canceled following a financial dispute. Kampsax joined the project only in 1933. Kauffeldt, *Danes and the Modern Middle East*, 167–68, 176.

14. Goswami, *Producing India*, 46–47. Brian Larkin notes that infrastructural projects allow nations to "take part in a contemporaneous modernity by repeating infrastructural projects from elsewhere to participate in a common visual and conceptual paradigm of what it means to be modern." See Larkin, "Politics and Poetics," 333.

15. Harvey, *Condition of Postmodernity*.

16. "Dar Ahvaz -40-," *Ettela'at*, December 28, 1936; "Dar istgah-e rah ahan," *Ettela'at*, January 28, 1937; "Rah ahan-e Lorestan," *Ettela'at*, April 18, 1937; and "Rah ahan-e Iran," *Ettela'at*, March 15, 1939.

17. In Soviet central Asia and Porfirian Mexico, centralizing states that emerged after political upheavals similarly attempted to inculcate new values in the populations through major infrastructural projects. For the early Soviet project of creating the Kazakh proletariat that was to embody socialist modernity, see Payne, *Stalin's Railroad*. For Mexico, see Matthews, *Civilizing Machine*.

18. Kampsax also made a Danish documentary film entitled *Iran—The New Persia*, featuring the Trans-Iranian Railway in the broader context of Reza Shah's achievements.

19. "Pol-e rah ahan dar Ahvaz," *Ettela'at*, January 5, 1937; "Jashn-e residan-e rah ahan beh Tehran—yek ruz-e bozorg por az masarrat va shadmani," *Ettela'at*, February 19, 1937; "Gozaresh-e jashn-e goshayesh-e rah ahan-e shomal," *Ettela'at*, February 20, 1937; and "Residan-e rah ahan beh Qom," *Ettela'at*, October 16, 1937.

20. For financing the project, see Moghadam, "*Iran's Foreign Trade Policy*," 113–16. For financing the railway before Kampsax, see IOR/L/PS/12/3472A, Annual Report 1932, 66–67.

21. See Abrahamian, *Iran between Two Revolutions*, 146; Abrahamian, *History of Modern Iran*, 77; and Keddie, *Modern Iran*, 93–94. Abbas Amanat provides a more detailed discussion, including strategic issues of the new state; Amanat, *Iran: A Modern History*, 452–56. For the tension between Iranian nationalism and foreign engineers from Kampsax's perspective, see Andersen, "Building for the Shah." For an economic analysis that mentions the limited role of the railway in reducing transportation costs, see Clawson, "Knitting Iran Together."

22. Katouzian, *Political Economy*, 115–16.

23. It should be noted that, by chronicling the thirty-one failed proposals and concessions from the Qajar period, Mokmeli's study implicitly acknowledges the pre-Reza Shah origins of the railway project. Mokmeli, *Tarikh-e Jame'-e Rah Ahan*. See also Mahbubi-Ardakani, *Tarikh-e Mo'assesat*.

24. Schayegh, "Seeing Like a State." I should note that some historians briefly mention the Trans-Iranian Railway beyond the framework of methodological statism. See Cronin, *Tribal Politics in Iran*, 26–27, and Cronin, *Soldiers, Shahs, and Subalterns*, 249–51. Schayegh has also noted the popular Iranian practice of traveling by train as

a new form of leisure that provided a sense of belonging to technological modernity. See Schayegh, "Iran's Karaj Dam Affair," 641.

25. For scholarship that critiques an emphasis on Western inventors and planners in studying technology, see Arnold, *Everyday Technology*, and Mukhopadhyay, *Imperial Technology and "Native" Agency*. For African agency in technological innovations, see Mavhunga, *Transient Workspaces*.

26. Adey, "If Mobility Is Everything."

27. For mobility, see Cresswell, *On the Move*, 3; Cresswell and Merriman, eds., *Geographies of Mobilities*, 5–8; Kaufmann, "Mobility: Trajectory of a Concept"; and Adey, *Mobility*, 15. Rather than seeing mobility as a fact of movement occurring outside power relations, scholars of mobility studies view it as embedded in, and productive of, social relations.

28. Sheller and Urry, "New Mobilities Paradigm," 216, and Adey, "If Mobility Is Everything," 83.

29. "Havades," *Mardan-e Ruz*, January 10, 1945; "Chera rah ahan-e dowlati-ye Iran ta konun dara-ye uniform-e makhsusi nashodeh ast?" *Mardan-e Ruz*, February 14, 1945; "Kargaran-e rah ahan ra beshnasid (Baqer Simkesh)," *Mardan-e Ruz*, March 20, 1946; "Kargaran-e rah ahan ra beshnasid (Mohammad Jalilzadeh)," *Mardan-e Ruz*, July 10, 1946; "Uniform dar rah ahan," *Mardan-e Ruz*, August 28, 1946; and "From Gholam Reza Ali Abadi to the U.S. Army Command, December 15, 1944," Record Group 338, Entry 29465, Box 77, Decimal File 230.14, NARA.

30. Colin Divall proposes this classification scheme to conceptualize rail-based im/mobility. In addition to individuals and infrastructure in its physical and institutional forms, he includes what he calls "rail-scapes," or "the spaces and temporalities in and through which railing occurs . . . the ways in which space and time were created, shaped, perceived, represented and performed." See Mom, Divall, and Lyth, "Toward a Paradigm Shift," 29–30, and Divall, "Mobilizing the History of Technology," 951. For the "co-construction" of the social and the technical, see Hughes, *Networks of Power*.

31. The "modern middle class" typically included urban professionals and their families with Western-style education. I acknowledge that the "modern middle class" was in fact a small minority within Iranian society at the time and that their economic status varied greatly. Nevertheless, I use the term in light of the dominant social norms, values, and tastes that held them together in contradistinction to other social strata such as landowners, the ulama, and tribes. For the formation of this class in Iran, see Schayegh, *Who Is Knowledgeable Is Strong*. For the global formation of the middle class, see Dejung, Motadel, and Osterhammel, eds., *Global Bourgeoisie*.

32. For the fixity of infrastructures that support mobilities of others, see Graham and Marvin, *Splintering Urbanism*, especially the introduction.

33. Michel de Certeau defines a strategy as "the calculation (or manipulation) of power relationships that becomes possible as soon as a subject with will and power (a business, an army, a city, a scientific institution) can be isolated. It postulates a *place* that can be delimited as its *own* and serve as the base from which relations with

an *exteriority* composed of targets or threats (customers or competitors, enemies, the country surrounding the city, objectives and objects of research, etc.) can be managed." In contrast, a tactic is "a calculated action determined by the absence of a proper locus. . . . The space of a tactic is the space of the other." See de Certeau, *Practice of Everyday Life*, 36–37.

34. For a critique of the monolithic "state," see Monroe, *Insecure City*, especially chap. 6, "There Is No State."

35. Arnold, *Everyday Technology*, 149. It is also important to recognize that not all practices of mobilities became conditioned by state power. We need to keep asking what types of sources are available to historians and how that availability shapes our framing. See Edele, "Soviet Society, Social Structure, and Everyday Life."

36. Gelvin and Green, eds., *Global Muslims*. Similarly, Adam McKeown called approximately the same period an age of "global migration," with particular attention to the Indian Ocean rim and northeast Asia, in addition to the transatlantic world. See McKeown, "Global Migration, 1846–1940."

37. In the 1940s, we also find instances when pilgrims flew from Tehran to Mecca, although the practice was largely limited to prominent individuals. See "'Olama-ye showravi 'azem-e makkeh mibashand," *Mardan-e Ruz*, November 14, 1945.

38. The historiography of pan-Asianism and pan-Islamism is too vast to list here. The following is a selective list of scholarship that transcends a particular area-studies framework: Aydin, *Politics of Anti-Westernism in Asia*; Aydin, *Idea of the Muslim World*; Duara, *The Global and Regional in China's Nation-Formation*; and van der Veer, *Modern Spirit of Asia*. For a classic study that traces the construction of geographical categories, see Lewis and Wigen, *Myth of Continents*.

39. McKeown, "Global Migration," 179.

40. Sohrabi, *Taken for Wonder*, especially chap. 4, "The Traveling King: Nasir al-Din Shah and His Books of Travel."

41. For a global historian's critique of "connectivity talk" that focuses exclusively on the proliferation of global connections in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, see Ogle, *Global Transformation of Time*.

42. Huber, *Channelling Mobilities*, and Kane, *Russian Hajj*. For a study that focuses on pilgrims' accounts, see Green, "The Hajj as Its Own Undoing." For the hierarchical spatialization of the Japanese Empire between Japan and its colonies through imperial tourism, see McDonald, *Placing Empire*.

43. For a proposal to study the Middle East, including Iran, in different spatial frameworks with attention to networks, see Green, "Rethinking the 'Middle East.'" For the proliferation of popular Islam in the Indian Ocean world, including Iran, see Green, *Bombay Islam*. For the Persian Gulf, especially its port cities, see Keshavarzian, "From Port Cities to Cities with Ports." For the Caspian Sea world, see Zarkar, "Customs of Customs."

44. Meiton, *Electrical Palestine*, and Jones, *Desert Kingdom*. For ethnographic studies, see Monroe, *Insecure City*; Nucho, *Everyday Sectarianism in Urban Lebanon*; and Anand, *Hydraulic City*.

45. Colonial writers imagined that technology and mobility would eradicate the "backwardness" of India, most visibly symbolized in their minds by the existence of different castes, but historians of India have illustrated how the railway space stratified individuals based on race, class, and gender. For example, the exclusion of Indian passengers from first- and second-class cars became especially problematic for upper- and middle-class women, both Hindus and Muslims, as Indian men demanded that these women be segregated from lower-class passengers. Goswami, *Producing India*; Bear, *Lines of the Nation*; Aguiar, *Tracking Modernity*; and Prasad, *Tracks of Change*.

46. Henri Lefebvre has stressed the role of state practices and capitalism in the processes of making global space, which would lead to "an intensified hierarchization, differentiation, and fragmentation of social life at all spatial scales." See Lefebvre, *State, Space, World*, 25, and chap. 11, "Space and the State"; also Lefebvre, *Production of Space*.

47. Cresswell, *On the Move*, 220.

48. For Indo-Iranian connections, see Tavakoli-Targhi, *Refashioning Iran*; Ringer, *Pious Citizens*; Kia and Marashi, "Introduction: After the Persianate," and Marashi, *Exile and the Nation*. For Russo-Iranian connections, see Deutschmann, *Iran and Russian Imperialism*, and Cronin and Herzig, eds., *Iranian Studies* 48. For Iranian nationalism's link to Orientalist scholarship, see Zia-Ebrahimi, *Emergence of Iranian Nationalism*.

49. Some historians have examined the material underpinning of transnational exchange. See Marashi, "Print Culture and Its Publics," and Green, "Fordist Connections." Arash Khazeni has detailed the case of the Bakhtiyari Road between Ahvaz and Isfahan at the turn of the twentieth century, with particular attention to the interplay between the British civilizing vision and local social and geographical conditions; see Khazeni, *Tribes and Empire*. I have also discussed the mobility network that underlay the circulation of ideas in the Indo-Iranian borderlands; see Koyagi, "Drivers across the Desert."

50. Cronin, *Tribal Politics in Iran*, and Matthee, "Transforming Dangerous Nomads."

51. Kashani-Sabet, *Frontier Fictions*, 165–66, 222–24.

52. Schayegh, *Who Is Knowledgeable Is Strong*, 95–109.

53. Some recent studies have paid attention to ordinary people's mobilities and their evolving sense of belonging. David Yaghoubian provides a fascinating example of an Iranian Armenian truck driver who frequently traveled to Tehran and the Persian Gulf to reunite with family members dispersed as a result of the Armenian massacre. In addition to Iraqi Jews in Abadan, Lior Sternfeld discusses Jewish refugees from Poland and Iraqi Jews in 1940s Tehran in the context of heterogeneous Jewish communities within the Iranian nation. See Yaghoubian. *Ethnicity, Identity*, 95, and Sternfeld, *Between Iran and Zion*, especially chap. 1, "Shifting Demographics." Touraj Atabaki has also explored transnational labor migration in the borderlands; see Atabaki, "Disgruntled Guests," and Atabaki, "Far from Home."

54. Adelkhah, *The Thousand and One Borders*, 11. Manu Goswami also states, "global space produces rather than subsumes, generates rather than negates, the local, regional, and national"; see Goswami, *Producing India*, 36–37.

55. In his study of ethnic minorities in contemporary Iran, Rasmus Christian Elling draws on Rogers Brubaker's insights, and he notes, "ethnicity should be treated as a processual, situational, relational and contextual dynamic of identification." This insight applies to national identity; see Elling, *Minorities in Iran*, 16.

CHAPTER 1

1. Curzon, *Persia and the Persian Question*, 1:viii.

2. Robinson, "Introduction: Railway Imperialism."

3. Robinson, "Introduction: Railway Imperialism," 5.

4. Kazemzadeh, *Russia and Britain in Persia*, 148.

5. Goswami, *Producing India*, 64.

6. This spatial framing makes sense when we look at other buffer states such as Siam. While the British planned railways to reach the Chinese province of Yunnan through Burma and northwestern Siam, the French attempted to reach Yunnan through Saigon and eastern Siam. Thus, the Anglo-French imperial rivalry made Yunnan the prime destination for both imperial powers and Siam the passageway to reach there. As such, British and French railway proposals had the effect of dividing Siam commercially along infrastructural routes. Moreover, like the Trans-Iranian Railway, the first railway in Siam was completed by the Siamese state in 1900, much later than its neighbors. See Kakizaki, *Tai Keizai to Tetsudo*, 105–12.

7. For a view that challenges an overemphasis on conquest through steamships in particular, see Cole, "Precarious Empires."

8. Argenbright, "Lethal Mobilities"; Atabaki, "Constitutionalism in Iran"; and Low, "Empire and the Hajj."

9. For a discussion of the concession craze and the eclipsing of the economic frontier, see Kashani-Sabet, *Frontier Fiction*, 75–80.

10. India Office Records (IOR)/L/PS/10/787. "Quetta-Sistan Railway," from Austen Chamberlain to prime minister, August 4, 1916. Kushk is present-day Serhetabat in Turkmenistan, not to be confused with the town of Kushk in present-day Afghanistan.

11. Until the level of the Caspian Sea dropped in the nineteenth century, rather than stopping at Anzali, ships reached Rasht by going up a creek. Melamid, "Communications, Transport," 554.

12. Issawi, *Economic History of Iran*, 157.

13. FO881/9230X, From Sir H. Drummond Wolff to the Marquis of Salisbury, August 19, 1890 (No. 7). However, Russian merchants and ministers were also complaining about Russia's weak commercial position in northern Iran. See Kazemzadeh, *Russia and Britain in Persia*, 169–70.

14. Issawi, *Economic History of Iran*, 71–72.

15. Kazemzadeh, *Russia and Britain in Persia*, 170–71.

16. *The Progress and Present Position of Russia in the East* (2nd ed.; London, 1839), 150–51, cited in Jones, "British Steamers," 25.

17. Rubin, *Formation of Modern Iran*, 101–3.

18. IOR/L/PS/18/C/208, Minute Paper: "Persian Baluchistan, The Quetta-Nushki Extension Railway."

19. For Karun River navigation, see Shahnavaz, *Britain and the Opening up of Southwest Persia*.

20. Khazeni, *Tribes and Empire*, chap. 3.

21. Jones, "British Steamers," 33, 37.

22. For similar attempts at delaying and blocking infrastructural development in the oil industry, see Shafiee, *Machineries of Oil*, 26–28.

23. Veeser, "A Forgotten Instrument." For the case of the Suez Canal, see Piquet, "Suez Company's Concession in Egypt."

24. Veeser, "A Forgotten Instrument," 1143.

25. Amanat, *Pivot of the Universe*, 407; also discussed in Sohrabi, *Taken for Wonder*, 76–77.

26. For Moshir al-Dowleh and his reform, see Nashat, *Origins of Modern Reform*.

27. Taymuri, *'Asr-e Bikhabari*, 32, 101.

28. Mirza Malkam Khan, *Kolliyat-e Malkom*, 33, cited in Algar, *Mirza Malkum Khan*, 112. See also Rahmanian, *"Mas'aleh-ye Rah Ahan dar Iran-e 'Asr-e Qajar."*

29. Celik, *Remaking of Istanbul*.

30. For the centrality of technology in Europe's self-perception, see Adas, *Machines as the Measure of Men*. For the optimistic reactions to the "Universal West" among mid-nineteenth-century Westernizing elites in Asia, see Aydin, *Politics of Anti-Westernism in Asia*, chap. 1.

31. Kazemzadeh, *Russia and Britain in Persia*, 101–3.

32. Galbraith, "British Policy on Railways in Persia," 482.

33. Curzon, *Persia and the Persian Question*, 1:480. For the Reuter Concession, see Kazemzadeh, *Russia and Britain in Persia*, 100–147, and Taymuri, *'Asr-e Bikhabari*, 97–150.

34. The committee's report is reproduced in Taymuri, *'Asr-e Bikhabari*, 105–7.

35. Nashat, *Origins of Modern Reform*, 94. I retained Nashat's transliteration style. Hence, "mujtahid" instead of "mojtahed." For a short biographical note of Kani, see Taymuri, *'Asr-e Bikhabari*, 123.

36. Nashat, *Origins of Modern Reform*, 94.

37. Kazemzadeh, *Russia and Britain in Persia*, 110–11.

38. Kazemzadeh, *Russia and Britain in Persia*, 114, 134–47.

39. Kazemzadeh, *Russia and Britain in Persia*, 156–60.

40. For a classic study, see Robinson, Gallagher, and Denny, *Africa and the Victorians*.

41. Robinson, Gallagher, and Denny, *Africa and the Victorians*, 187–88.

42. Andrew, *Memoir*, 6–14.

43. Kazemzadeh, *Russia and Britain in Persia*, 155.

44. For the American proposal, see Galbraith, "British and American Railway Promoters." For the Russian plan, see Kazemzadeh, *Russia and Britain in Persia*, 201.

45. Curzon, *Persia and the Persian Question*, 1:638, 2:588.

46. Wolff, *Rambling Recollections*, 2:368–69.

47. FO881/9290, "Memorandum respecting Persian Undertakings as to British Railway Construction in Persia," September 1908.

48. Wolff, *Rambling Recollections*, 2:373–74.

49. Curzon, *Persia and the Persian Question*, 1:636.

50. FO881/9230X, Sir R. Morier to the Marquis of Salisbury, November 13, 1889.

51. FO881/9230X, "Memorandum by Henry Brackenbury, the Director of Military Intelligence, respecting Persian Railways," October 8, 1889.

52. For debates on railway construction in Sistan, see also Greaves, "Sistan in British Indian Frontier Policy," 90–102.

53. FO881/9230X, "Memorandum by Henry Brackenbury, the Director of Military Intelligence, respecting Persian Railways," October 8, 1889.

54. FO881/10114X, Political Department, India Office, "Memorandum on Persian Railways," 11.

55. FO881/9230X, Henry Drummond Wolff to Lord Salisbury, November 18, 1888, and February 19, 1889.

56. FO881/9230X, Henry Drummond Wolff to Lord Salisbury, August 19, 1890.

57. FO881/9230X, Henry Drummond Wolff to Lord Salisbury, November 18, 1888; February 19, 1889; July 25, 1889; and July 25, 1890.

58. For the tramway, see Mahbubi-Ardakani, *Tarikh-e Mo'assesat*, 323–24.

59. Kazemzadeh, *Russia and Britain in Persia*, 231–35.

60. FO881/10114X, Political Department, India Office, "Memorandum on Persian Railways," June 20, 1911, 5.

61. For the Baghdad Railway, see Christensen, *Germany and the Ottoman Railway*, and McMurray, *Distant Ties*.

62. For an account of the 1907 Agreement, see Bonakdarian, *Britain and the Iranian Constitutional Revolution*, chap. 3, "The Ritual of Sacrifice and the Will to Resist."

63. Luft, "Persian Railway Syndicate," 169–75.

64. Kazemzadeh, *Russia and Britain in Persia*, 592–96, and Spring, "Trans-Persian Railway Project," 66–71.

65. For the Russian banks and industries that were involved in the project, see Spring, "Trans-Persian Railway Project," 64–66. For British perspectives, see Bonakdarian, *Britain and the Iranian Constitutional Revolution*, 331–34, and IOR/L/PS/10/417, From Revelstoke, Director of the *Société d'Études* to the Under Secretary of State, Foreign Office, August 5, 1932.

66. Yate, "Proposed Trans-Persian Railway," 8–10.

67. On another occasion, he included the Achaemenid conquest of Egypt as another example of the lost connectivity. Black, "A Proposed Railway," 1424.

68. Yate, "Proposed Trans-Persian Railway," 2, 6, 9, 16.

69. Andrew, *Memoir*, viii, 18, and Curzon, *Persia and the Persian Question*, 2:588.

70. Wilson, *Southwest Persia: A Political Officer's Diary*, 5, 180.

71. For the contemporary British imaginary of resurrecting the cradle of civilization in Mesopotamia and restoring Iraq's lost status in the modern world through technology, see Satia, "A Rebellion of Technology." For French North Africa, see Davis, *Resurrecting the Granary of Rome*.

72. Yate, "Proposed Trans-Persian Railway," 17.

73. Black, "A Proposed Railway," 1425.

74. Spring, "Trans-Persian Railway Project," 71–82.

75. For railway concessions during World War I, IOR/L/PS/10/417, From Foreign Office to the Chairman, Kerman Mining Syndicate, January 13, 1917, and From Sir C. Marling to Political Department, February 19, 1917. See also IOR/L/PS/10/417, "Memorandum by Lord Curzon," August 24, 1916, From Viceroy to Political Department, February 22, 1917, and IOR/L/PS/10/417, From Major A. P. Trevor, Deputy Political Resident, Persian Gulf, to A. H. Grant, June 11, 1917.

CHAPTER 2

1. For instance, see Sayyah, *Safarnameh-ye Hajj Sayyah beh Farang*, 89, 93, 96, 101, 112, 120; 147.

2. Kashani-Sabet, *Frontier Fictions*, especially chap. 3, "From Riches to Ruins."

3. For example, Farrokh Khan Amin al-Dowleh was sent to Europe on an official mission in the 1850s and wrote about railways along with other infrastructural developments. See Ghanoonparvar, *In a Persian Mirror*, 22–25. Seyf al-Dowleh also recorded the details of how to travel by rail based on his experience with the Egyptian Railway between Alexandria and Cairo in 1862. See Seyf al-Dowleh Soltan Mohammad, *Safarnameh-ye Seyf al-Dowleh*, 109–15.

4. Morikawa, "Gajaru-choki Ryokoki Shiryo Kenkyu Josetsu," 46–47.

5. For studies that discuss treatises about railways, see Rahmanian, "*Mas'aleh-ye Rah Ahan*," and Pashazadeh, "*Rah Ahan va Taraqqi*."

6. Green, *Bombay Islam*, 125–27. For Amin al-Zarb's encounter with technology during his 1863 hajj, see Mahdavi, *For God, Mammon, and Country*, 48–51.

7. For the temporal gap between Hajj Sayyah's travel and his composing of the text, see Haag-Higuchi, "Touring the World, Classifying the World," 150, and Sohrabi, *Taken for Wonder*, 106–07.

8. Nabavi, "Journalism i. Qajar Period," *Encyclopedia Iranica*, http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/journalism-i-qajar-period [accessed May 31, 2018].

9. Balaghi, "Constitutionalism and Islamic Law," 345.

10. Adas, *Machines as the Measure of Men*.

11. Green, "Spacetime and the Muslim Journey West."

12. For constitutionalism and the connections with the Caucasus, see Afary, *Iranian Constitutional Revolution*, chap. 2. For education and the connections with the Ottoman Empire, see Ringer, *Education, Religion*, chap. 5.

13. "Rah Ahan-e Iran," *Iran-e Emruz*, March 15, 1939, 48–49.

14. Fereydun Adamiyat states that Moshir al-Dowleh encouraged the shah to travel to Europe and witness various manifestations of progress in Europe, including extensive railway systems. Adamiyat, *Andisheh-ye Taraqqi*, 259–60. For a critique of the reading that privileges the teleological account of modernization, see Sohrabi, *Taken for Wonder*, 87–88.

15. Granville to W. Taylour Thomson, Draft, No. 8, F. O. April 17, 1873; FO60/358, cited in Kazemzadeh, *Russia and Britain in Persia*, 111–12.

16. Naser al-Din Shah Qajar, *Ruznameh-ye Khaterat-e Naser al-Din Shah*, 38–39.

17. Nashat, *Origins of Modern Reform*, 132–33.

18. Sohrabi, *Taken for Wonder*, 75–76.

19. Naser al-Din Shah Qajar, *Ruznameh-ye Khaterat-e Naser al-Din Shah*, 39, 104, 142.

20. For nineteenth-century Europe, Schivelbusch, *Railway Journey*.

21. Farmafarmayan, ed., *Safarnameh-ye Hajji Pirzadeh*, 2–3, and Sohrabi, *Taken for Wonder*, 107.

22. Farmafarmayan, ed., *Safarnameh-ye Hajji Pirzadeh*, 118.

23. Farmafarmayan, ed., *Safarnameh-ye Hajji Pirzadeh*, 126.

24. Farmafarmayan, ed., *Safarnameh-ye Hajji Pirzadeh*, 119.

25. Farmayan and Daniel, eds., *A Shi'ite Pilgrimage to Mecca*, 67–72.

26. Farmayan and Daniel, eds., *A Shi'ite Pilgrimage to Mecca*, 92.

27. Farmayan and Daniel, eds., *A Shi'ite Pilgrimage to Mecca*, 168, 169.

28. Morikawa, "Gajaru-choki Ryokoki Shiryo Kenkyu Josetsu."

29. This was similar to the case of Siam, another independent Asian kingdom sandwiched by two imperial powers. In Siam, the political elite encountered railways first in nearby European colonies such as Java and India, as exemplified by Chulalongkorn's trip in 1871 during his regency period. Kakizaki, *Tai Keizai to Tetsudo*, 106–7, and Chenpitayaton, *When Siam Faced the World*, 159.

30. An example of such travelers was Mehdi Qoli Hedayat, who traveled by train in both Japan and the United States at the beginning of the twentieth century. For his journey, see Green, "The Hajj as Its Own Undoing."

31. Naser al-Din Shah Qajar, *Ruznameh-ye Khaterat-e Naser al-Din Shah*, 360.

32. Later in his life, Mostashar al-Dowleh played a pivotal role in the development of new roads (such as the Qazvin–Tabriz road) by forming liaisons with Tabrizi and Isfahani merchants, *mojtaheds*, and prominent officials. Adamiyyat, *Andisheh-ye Taraqqi*, 323.

33. For Akhundzadeh, see Zia-Ebrahimi, *Emergence of Iranian Nationalism*.

34. Adamiyyat, *Andisheh-ye Taraqqi*, 327.

35. For instance, the population of Qom declined from 25,382 in 1867–68 to 14,000 in 1874–75. Okazaki, "Great Persian Famine," 184.

36. Adamiyat, *Andisheh-ye Taraqqi*, 327n42.

37. Adamiyat, *Andisheh-ye Taraqqi*, 328.

38. Adamiyat, *Andisheh-ye Taraqqi*, 328–29.

39. Pashazadeh, "Rah Ahan va Taraqqi," 64.

40. "Rah ahan-e Hejaz," *Habl al-Matin* (December 10, 1900), 22–23, and "Rah ahan-e Dameshq," *Habl al-Matin* (March 25, 1901), 21.

41. After living in Paris for eight years, Kashef al-Saltaneh later served in Russia and India. He actively participated in the Iranian Constitutional Revolution. For his biography, see Kashef, *Taghyirat va Taraqqiyat*, 3–7.

42. Kashef, *Taghyirat va Taraqqiyat*, 73, 37–38.

43. Kashef, *Taghyirat va Taraqqiyat*, 96–97.

44. Kashef, *Taghyirat va Taraqqiyat*, 100.

45. Kashef, *Taghyirat va Taraqqiyat*, 104, 109–10, 110–11.

46. Kashef, *Taghyirat va Taraqqiyat*, 7, 107.

47. Kashef, *Taghyirat va Taraqqiyat*, 25, 74, 80, 25–26.

48. Kashef, *Taghyirat va Taraqqiyat*, 29–31.

49. Kashef, *Taghyirat va Taraqqiyat*, 113–14, 43.

50. Algar, *Mirza Malkum Khan*, 111. Algar attributes this change of attitude to the change in Malkam's wealth and position.

51. Adamiyyat, *Andisheh-ye Taraqqi*, 323.

52. Mahdavi, *For God, Mammon, and Country*, chap. 6.

53. Kamran M. Dadkhah points out the evolution of Iranian economic thought in three phases. The first phase is the period of economic liberalism that stressed attracting global capital in the nineteenth century. The second phase is the emergence of nationalism that attempted to mobilize domestic capital following the Constitutional Revolution. The third phase is the period of state dominance in Iran's economy from the 1920s. While this argument captures the general shift, it is too directly tied to political change. As I discuss in this chapter, the shift was far more gradual and often preceded political developments. See Dadkhah, "From Global Capital to State Capitalism," 140–58.

54. Lak, "Rah Ahan-e Sarasari dar Mozakerat-e Majles."

55. Mashruh-e Mozakerat-e Majles-e Shura-ye Melli. Dowreh-ye 1, Jalaseh-ye 29 (January 19, 1907), 4 (the page number corresponds to the online version): http://www.ical.ir/index.php?option=com_mashrooh&view=session&id=20029&Itemid=38 [accessed September 21, 2014].

56. Malakuti, *Rah Ahan-e Iran*, 22–23, 24.

57. Sani' al-Dowleh, *Rah-e Nejat*, 5.

58. Sani' al-Dowleh, *Rah-e Nejat*, 10, 11, 17, 15.

59. Mashruh-e Mozakerat-e Majles-e Shura-ye Melli. Dowreh-ye 1, Jalaseh-ye 263 (April 25, 1908), 2–4 http://www.ical.ir/index.php?option=com_mashrooh&view=-session&id=20263&Itemid=38 [accessed September 20, 2014].

60. Mashruh-e Mozakerat-e Majles-e Shura-ye Melli. Dowreh-ye 1, Jalaseh-ye 263 (April 25, 1908), and Sani' al-Dowleh, *Rah-e Nejat*, 16.

61. Sani' al-Dowleh, *Rah-e Nejat*, 22.

62. Chahian, "Tarh-e Rah Ahan va Majles dar Dowreh-ye Pahlavi-ye Avval," 75.

63. Balaghi, "Print Culture in Late Qajar Iran," 167, 175–77.

64. *Kashkul*, May 12, 1908. One farsakh is approximately six kilometers.

65. *Kashkul*, May 12, 1908.

66. Hedayat, *Khaterat va Khatarat*, 372.

67. For the Berlin circle, see Matin-Asgari, "The Berlin Circle," and Behnam, *Berliniha*.

CHAPTER 3

1. For the rise of Reza Shah, see Ghani, *Iran and the Rise of Reza Shah*, and Katouzian, *State and Society in Iran*.

2. Meskub, *Dastan-e Adabiyat va Sargozasht-e Ejtema*ʿ, 37, 30.

3. Marashi, *Nationalizing Iran*, 7.

4. Marashi, *Nationalizing Iran*, 110–32.

5. See Goswami, *Producing India*. Kemal Ataturk's Republican Turkey also undertook the expansion of a national railway network to produce a nationalized space of Turkey. In particular, the rail network extended to volatile regions of eastern Anatolia, departing from the concentration of rail networks built by European businesses in western Anatolia during the Ottoman Empire. See Kezer, *Building Modern Turkey*, chap. 5, "Nationalizing Space."

6. Clawson, "Knitting Iran Together."

7. In addition to Katouzian and Ghani, for a detailed discussion on negotiations over railway development, see Bast, "'Sheer Madness' or 'Railway Politics' Iranian Style?"

8. IOR/L/PS/10/793, "Roads and Railways in Persia," from Foreign Office to India Office, December 31, 1919.

9. Luft, "Persian Railway Syndicate," 195–96.

10. Luft, "USA and the Trans-Iranian Railway," 121–22.

11. Rosenberg, *Financial Missionaries to the World*, 184.

12. Khatib-Shahidi, *German Foreign Policy*, 45.

13. IOR/L/PS/10/794, "Persian Railways Syndicate to Foreign Office," January 20, 1922, "Persian Railways Syndicate to Foreign Office," January 27, 1922.

14. IOR/L/PS/10/794, "Persia: Proposal to Invite American Cooperation in Railway Enterprise," June 17, 1922.

15. IOR/L/PS/10/794, "Persia: Proposal to Invite American Cooperation in Railway Enterprise," June 17, 1922.

16. IOR/L/PS/10/794, "Mohammerah-Khoramabad and Khanikin-Tehran Railway Concessions," from the Persian Railway Syndicate to Foreign Office, July 28, 1922.

17. IOR/L/PS/11/209, From Percy Loraine to Lord Curzon, January 5, 1924.

18. IOR/L/PS/11/209, "American Commercial Activity in Persia," from Loraine to H. M. Charge d'Affaires in Washington, February 6, 1924.

19. IOR/L/PS/11/209, from Loraine to Austen Chamberlain, May 9, 1925.

20. Mokmeli, *Tarikh-e Jame*ʿ*-e Rah Ahan*, 127.

21. Malakuti, *Rah Ahan-e Iran*, 25. For the proliferation of tea and sugar smuggling to avoid hefty taxes, see IOR/L/PS/10/794, From Robert Clive to A. Henderson, June 15, 1929.

22. Mahbubi-Ardakani, *Tarikh-e Mo'assesat*, 344–45.

23. Mashruh-e Mozakerat-e Majles-e Shura-ye Melli, Dowreh-ye 6, Jalaseh-ye 67, February 24, 1927.

24. IOR/L/PS/10/794, Clive to Chamberlain, April 21, 1928, and Clive to Chamberlain, May 5, 1928. German firms maintained close relations with the Soviet Union. For example, German firms offered guarantees that they would buy Soviet construction materials; in exchange, the Soviet Union agreed to free transit for German materials. As for Ulen & Company, it allowed limited French and British participation to reduce financial risk. IOR/L/PS/10/794, Clive to Chamberlain, April 5, 1928. For Ulen & Company's preference for Anglo-French participation, see Clive to Chamberlain, March 9, 1928.

25. Luft, "USA and the Trans-Iranian Railway," 131–32. For the distrust between Germans and Americans from the beginning, see IOR/L/PS/10/794, Clive to Foreign Office, May 14, 1930.

26. Kauffeldt, *Danes and the Modern Middle East*, 167.

27. Vezarat-e Toroq, *Rah Ahan-e Sarasar-e Iran*, 41–44.

28. IOR/L/PS/11/209, From Clive to Chamberlain, March 9, 1928. The German-American consortium also preferred multinational involvement, as the American Ulen & Company included limited Anglo-French participation to mitigate the financial risk. See IOR/L/PS/10/794, From Clive to Chamberlain, March 9, 1928, and April 5, 1928.

29. Kashani-Sabet, *Frontier Fictions*, 91–98.

30. Mashruh-e Mozakerat-e Majles, Dowreh-ye 6, Jalaseh-ye 66, February 22, 1927.

31. IOR/L/PS/11/209, From Percy Loraine to Austen Chamberlain, October 31, 1925.

32. Mashruh-e Mozakerat-e Majles-e Shura-ye Melli, Dowreh-ye 6, Jalaseh-ye 66, February 22, 1927. For a similar idea expressed by Mirza Ali Kazeruni, who represented Bushehr, see Mashruh-e Mozakerat-e Majles-e Shura-ye Melli, Dowreh-ye 5, Jalaseh-ye 240, January 19, 1926.

33. "Otumobil ja-ye khatt ahan," *Ettela'at*, August 14, 1927.

34. "Az otumobil natijeh-ye ma'kus migirim," *Ettela'at*, August 16, 1927.

35. "Motor Bus Concessions in Tehran and Suburbs Granted Danish Commercial Corporation," February 18, 1928, Record Group 84, Records of Foreign Service Posts, Consular Posts, Tehran, Volume 50, 879.7, NARA.

36. "A Letter from Augustin W. Ferrin, American Consul, to Witte Engine Works," September 21, 1928, Record Group 84, Records of Foreign Service Posts, Consular Posts, Tehran, Volume 55, 866.12, NARA.

37. "Persian Market for Automotive Products," October 3, 1926–February 21, 1927, Record Group 84, Records of Foreign Service Posts, Consular Posts, Tehran, Volume 50, 866.16, NARA.

38. Mashruh-e Mozakerat-e Majles-e Shura-ye Melli, Dowreh-ye 5, Jalaseh-ye 58, September 16, 1924.

39. "Az otumobil natijeh-ye maʿkus migirim," *Ettelaʿat*, August 16, 1927.

40. "Review of Commerce and Industry for the Quarter Ended March 31, 1927," April 18, 1927, Record Group 84, Records of Foreign Service Posts, Consular Posts, Tehran Volume 46, 600, NARA, Mashruh-e Mozakerat-e Majles-e Shura-ye Melli, Dowreh-ye 6, Jalaseh-ye 66, February 22, 1927, and "Nazariyat-e doctor milspow," *Ettelaʿat*, August 14, 1927.

41. For a contemporary debate on trade balance in Germany, see Tooze, "Trouble with Numbers."

42. Hansen, "Learning to Tax."

43. Mashruh-e Mozakerat-e Majles, Dowreh-ye 6, Jalaseh-ye 66, February 22, 1927.

44. Mashruh-e Mozakerat-e Majles, Dowreh-ye 6, Jalaseh-ye 66, February 22, 1927, and Mashruh-e Mozakerat-e Majles, Dowreh-ye 5, Jalaseh-ye 251, February 9, 1926.

45. Mashruh-e Mozakerat-e Majles, Dowreh-ye 5, Jalaseh-ye 251, February 9, 1926.

46. IOR/L/PS/10/794, Clive to Chamberlain, April 23, 1927.

47. ML6/14/13/1/70.

48. ML6/5/6/1/67.

49. IOR/L/PS/11/209, From Clive to Austen Chamberlain, November 26, 1927.

50. "Recent Developments in the Proposed Construction of a Trans-Persian Railway," May 14, 1927, Record Group 84, Records of Foreign Service Posts, Consular Posts, Tehran, Volume 50, 877.2, NARA.

51. IOR/L/PS/11/209, From B. J. Gould, Consul in Sistan and Kain, to Minister in Tehran, September 26, 1924.

52. IOR/L/PS/12/3472A, Annual Report 1933, 90, and IOR/L/PS/12/3400, Khuzistan, Ahwaz Diary, No. 10, October 1935.

53. Bayat, "Andisheh-ye Siyasi-ye Davar," 122; Matin-Asgari, "Berlin Circle," 62; Ghani, *Iran and the Rise of Reza Shah*, 295–97; and Enayat, *Law, State, and Society*, 120.

54. *Bulletin of Banque Mellie*, September 1938, 418. FO371/23258/E210/210/34.

55. For example, "Mozakerat-e majles dar atraf-e rah ahan," *Ettelaʿat*, February 22 and 23, 1927; "Mohandesin-e rah ahan," *Ettelaʿat*, July 30, 1927; "Qanun-e estekhdam-e motakhassesan-e rah ahan," *Ettelaʿat*, August 3, 1927; and "Emtiyaz-e yek reshteh-ye rah ahan beyn-e Mohammareh va Abadan," *Ettelaʿat*, November 7, 1927.

56. Meskub, *Dastan-e Adabiyat va Sargozasht-e Ejtemaʿ*, 30. Universal male suffrage had been achieved during the Constitutional period.

57. The newspaper *Setareh-ye Sobh*, edited by Mirza Ebrahim Khan Nahid, was also published under different names such as *Aflak*, *Khalq*, and *Nahid*. First published in 1921, it quickly became a popular reformist paper and was renowned for its political cartoons. Although Nahid was arrested five times for criticizing the new regime, he shared its sense of urgency regarding the need for social change and for reforming the ignorant "masses." See *Salnameh-ye Pars*, 1927–28, 64–65.

58. In British India, colonial writers also represented the railway in opposition to Indian religions, especially Hinduism. See Aguiar, *Tracking Modernity*, 15–6.

59. For other early Pahlavi cartoons that contrasted mechanized modes of transport and animal-powered transport, see "Mosaferin ba havapeima miravand, ba shotor savari bar migardand," *Khalq*, April 10, 1926; "Mardom beh taraf-e taraqqi va 'elm!" and "Ma. . . . .!" *Khalq*, July 17, 1926; and "Marasem-e esteqbal az yek kandid-e vekalat dar Iran," *Nahid*, April 17, 1928.

60. *Kaveh*, Series 2, 1:1 (January 11, 1921), 2; cited in Matin-Asgari, "Berlin Circle," 56.

61. For the shift in East Asia, see Duara, "Discourse of Civilization and Pan-Asianism."

62. The term "Silk Road" had been coined by Baron Ferdinand von Richthofen in 1877, but it was not used widely in English until the 1930s. In Persian, the term "Jaddeh-e Abrisham" appeared in the monthly journal of the Ministry of Roads in 1941. "Dar rah-e qadimi-ye tejarat-e abrisham," *Nameh-ye Rah* 1:9 (1941): 21. See Hansen, *Silk Road*, 6–8; see also Green, "From the Silk Road to the Railroad (and Back)," 167.

63. See the map of Iran in *Nahid*, January 19, 1929.

64. For representations of the ruinous state of post–World War I Iran in the nationalist discourse, see Zia-Ebrahimi, *Emergence of Iranian Nationalism*, especially chap. 7, "The Road to Officialdom."

65. Vezarat-e Toroq, *Rah Ahan-e Sararar-e Iran*, 13.

66. "Mazandaran va Gilan ya zarrestan-e Iran," *Salnameh-ye Pars*, 1936–37, 43.

67. For a similar characterization, see Vezarat-e Toroq, *Rah Ahan-e Sarasar-e Iran*, 55, and Malakuti, *Rah Ahan-e Iran*, 12.

68. For the plan of a train station in Shush, see "Gar," *Nahid*, June 25, 1929, 2. For plans of Ahvaz and Khor Musa (Bandar-e Shahpur) stations, see p. 17 of the same issue as well as *Nahid*, June 29, 1929, 2.

69. The exact process behind railway station design is unclear. Initial designs submitted to the German-American consortium seem to have been discarded. No relevant documents exist at the COWI archives, which house Kampsax documents. The stations were apparently designed in the Kampsax office in Tehran (with the exception of Tehran Station, which was designed in Copenhagen), but it is unclear to what extent the Iranian government exerted influence over architectural designs. I would like to thank Flemming Møller at the COWI archives for the information. Personal correspondence with Flemming Møller, April 23, 2012.

70. IOR/L/PS/12/3849, PZ6946. No. 369. From H. J. Seymour to Anthony Eden, September 24, 1937.

71. Vezarat-e Toroq, *Rah Ahan-e Sarasar-e Iran*, 100.

CHAPTER 4

1. COWI Archivs, Kasse 106, Ingolf Boisen, *Banen Skal Bygges Paa Seks Aar* (Copenhagen: Nyt Nordisk Forlag Arnold Busck, 1946), 138–40.

2. COWI Archives, KX 14, "Ingeniøren og Eventyret (Consortium Kampsax)," Indberetning nr., 38–39; and Gruner, *Iran—"Persien,"* 25. See also COWI Archives,

Kasse 102, Jernbaner, Iran, Club Irano Scandinave, 21; and COWI Archives, Kasse 106, Svend Buhelt, "Mit Persiske Eventyr (My Persian Adventure)," 55.

3. COWI Archives, Kasse 106, Boisen, *Banen Skal Bygges Paa Seks Aar*, 155.

4. For Sorkhabad near Veresk Bridge in Mazandaran, see COWI Archives, Kasse 106, Buhelt, "Mit Persiske Eventyr," 22–23. For Borujerd, see COWI Archives, Kasse 106, Povl Buhl, "Mit liv i Orienten" (My Life in the Orient), n.p., and COWI Archives, Kasse 106, Boisen, *Banen Skal Bygges Paa Seks Aar*, 70.

5. IOR/L/PS/12/3400, Khuzistan Diary, No. 9, October and November 1933. Given involvement by Japanese conglomerates in the opium smuggling business, it is possible that Japanese ships were also smuggling opium from Iran to Japan's colony of Taiwan, where the colonial government monopolized opium sale. For Japan's involvement in opium trafficking, see Regavim, *Most Sovereign of Masters*, especially 116–18.

6. IOR/L/PS/12/3400, Khuzistan Diary, No. 3, March 1934, No. 4, April 1936, and IOR/L/PS/12/3849, From A. E. Watkinson, Consul for Khuzistan, to Charge d'Affaires, British Legation, February 27, 1935. See also "History of the Persian Gulf Command," 11–15, Record Group 319, Entry 217, Box 1, NARA.

7. For the Pahlavi state's attempts at displacing Lor tribesmen and settling them in Khorasan, see FO371/23265 E4320/707/34, Mashhad Consular Diary, No. 8, May 1930, E5712/707/34, Mashhad Consular Diary, No. 13, August 1930, E6895/707/34, Mashhad Consular Diary No. 15, September 1930, No. 17. October 1930.

8. Adey, *Mobility*, 146–49.

9. For land tenure, see Lambton, *Landlord and Peasant in Persia*, especially 182–229. For property rights in the oil industry, Shafiee, *Machineries of Oil*, especially chap. 1, "Properties of Petroleum." For a polemical yet well-documented study, see Majd, *Great Britain and Reza Shah*.

10. Mahbubi-Ardakani, *Tarikh-e Mo'assesat*, 342.

11. IOR/L/PS/11/290, Ahwaz Diary, January, February, and April 1929.

12. Lambton, *Landlord and Peasant in Persia*, 188.

13. Numerous examples of Mazandaran properties having been destroyed without compensation are reported in Nuri, ed., *Asnad-e Mazandaran dar Dowreh-ye Reza Shah*. For example, see "E'teraz beh taghir-e naqsheh-ye jaddeh-ye Sari-Barforush," ML7/151/33/1/48 (Nuri, 209); "Taqaza-ye ahali-ye Barforush baraye jelowgiri az kharabi-ye bazar dar 'amaliyat-e rahsazi," ML8/32/32/42 (Nuri, 213); and "Taqaza-ye varseh-ye seyyed larimi baraye residegi beh mas'aleh-ye kharabi-ye karvansara dar Babol," ML8/33/32/78 (Nuri, 215). For other provinces, see ML10/159/16/1/349 (Sufiyan, East Azerbaijan) and ML9/60/17/7/278 (Sabzevar, Khorasan). For British sources, see IOR/L/PS/12/3404, From R. H. Hoare to Sir John Simon, May 24, 1932, IOR/L/PS/12/3404, Report by Mallet, Counsellor at British Legation, September 28, 1935, and BNA, WO106/5959, "Tribes of Luristan," 1943.

14. "E'teraz-e gholamreza mokhtari beh tasarrof-e amlakesh dar asar-e shuseh kardan-e rah-e Amol beh Barforush," ML6/73/39/9 (Nuri, 207–9). The Ministry of Roads also prohibited the building of the new *qanat* underneath roads. IOR/L/

PS/11/209/3859, Economic Report No. 37, "Road Tolls. The Duzdab-Meshed Road," August 10, 1922.

15. For instance, see "Jashn-e residan-e rah ahan beh Tehran–yek ruz-e bozorg por az masarrat va shadmani," *Ettelaʻat*, February 19, 1937, and "Rah ahan-e Iran," *Ettelaʻat*, March 15, 1939, and *Iran-e Emruz*, Vol. 1, No. 1 (1939), 48–52.

16. "Vaqayeʻ-e in mah," *Nameh-ye Rah* 2:8 (1941): 323–27.

17. ML13/148/15/1/233.

18. ML12/38/10/1/11 and ML13/119/6/1/126.

19. ML12/28/3/1/10.

20. ML13/100/2/1/44.

21. ML13/117/6/1/10. For a similar case, see ML12/28/3/1/10.

22. ML14/179/18/1/409.

23. ML11/205/11/1/8.

24. ML12/38/10/1/22 and ML13/101/2/1/76.

25. IOR/L/PS/12/3409, "Persia: Memorandum of the Commercial Secretary on the Northern Section of the Trans-Persian Railway," May 16, 1931.

26. COWI Archives, KX 14, "Ingeniøren og Eventyret (Consortium Kampsax)," 41–42, COWI Archives, Kasse 106, Boisen, *Banen Skal Bygges Paa Seks Aar*, 72–73, and COWI Archives, Kasse 106, Buhelt, "Mit Persiske Eventyr," 26.

27. ML12/57/25/1/50.

28. COWI Archives, Kasse 106, Buhl, "Mit liv i Orienten" (My Life in the Orient), n.p.

29. Scarcity of usable water was a problem even in northern Iran. For example, water from the Gorgan River near Bandar-e Shah was too opaque for locomotives, particularly in the spring. Water from the Bandar-e Gaz River was usable, but the river dried up in the summer. To solve this problem, water had to be hauled from Behshahr, sixty kilometers away from Bandar-e Shah. See "Sakenin-e bandar-e shah az eqdamat-e bongah-e rah ahan qadrdani mikonand," *Mardan-e Ruz*, June 6, 1945.

30. Sayre, *I Served in the Persian Gulf Command*, 25, and Motter, *Persian Corridor*, 369.

31. ML13/162/16/1/412.

32. IOR/L/PS/11/290. Khuzistan Diary, No. 1, January 1930. Also, contractors often cut trees from the local landowners' forests without providing compensation, allegedly to use them as lumber for the railway or to make way for the railway track. See Nuri, ed., *Asnad-e Mazandaran*, "Shekayat-e ahali-ye zirab az ʻadam-e pardakht-e qeimat-e ashjar tavassot-e kontoratchiha," ML9/117/33/29 (Nuri, 265), and ML10/175/25/1/47. More generally, Saghar Sadeghian briefly mentions the impact of transport infrastructure development on Caspian forests. See Sadeghian, "Caspian Forests."

33. Compensation for land acquisition was highly contested in the case of Bengal, too. Competing parties laid claim over one piece of land; lands were sometimes acquisitioned forcefully; local administrators and other officials did not always agree on who was responsible for environmental destruction associated with railways;

villagers opposed the use of nearby land that could impact their land environmentally. See Prasad, *Tracks of Change*, 103–8, and Sarkar, *Technology and Rural Change in Eastern India*, 44–67.

34. IOR/L/PS/11/209, 234/22/6410. From R. C. Parr to Lord Cushendun, November 1, 1928.

35. *Nahid*, October 30, 1928.

36. Despite its limited scale, the forced settlement of tribes in the late 1920s had disastrous consequences. See Cronin, *Tribal Politics in Iran*.

37. *Nahid*, October 30, 1928.

38. "Vaqaye'-e mohemeh sal az tir mah-e 307 ela tir mah-e 308," *Nahid*, June 25, 1929.

39. In addition to other articles discussed in this section, see a number of articles in *Nahid*, June 25, 1929, including "Yadgar-e eftetah-e rah-e Khorramabad" and "'Aks-e nemuneh-i az alvar ba budan-e do she sarkardeh-ye mashhur-e alvar," 20–29; "Mosaferat-e do mahe," a series of articles started in *Nahid* on September 22, 1928; and "Basharat: rah-e Ahvaz-Khorramabad-Tehran," *Nahid*, July 13, 1929.

40. Khazeni, *Tribes and Empire*, 193.

41. Cronin, *Tribal Politics in Iran*, 3.

42. For a discussion of the "peculiar frame of mind" that envisaged an inevitable confrontation with tribal groups, see Bayat, "Riza Shah and the Tribes," 217–18.

43. Cronin raises a similar question to Bayat's in her problematizing of the "tribal problem." See Cronin, *Tribal Politics in Iran*, introduction, especially 2–4.

44. Huber, *Channelling Mobilities*, 141–71.

45. For a discussion of time and work-discipline in modern Iran, see Atabaki, "Time, Labour-Discipline and Modernization." For the creation of a permanent workforce, see Atabaki, "From 'Amaleh (Labor) to Kargar (Worker)."

46. Amanolahi, "Reza Shah and the Lurs," 199.

47. Edmonds, "Pish-i-Kuh and Bala Gariveh," 347, 336.

48. Harrison, "South-West Persia: A Survey of Pish-i-Kuh in Luristan," 56.

49. Edmonds, "Pish-i-Kuh and Bala Gariveh (continued)," 438.

50. Black-Michaud, "Ethnographic and Ecological Survey," 218.

51. For instance, tribal leaders like the Vali of Posht-e Kuh and Dust Mohammad Khan of Baluchistan were initially co-opted as local governors.

52. Papi, *Shenakht-e Il-e Papi*, 134–35, and BNA, WO106/5959, "Tribes of Luristan," 1943.

53. IOR/L/PS/11/290, Percy Loraine to Austen Chamberlain, July 14, 1925, and R. H. Clive to Austen Chamberlain, April 7, 1928. For continuing disputes over the arbitrariness of land distribution well into the 1930s, IOR/L/PS/12/3400, Khuzistan Diaries, February 1934, and IOR/L/PS/12/3404, Butler to Eden, May 28, 1936.

54. IOR/L/PS/11/209, R. H. Clive to Austen Chamberlain, April 5, 1928.

55. IOR/L/PS/11/290, R. F. Woodward, Major, Military Attache to British Minister in Tehran, May 4, 1928.

56. Papi, *Shenakht-e Il-e Papi*, 143, and BNA, WO106/5959, "Tribes of Luristan."

57. IOR/L/PS/12/3400/PZ2969, PZ3627, PZ6327, PZ6646, PZ7292, PZ8023, PZ983, PZ 1507, PZ1955. Khuzestan Diaries, from February 1931 to January 1932.

58. IOR/L/PS/11/290/P3409, Khuzestan Diary, April 1928. However, the fact that Yadollah Khan found allies among conscription deserters may indicate the desperate conditions experienced by soldiers stationed to protect railway-related sites.

59. IOR/L/PS/12/3400/PZ6460, Khuzestan Diary, August 1932, and PZ3586, Khuzestan Diary, January 1933. For earlier layoffs, see IOR/L/PS/11/290/p2980, Ahwaz Diary, February 1930. For similar unrest in the Anglo-Persian Oil Company, see IOR/L/PS/12/3400/PZ983, Khuzestan Diary, November 1931.

60. IOR/L/PS/12/3400/PZ3587, Khuzestan Diary, February 1932.

61. IOR/L/PS/12/3469, R. H. Hoare to John Simon, February 10, 1933.

62. IOR/L/PS/12/3469/PZ2230/E1106/333/34, from R. H. Hoare to John Simon, February 10, 1933.

63. IOR/L/PS/12/3469/PZ2430/E2113/333/34, from A. E. Watkinson to R. H. Hoare on March 16, 1933.

64. IOR/L/PS/12/3472A, Annual Report 1933, 71, and IOR/L/PS/12/3469, Lorestan Affairs, 1932–33, From R. H. Hoare to John Simon, June 1, 1933.

65. As the British report "Tribes of Luristan" indicated, *tayefeh*s that were known for having "coolies"—such as the Kord Alivands and Murad Alivands within the Baharvand tribe (*il*)—insured that most of their adult members were employed on construction sites, either temporarily or permanently. Other tribes, such as the Beyranvands, had no known coolies. Thus, as was the case with Papis, it appears that tribal construction workers were usually hired during the Reza Shah period as groups through tribal khans rather than on an individual basis.

66. For instance, see IOR/L/PS/11/209/6410, R. C. Parr to Lord Cushendun, November 1, 1928, and "Burujird-Dizful Road."

67. Gruner, *Iran—"Persien,"* 20–21. Another source notes the presence of young children around ten years old and much older men with beards dyed red among construction laborers in Eastern Iran during World War II. See COWI Archives, Kurt Olsen, "Storm over Mellemøsten (Storm over the Middle East)," (Copenhagen: H. Hirschsprungs Forlag, n.d.), 76.

68. "Vinterbulletin fra Persien," COWI Archives, Kasse 106, November 1933, Ahvaz, 4. It appears that clocks were not used to measure working hours. As a Swiss engineer wrote, "Working hours were what a modern man would estimate [as] ten hours a day." See Gruner, *Iran—"Persien,"* 24.

69. COWI Archives, Kasse 106, Buhelt, "Mit Persiske Eventyr," 27.

70. The wage was the same in southeastern Iran. See IOR/L/PS/10/794/E1/1/34, "Parsi Transport Company in Southeast Persia," May 30, 1923. The qeran was a currency used in Iran prior to its replacement with the riyal in 1932. The qeran was worth 20 shahi and 0.1 toman.

71. IOR/L/PS/10/794/P56/E5438/201/34, from R. H. Clive to Austen Chamberlain, November 26, 1927. Mass exodus is a common form of collective action among coolies

to protest against working conditions without making specific demands. See Van der Linden, "Promise and Challenges of Global Labor History," 71.

72. IOR/L/PS/11/290/P4431, Ahvaz Diary, No. 4, April 1929.

73. Atabaki, "From ʻAmaleh (Labor) to Kargar (Worker)," 164, 166–68, and Gruner, *Iran—"Persien,"* 20.

74. In analyzing labor desertion, beyond the "lifestyle" of tribal laborers, it is also important to consider the dreadful material conditions in which construction laborers worked. For labor desertion among laborers who worked during the brutal winter of central Asia without special winter clothes provided, see Payne, *Stalin's Railroad*, 228–29. In the case of the Trans-Iranian Railway, the question of providing a uniform, particularly in winter, remained a complaint among workers even in the mid-1940s. See "Chera rah ahan-e dowlati-ye iran ta konun dara-ye uniform-e makhsusi nashodeh ast?" *Mardan-e Ruz*, February 14, 1945.

75. Nuri, ed., *Asnad-e Mazandaran*, "Javabiyeh-ye vezarat-e toroq dar mowred-e pardakht-e hoquq-e ʻamalejat," ML9/118/33/57 (Nuri, 224).

76. Kauffeldt, *Danes and the Modern Middle East*, 168, 171.

77. COWI Archives, KX 14, "Ingeniøren og Eventyret (Consortium Kampsax)," 54.

78. Southern Europe exported workers en masse to other parts of the Middle East before and during the Great Depression. See Beinin and Lockman, *Workers on the Nile*, 35–43.

79. IOR/L/PS/18/193, Memorandum Regarding the Policy of His Majesty's Government towards Persia at the Peace Conference, 20–23.

80. COWI Archives, Kasse 106, "Vinterbulletin fra Persien," 3.

81. ML 8/10/21/1/10.

82. IOR/L/PS/12/3400/PZ8023, Khuzestan Diary, October 1931. Likewise, immediately after the 1929 strike by oil workers in Abadan, three hundred construction workers hired by Ulen & Company also demanded higher wages. Upon receiving advice from the Anglo-Persian Oil Company, Ulen & Company requested that the governor-general of Ahvaz arrest the strike's ringleaders. Atabaki, "Missing Labour," 186.

83. COWI Archives, Olsen, "Storm over Mellemøsten," 57. Although Olsen states that Kampsax made sure that contractors paid workers regularly and deducted workers' salaries from the contractors' accounts if they did not, the effectiveness of this measure is questionable given the number of workers' complaints regarding nonpayment.

84. Nuri, ed., *Asnad-e Mazandaran*, "Taqaza-ye maldaran va ʻamalejat-e khatt-e kenar-e deh now baraye pardakht-e hoquq," ML9/118/33/57 (Nuri, 223); "Taqaza-ye pardakht-e hoquq-e ʻamalegi dar jaddeh-ye Shahi," ML10/186/34/16 (Nuri, 225); and "Taqaza-ye pardakht-e hoquq-e ʻaqabmandeh-ye motasaddi-ye jaddeh-ye Alasht," ML8/32/32/37 (Nuri, 255); and "Taqaza-ye ʻamalejat-e Damghani," ML9/118/33/84 (Nuri, 275).

85. Nuri, ed., *Asnad-e Mazandaran*, "Shekvaiyeh-ye mobasher-e rah ahan az ekhrajesh tavassot-e kampsaks," ML9/118/33/67 (Nuri, 271–72); IOR/L/PS/12/3400/PZ850, Khuzestan Diary, August 16 to October 20, No. 8, 1933; IOR/L/PS/3400/PZ4613, Khuzestan Diary, May 1934.

86. Email correspondence with Roozbeh Kalantary, March 14, 2018.

87. IOR/L/PS/12/3503, Intelligence Summary No. 23, November 16, 1940.

88. IOR/L/PS/12/3400/PZ3627, Khuzistan Diary, No. 3, March 1931.

89. IOR/L/PS/12/3409, "Opening of the Trans-Iranian Railway," H. J. Seymour to Viscount Halifax, August 30, 1938.

90. IOR/L/PS/12/3472A, Annual Report 1933, 90.

91. For instance, see Mahbubi-Ardakani, *Tarikh-e Mo'assesat*, 381, and Malakuti, *Rah Ahan-e Iran*, 195.

92. Mahbubi-Ardakani, *Tarikh-e Mo'assesat*, 383–85, and Malakuti, *Rah Ahan-e Iran*, 202–8.

93. "Kholaseh-ye gozaresh-e aqa-ye mohandes-e razmara, ra'is-e amuzesh-e fanni," *Mardan-e Ruz*, March 20, 1946.

94. Green, "Rethinking the 'Middle East.'"

95. Atabaki, "Disgruntled Guests," and Hachioshi, *Iran Kindai no Genzo*, 154–67.

96. Atabaki, "Far from Home," 104.

97. For a discussion of the tensions between the Danish consortium's lack of interest in indigenizing the workforce and the Pahlavi state's desire to Iranize the operations from a business history perspective, see Andersen, "Building for the Shah."

98. IOR/L/PS/11/290. Consul for Khuzistan, Ahwaz Diary, No. 10, October 1929.

99. Matthee, "Transforming Dangerous Nomads," 132.

100. As was the case with the oil industry, European engineers frequently complained about the perceived incompetence of Iranian "boys." For instance, see IOR/L/PS/12/3409. From Lacy Baggallay to Lord Marquess, September 21, 1931, "Persia: Progress of the North to South Trunk Railway," and IOR/L/PS/12/3404. From H. M. Knatchbull-Hugessen to Sir Samuel Hoare, October 24, 1935.

101. Tetzlaff, "Turn of the Gulf Tide."

102. Tetzlaff, "Turn of the Gulf Tide,"15.

103. "The Iraqi railways, for example, reduced their subordinate staff of skilled and unskilled labor, many of whom were Indians, from 26,120 to 304 between 1920 and 1931." Tetzlaff, "Turn of the Gulf Tide," 21.

104. IOR/L/PS/11/290. Consul for Khuzestan, Ahwaz Diary, No. 2, February 1929.

105. IOR/L/PJ/7/1904. From Nevile Butler to Lord Marquess, April 8, 1938. The APOC was renamed the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company (AIOC) in 1935.

106. IOR/L/PJ/7/1904. From Nevile Butler to Lord Marquess, April 8, 1938.

107. *Encyclopedia Iranica*. Commerce vii. In the Pahlavi and post-Pahlavi periods. http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/commerce-vii [accessed March 24, 2014].

108. IOR/L/PJ/7/1904. From Nevile Butler to Lord Marquess, April 8, 1938, June 1938.

109. "Kargaran-e rah ahan ra beshnasid," *Mardan-e Ruz*, July 10, 1946. His choice of the Tudeh newspaper was in stark contrast with nationalist newspapers the IRO technical consultant listed as his favorites. Besides *Mardan-e Ruz*, the technical consultant enjoyed *Mehr-e Iran*, *Khavar*, *Ettela'at*, *Ettela'at-e Haftegi*, and *Setareh*. "Karmandan-e rah ahan ra beshnasid," *Mardan-e Ruz*, February 27, 1946.

110. "Kargaran-e rah ahan ra beshnasid," *Mardan-e Ruz*, May 1 and May 8, 1946.

111. "Kargaran-e rah ahan ra beshnasid," *Mardan-e Ruz*, January 16, 1946; February 6, 1946; May 1, 1946; June 19, 1946; July 10, 1946; August 4, 1946; September 11, 1946; and September 18, 1946.

112. For temporary workers from northwestern Iran in the Russian Empire, see Atabaki, "Disgruntled Guests." Atabaki discusses workers from northwestern Iran, especially Ardabil, finding employment on construction projects like the Trans-Caspian Railway in the late nineteenth century. None of the workers discussed in this chapter were old enough to work on these projects; nevertheless, one can appreciate the long tradition of providing labor for industrial projects in northwestern Iran.

113. "Kargaran-e rah ahan ra beshnasid," *Mardan-e Ruz*, July 10, 1946; June 19, 1946.

114. "Kargaran-e rah ahan ra beshnasid," *Mardan-e Ruz*, January 16, 1946.

115. "Kargaran-e rah ahan ra beshnasid," *Mardan-e Ruz*, March 13, 1946; March 20, 1946; April 3, 1946; April 10, 1946; April 17, 1946; May 15, 1946; June 26, 1946; July 3, 1946; and July 17, 1946. The two exceptions were an eighty-eight-year-old employee, the oldest in the IRO in 1946, who had accrued significant work experience as a weapon maker prior to the twentieth century, and a twenty-eight-year-old employee, whose teen years occurred after the Trans-Iranian Railway project had already begun. "Kargaran-e rah ahan ra beshnasid," *Mardan-e Ruz*, April 24, 1946, and September 25, 1946.

116. Touraj Atabaki, "From ʻAmaleh (Labor) to Kargar (Worker)," 167–68.

117. "Kargaran-e rah ahan ra beshnasid," *Mardan-e Ruz*, April 17, 1946; January 30, 1946.

CHAPTER 5

1. "Saneheh-ye istgah-e Markaz-e Garm: shayeʻat-e eghraqamiz haqiqat nadarad," *Mardan-e Ruz*, July 4, 1945. For an example of the coverage of this accident, see "Tafsil-e hadeseh-ye asafnak-e rah ahan," *Ettelaʻat*, June 21, 1945.

2. Malakuti, *Rah Ahan-e Iran*, 342.

3. Virilio, *Original Accident*, 10. This does not mean that accidents were entirely new. Yet premodern human-made accidents were more localized, minor, and transitory. See Matthewman, "Waiting to Happen," 115–16.

4. In Iran, a translation of Thomas Mann's short story "Das Eisenbahnunglück" (The Railway Accident) was published in 1949 in the literary magazine *Danesh*; see Mann, *Saneheh-ye Rah Ahan*.

5. In his classic study, Wolfgang Shivelbusch notes the initial ambivalence toward railway technology in nineteenth-century Europe. The railway journey was marked by the sense of ease and comfort as well as the ever-present fear of a potential disaster. See Schivelbusch, *Railway Journey*; see also Matus, "Trauma, Memory, and Railway Disaster." For a historical study of how the public viewed catastrophic accidents, see Matthews, *Civilizing Machine*, chap. 4.

6. For the vulnerability of the "complex hi-tech assemblages," see Matthewman,

"Waiting to Happen," 122. For infrastructural disruption as normalcy, see Larkin, *Signal and Noise*, especially chap. 7.

7. Malakuti, *Rah Ahan-e Iran*, 336–37, 342. Considering the extensive number of fatalities and injuries in some of the major accidents, one can assume that the relatively small numbers in these statistics were inconclusive. For example, the Markaz-e Garm accident in 1945 alone injured between 86 and 118 individuals, while Malakuti's account claims that only 136 people were injured during the entire year 1324 (1945–46).

8. For everyday practice of consumers when disruption becomes normalized, see Trentmann, "Disruption Is Normal."

9. For example, see "Ziyan-e nadani: dinamit bazicheh nist," *Nameh-ye Rah* 1:9 (1941): 18, and Malakuti, *Rah Ahan-e Iran*, 338–40. For a locomotive engineer who was blamed for a fatal railway accident and faced the prospect of a prison term in 1944, see ML14/80/5/1/187. Similar arguments were common in the transport sector in general. See "Otumobil va ranandegi," *Nameh-ye Rah* 2:5 (1941): 188, and 2:6 (1941): 226.

10. IOR/L/PS/12/3404, From H. M. Knatchbull-Hugessen to Sir Samuel Hoare, October 24, 1935. For similar complaints about perceived incompetence of Iranian workers, see IOR/L/PS/12/3409, "Persia: Memorandum of the Commercial Secretary on the Northern Section of the Trans-Persian Railway, May 16, 1931, and IOR/L/PS/12/3409, "Persia: Progress of the North to South Trunk Railway," September 21, 1931.

11. "Sana'at va amuzesh," *Mardan-e Ruz*, April 11, 1945.

12. Sheller, "From Spatial Turn to Mobilities Turn," 8.

13. Edwards, "Infrastructure and Modernity."

14. Barak, *On Time*, 57–60.

15. Mentzel, "Accidents, Sabotage, and Terrorism," 233.

16. In the United States, a combination of factors such as legal pressure, public opinion, and the costliness of disruption and destruction caused by accidents convinced railway companies to shift from blaming individual workers to undertaking organizational improvements; see Aldrich, *Death Rode the Rails*. In his analysis of traffic safety, particularly in the United States, Peter Norton discusses changing paradigms of who to blame and what to fix to ensure safety. See Norton, "Four Paradigms: Traffic Safety in the Twentieth-Century United States." As the case of road safety in Kenya and South Africa shows, however, specific local contexts shaped how road safety measures evolved. Lamont and Lee, "Arrive Alive: Road Safety in Kenya and South Africa."

17. For how technocratic experts create a way of ordering the world, see Mitchell, *Rule of Experts*.

18. For Frederick Taylor's attempts at producing "a new form of modern mobility where the bodies of workers were reconstituted as passive objects—machines to serve the interests of capital," see Cresswell, *On the Move*, 92.

19. Barry, *Political Machines*, 3.

20. For example, John A. Gillies, a lieutenant colonel stationed in Iran for the

American Military Mission in late 1941, was general manager of the Santa Fe Railroad. See Motter, *Persian Corridor*, 334.

21. "Major Activities of the Persian Gulf Command, 19 June 1943 to 1 January 1944," Record Group 160, Entry 116, Box 24, NARA, and Motter, *Persian Corridor*, 331.

22. During the same period, trucks carried 1,235,088 long tons. Airplanes carried 36,018 long tons. See Sayre, *I Served in the Persian Gulf Command*, 31–32.

23. Schayegh, *Who Is Knowledgeable Is Strong*, 95–109.

24. For the timetable of the Iranian State Railway, "Agahi: barnameh-ye vorud va khoruj-e qatarha-ye mosaferi az Tehran dar salha-ye 1323–24," *Mardan-e Ruz*, May 23, 1945. For the travelogue, Arjomand, *Shesh Sal*, 262–66.

25. Clawson, "Knitting Iran Together," 236–37, and Ebtehaj, *Guide Book on Iran*, 154–63.

26. "Ehsa'iyeh: otumobil va do charkheh va sodur-e tasdiqnameh-ye ranandegan," *Ettelaʿat*, August 30, 1926. "Motor Vehicle Census in Persia," April 8, 1933, 2. Record Group 84, Vol. 87, NARA. For further data from 1931, see "Vasayet-e naqliyeh va ʿeddeh-ye talafat," *Salnameh-ye Pars*, 1932–33, 101.

27. "Major Activities of the Persian Gulf Command, Period 19 June, 1943 to 1 January, 1944," Record Group 160, Entry 116, Box 24, NARA.

28. *Nameh-ye Rah* 1:5–6 (1940); see also *Nameh-ye Rah* 2:1 (1941).

29. "Mosaferat-e diruz va emruz," *Ettelaʿat*, August 7, 1933.

30. For example, "Vagunchi negah dar!" *Nahid*, November 1, 1927; "Khub zadim beh chal 2," *Nahid*, September 15, 1928; and "Dar rah-e Ahvaz 40," *Ettelaʿat*, December 25, 1936.

31. "Khub zadim beh chal 1," *Nahid*, September 4, 1928.

32. Schayegh, *Who Is Knowledgeable Is Strong*, 99. Vanessa Ogle has recently critiqued E. P. Thompson's analysis that assumes a causal relationship between the proliferation of an abstracted notion of time and industrial capitalism. See Ogle, *Global Transformation of Time*, especially chap. 2, "Saving Social Time." In the case of Iran, the call for adopting time discipline and abstract time emerged among those who had access to writings about the topic in European languages when there was no sizable industry outside the oil fields in southwestern Iran. For them, adopting a new notion of time was part and parcel of Iran's attempts at replicating European modernity.

33. Levantine writers at the turn of the twentieth century also wrote extensively on how to manage finite time. See Ogle, *Global Transformation of Time*, chap. 5, "Comparing Time Management."

34. IOR/L/PS/11/228, From Sir Percy Loraine to the Marquess Curzon of Kedleston, October 30, 1922; IOR/L/PS/11/290, Consul for Khuzistan, Ahwaz Diary, No. 1, January 1930; IOR/L/PS/12/3406, Meshed Consular Diary, No. 18, September 1931; IOR/L/PS/12/3399, From Agent to the Governor General and Chief Commissioner in Baluchistan to the Foreign Secretary to the Government of India, November 7, 1931; and IOR/L/PS/12/3503, Intelligence Summary, No. 26, December

17, 1938. See also COWI Archives, Kasse 106, Buhl, "Mit liv i Orienten," (My Life in the Orient), n.p.

35. Keeling, *Pictures from Persia*, 57–58. For similar observations of chaotic roads, see Isoda, *Kiiroi Sabaku*, 29–35, 56, and 69, and COWI Archives, Kasse 106, Boisen, *Banen Skal Bygges Paa Seks Aar*, 33–34.

36. Especially in Khuzestan, floods could cut off the railway line for a month. For an incident between Ahvaz and Khorramshahr, see Coll 28/97(2) "Tehran Intelligence Summaries" [120r] (239/252), British Library: India Office Records and Private Papers, IOR/L/PS/12/3507, in *Qatar Digital Library,* https://www.qdl.qa/archive/81055/vdc_100055165773.0x000028 [accessed December 28, 2019]. See also "History of the Persian Gulf Command," 13, Record Group 319, Entry 217, Box 1, NARA; Motter, *Persian Corridor*, 355; and "Havades," *Mardan-e Ruz*, January 10and April 11, 1945.

37. Filmer, *Pageant of Persia*, 48.

38. IOR/L/PS/12/3400, Khuzistan Diary, No. 12, December 1932.

39. IOR/L/PS/12/3400, Khuzistan Diaries, No. 5, May 1933, and No. 12, December 1936.

40. See illustrations and captions in *Salnameh-ye Pars*, 1930–31, 71–80.

41. IOR/L/PS/3400, PZ4765, "Khuzistan Consular Diary No. 5," May 1932, and PZ6460, "Khuzistan Consular Diary No. 8," August 1932. See also IOR/L/PS/3400, PZ6380, "Khuzistan Consular Diary No. 6, 7, 8," June, July, and August 1934, and PZ5839, "Khuzistan Consular Diary No. 6," June 1935. See also IOR/L/PS/3400, PZ6380, "Khuzistan Consular Diary No. 6–8," June, July, and August 1934, and PZ5839, "Khuzistan Consular Diary No. 6," June 1935.

42. For the case of Banu Mirzadeh Erfeʿi's petition, see ML13/147/15/1/190. For the case of Maʿsumeh Ardabili, see ML13/148/15/1/233. For a legal study of railway accidents in the Ottoman Empire, see Nacar, "Railroads as Sites of Social Conflict."

43. "Havades," *Mardan-e Ruz*, January 31and April 11, 1945, and "Tasadof-e qatar beh dah ras-e gav," *Mardan-e Ruz*, June 20, 1945.

44. COWI Archives, KX 14, "Ingeniøren og Eventyret (Consortium Kampsax)," Indberetning nr. KX 14, COWI Archives, 39.

45. "Havades," *Mardan-e Ruz*, January 10, 1945.

46. "Zir-e otubus, *Ettelaʿat*, July 11, 1945; "Zir-e otumobil," *Ettelaʿat*, July 11, 1945; "Fowt dar zir-e otumobil," *Ettelaʿat,* July 11, 1945; and "Fowt dar zir-e qatar," *Ettelaʿat*, July 11, 1945.

47. This included Parviz Mirza, the great grandson of Crown Prince Abbas Mirza, and Ahmad Mosaddeq, Mohammad Mosaddeq's son. See Malakuti, *Rah Ahan-e Iran*, 183–94, and "Roʾasa-ye sabeq-e rah ahan ra beshnasid," *Mardan-e Ruz*, April 24, 1946.

48. For instance, between 1929 and 1932, the Ministry of Roads sent sixty-nine students to the West to study railway engineering. See Menashri, *Education and the Making of Modern Iran*, 125.

49. "Karmandan-e rah ahan ra beshnasid (Ibrahim Ruhi)," *Mardan-e Ruz*, January 23, 1946; "Karmandan-e rah ahan ra beshnasid (Hoseyn Hasheminezhad)," *Mardan-e Ruz*, February 6, 1946; "Karmandan-e rah ahan ra beshnasid (doktor

Taba)," *Mardan-e Ruz*, February 20, 1946; and "Karmandan-e rah ahan ra beshnasid (Khosrow Hedayat)," *Mardan-e Ruz*, March 20, 1946.

50. "Nazari beh vaz'yat-e fe'li-ye rah ahan," *Mardan-e Ruz*, June 20, 1945.

51. "Saneheh-ye istgah-e Markaz-e Garm," *Mardan-e Ruz*, July 4, 1945, and "Rah ahan ra bayad baraye reqabatha-ye eqtesadi-ye zaman-e solh amadeh kard," *Mardan-e Ruz*, May 20, 1945.

52. "Karmandan-e biganeh dar khedmat-e dowlat," *Mardan-e Ruz*, March 7, 1945.

53. Malakuti, *Rah Ahan-e Iran*, 338–39.

54. Malakuti, *Rah Ahan-e Iran*, 326–27.

55. "*A'innameh-ye Shomareh-ye F*-1 *Mokarrar: Zamimeh-ye A'innameh-ye F*-1," *Nameh-ye Rah* 1:9 (1941): 19.

56. "Accident Rate," April 24, 1943, Record Group 497, Entry 9, Box 893, Decimal File 537.4, NARA.

57. Malakuti, *Rah Ahan-e Iran*, 329, and "History of the Persian Gulf Command," pt. 2, chap. 6, History of the Office of Technical Information, 6, Record Group 319, Entry 217, Box 1, NARA.

58. Malakuti, *Rah Ahan-e Iran*, 330–32. Motter notes the inauguration of a "comprehensive safety program" in 1944 without further detail. Motter, *Persian Corridor*, 363.

59. IOR/L/PS/10/794, From Robert Clive to A. Henderson on February 13 and October 6, 1929; "Doshvariha-ye bongah-e rah ahan," *Mardan-e Ruz*, January 10, 1945.

60. "Persia: Progress of the North to South Trunk Railway," IOR/L/PS/12/3409, From Knatchbull-Hugessen to Sir Samuel Hoare, October 24, 1935; IOR/L/PS/12/3404, and Khuzistan Diaries, March 1937, IOR/L/PS/12/3400.

61. For the British case, see Wetzel, "Railroad Management's Response to Operating Employees Accidents." For the American case, see Aldrich, *Safety First*, 25.

62. Motter, *Persian Corridor*, 363.

63. Malakuti, *Rah Ahan-e Iran*, 340–43.

64. "Thefts and Pilferage by Military Personnel," March 31, 1944, Record Group 497, Entry 9, Box 1, NARA, and From G.A.M. Anderson, Colonel, Infantry, to Aghai Darvish, Acting Governor of Khorramshahr, November 21, 1945, Record Group 497, Entry 9, Box 1, NARA.

65. Sayre, *I Served in the Persian Gulf Command*, 4.

66. "Suspected Sabotage," April 30, 1944, Record Group 497, Entry 9, Box 893, NARA.

67. "Report of Accident" February 3, 1945, Record Group 497, Entry 9, Box 893, NARA.

68. "Security of Railway Line," from Intelligence Corps to Headquarters, June 8, August 8, August 23, and September 29, 1944, Record Group 497, Entry 9, Box 1, NARA.

69. Sheller, "From Spatial Turn to Mobilities Turn," 8.

70. In comparing the age of coal and that of oil, Timothy Mitchell has made a case for the relationship between workers' ability to sabotage and its implications on

democratic politics. Although our evidence on sabotage is limited, and we should never ignore the crucial change in the general political context after the end of the Allied occupation in Iran, it is interesting that the post-occupation period witnessed intensification of railway workers' labor politics, as we will see in chap. 6. See Mitchell, *Carbon Democracy*.

71. Motter, *Persian Corridor*, 238, 360–362; "Yek mozuʿ-e hayati rajeʿ beh rah ahan-e iran: amniyat-e rah ahan pas az ʿazimat-e mottafeqin ba kist?" *Mardan-e Ruz*, May 30, 1945.

72. "Dismissal of Civilian Employees," July 29, 1944, Record Group 497, Entry 9, Box 853, NARA.

73. "Suspected Sabotage," May 4, 1944, Record Group 497, Entry 9, Box 893, NARA.

74. "Suspected Sabotage," May 4, 1944, Record Group 497, Entry 9, Box 893, NARA, 340. See also "Havades," *Mardan-e Ruz*, April 11, 1945.

75. Malakuti, *Rah Ahan-e Iran*, 339. For other examples of passenger victims in railway accidents, see "Havades," *Mardan-e Ruz*, April 11, 1945.

76. Malakuti, *Rah Ahan-e Iran*, 340–43. There were three other accidents, none of which resulted in fatalities; these accidents were not explicitly blamed on workers' behavior.

77. The discussion of the accident is based on "12 Indian Division Orders," January 19, 1943, and "Headquarters, Ahwaz Service District, Persian Gulf Service," Record Group 497, Entry 9, Box 864, Decimal File 370.11, NARA.

78. "Headquarters, Ahwaz Service District, Persian Gulf Service," 8–9, 11.

79. Bongah-e Rah Ahan, *Moqarrarat-e ʿOmumi/Rules and Regulations*, 2–3, 8–9, and 15 (English) and 3–4, 8–10, and 15–16 (Persian).

80. In the early twentieth century, American industrialists attempted to eradicate irregular "mobilities—those considered superfluous to the production of steel, handkerchiefs, or lemon meringue pies," to cultivate new, orderly, and knowable mobilities. In doing so, they meticulously recorded every motion workers made by using photography. The fact that the Iranian railway industry made similar attempts during the occupation, when many American railway men served in Iran, deserves attention here. See Cresswell, *On the Move*, 98–106, 120–121. For the scientific management of bodily movement, see Rabinbach, *Human Motor*.

81. "Headquarters, Ahwaz Service District, Persian Gulf Service," 14–15.

82. For a petition submitted by an Iranian locomotive engineer whom the Accidents Division found responsible for an accident, see ML14/80/5/1/187.

83. For the tension between abstracted mobility envisioned by planners and technocrats and actual embodied motion lived by individuals, see Cresswell, *On the Move*, 58.

84. Burnham, *Accident Prone*.

85. For Mirsepasi, see Schayegh, *Who Is Knowledgeable Is Strong*, 81–85.

86. "Azmayesh-e Ruhi-ye Ranandegan," *Nameh-ye Rah*, 1:2 (1940): 3, 5, 4.

87. "Azmayesh-e Ruhi az Ranandegan," *Nameh-ye Rah*, 1:4 (1940): 9–10, 5–7.

88. "Azmayesh-e Ruhi az Ranandegan," *Nameh-ye Rah*, 1:4 (1940): 6.

89. "Mo'arrefi va mo'alejeh-ye karmandan-e mo'tad beh taryak beh behdari," *Mardan-e Ruz*, July 4, 1945.

CHAPTER 6

1. Manu Goswami briefly discusses the formation of a transregional labor market and the hierarchization of different categories of workers, illustrating the simultaneous processes of homogenization and differentiation. Goswami, *Producing India*, 109–16.

2. For a recent study of working-class formation as a discursive process in Iran, see Atabaki, "From 'Amaleh (Labor) to Kargar (Worker)."

3. Laura Bear discusses Indian railway workers' petitions submitted to internal committees of railway officials following the development of an institutional mechanism for petitioning in the 1920s. The striking aspect of this practice is the degree of its institutionalization. In the case of Iran, it is unclear to what extent the system of petitioning was centralized, how petitions were read, and how they were processed. Therefore, I restrict my analysis primarily to the language of petitioning. See Bear, *Lines of the Nation*, especially chap. 5, "An Economy of Suffering."

4. "Namehha-ye Varedeh," *Mardan-e Ruz*, February 27, 1946.

5. ML10/134/7/1/20.

6. This is similar to Lex Heerma van Voss's discussion of petitioning. It could work to form a coalition between the central state and the local population against intermediate power holders. See van Voss, "Introduction." For the case of nineteenth-century Egyptian peasants encountering the state as a multilayered nexus of power through petitioning, see Chalcraft, "Engaging the State." At the same time, as Irene Schneider has argued in her study of Qajar Iran, it is important to note that this particular language in petitions implicitly criticized the shah for allowing the corrupt system to continue to exist. Schneider, *Petitioning System in Iran*, 97–101.

7. For the social security fund, see Floor, *Labor and Industry in Iran*, 93, and Schayegh, "Development of Social Insurance in Iran," 545.

8. Nuri, ed., *Asnad-e Mazandaran*, "Taqaza-ye pardakht-e hoquq-e 'amalegi dar jaddeh-ye shahi," 225–26. See also Nuri, ed., *Asnad-e Mazandaran*, "Taqaza-ye 'Abbas Qoli 'Atapur baraye bar qarari-ye moqarrari-ye havades va shoghl-e monaseb," 262, and ML11/19/39/1/3.

9. ML14/78/5/1/79.

10. Atabaki, "Missing Labour," and Ladjevardi, *Labor Unions and Autocracy in Iran*. For the 1929 strike, see Bayat, "With or Without Workers in Reza Shah's Iran."

11. "Gozaresh-e ha'yat-e 'ammeh-ye ettehdiyehha-ye kargaran-e rah ahan," *Zafar*, August 11, 1946.

12. In particular, see Ehsani, *Social History of Labor.*

13. Rasmus Christian Elling notes how socialization spaces, particularly clubs, provided by the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company became sites of resistance for the labor movement. Elling, "War of Clubs."

14. Ehsani, "Social Engineering," and Crinson, "Abadan: Planning and Architecture."

15. This is not to say that oil workers were homogeneous. As Elling points out, Iranian workers of Abadan came from various provincial backgrounds. However, while it is analytically feasible in studying the oil industry to use a generalized definition such as "Persian" in contradistinction to the Arabs of Abadan, this distinction does not work in the railway industry because the provincial backgrounds of workers were not the same across the route. See Elling, "War of Clubs," 280n7.

16. Cobble, *The Other Women's Movement*, and Vargas, *Labor Rights Are Civil Rights*.

17. Similarly, Mexican railway workers' masculinity was tied to their mobility, which was in turn associated with autonomy. Alegre, "Las Rieleras," 169.

18. McFarland, "Anatomy of an Iranian Political Crowd."

19. Atabaki, "Indian Migrant Workers," 214.

20. Motter, *Persian Corridor*, 360–362.

21. Majd, *Iran under Allied Occupation in World War II*, and Rowhani and Izadizadeh, eds., *Asnadi az Eshghal-e Iran dar Jang-e Jahani-ye Dovvom*.

22. Motter, *Persian Corridor*, 349, 252.

23. "Employment by Persian Gulf Command of Discharged Iranian Soldiers," December 27, 1943, Record Group 338, Entry 29465, Box 77, Decimal File 230.14, NARA; "Major Activities of the Persian Gulf Command, 19 June 1943 to 1 January 1944," Record Group 160, Entry 116, Box 24, NARA.

24. "History of the Military Railway Service," 145, in an incomplete copy of the study "History of the Persian Gulf Command," Record Group 319, Entry 217, Box 1, NARA.

25. "Polish Employees in American Laundry," September 21, 1943, "Polish Labor," September 30, 1943, "Employment of Poles at Andimeshk," October 2, 1943, "Employment of Polish Refugees," December 6, 1943, and From Arselby, Major-General, to Minister of State, Cairo, January 22, 1944. Record Group 338, Entry 29465, Box 77, Decimal File 230.14, NARA.

26. "History of the Military Railway Service," 103.

27. "History of Construction," 43, in an incomplete copy of the study "History of the Persian Gulf Command," Record Group 319, Entry 217, Box 1, NARA.

28. "Native Civilian Employment," November 18, 1943, Record Group 338, Entry 29465, Box 77, NARA.

29. Malakuti, *Rah Ahan-e Iran*, 66, 202–3, and 410. See also "Janbeh'ha-ye rah ahan—jashn-e farogh al-tahsil-e dowreh-ye dovvom-e honarestan-e rah ahan dar amuzesh-e fanni," *Mardan-e Ruz*, March 21, 1945.

30. "Alleged Violation of Labor Policy," March 8, 1943, and "Report of Investigation," March 30, 1943, Record Group 338, Entry 29465, Box 77, Decimal File 230.144, NARA.

31. "Employment of MTS Civilian Drivers by the Russians in Violation of Present Labor Agreements," December 7, 1943, Record Group 338, Entry 29465, Box 77, Decimal File 230.144, NARA.

32. "Investigation of Complaint of British Regarding Arabian American Oil Company's Recruitment Activities in Iraq," September 12, 1944, Record Group 338, Entry 29465, Box 77, Decimal Finle 230.14, NARA.

33. "Recruitment of Labor in Iraq," May 27, 1943, Record Group 338, Entry 29465, Box 77, Decimal File 230.144, NARA.

34. "Labor Relations," June 10, 1943, Record Group 338, Entry 29465, Box 77, Decimal File 230.144, NARA.

35. "Dismissal of Civilian Employees," July 29, 1944, Record Group 497, Entry 9, Box 853, Decimal File 230.146, NARA.

36. Ahmadi, *Man va Zendegi*, 87–92.

37. "History of the Military Railway Service," 104 and 107–108.

38. "History of the Military Railway Service," 106, 104, 144. The silos stored grain specifically for employees of the Iranian State Railway.

39. "From Gholam Reza Ali Abadi to The U.S. Army Command, December 15, 1944," Record Group 338, Entry 29465, Box 77, Decimal File 230.14, NARA.

40. "Ahamiyat-e amuzeshgah-e bongah-e rah ahan," *Nameh-ye Rah* 2:1 (March 1941): 5–9. For sports in the early Pahlavi period, see Schayegh, "Sport, Health, and the Iranian Middle Class in the 1920s and 1930s."

41. Long, *The Rise and Fall of the Healthy Factory*, 26, 40.

42. Ehsani, *Social History of Labor*, 220–21.

43. "Bashgah-e rah ahan tashkil shod," *Mardan-e Ruz*, January 9, 1946.

44. Mann, "Development Arrested?"

45. "History of the Ports," 108, in an incomplete copy of the study "History of the Persian Gulf Command," Record Group 319, Entry 217, Box 1, NARA.

46. There were thirty-four reported cases of scurvy among hospitalized workers at the Shahrud Railway Hospital in 1940–41. The director of the hospital attributed workers' deficiency of Vitamin C to their lack of access to fresh fruits and vegetables. "Bimariha-ye eskorbut," *Nameh-ye Rah* 2:10 (1941): 390.

47. Refrigerated railway cars were used for the transport of frozen food, perishable food, medical biologicals, photographic materials, ice, and surgical and medical cases requiring air-conditioned environments. Emergency heat-stroke centers were also transported in refrigerated cars. See "Mechanical Refrigerated Railway Express Cars," September 30, 1943, Record Group 497, Entry 9, Box 893, Decimal File 531.4, NARA.

48. Malakuti, *Rah Ahan-e Iran*, 404–5.

49. Malakuti, *Rah Ahan-e Iran*, 410.

50. "Bashgah-e rah ahan cheh mikonad," *Mardan-e Ruz*, September 5, 1945. For a similar argument, see "Lozum-e ijad-e bashgah dar navahi-ye rah ahan," *Mardan-e Ruz*, May 16, 1945.

51. Malakuti, *Rah Ahan-e Iran*, 410–11. See also "Ta'sis-e bashgah-e rah ahan dar nahiyeh-ye arak," *Mardan-e Ruz*, February 14, 1945.

52. Malakuti, *Rah Ahan-e Iran*, 209–11, 208.

53. Malakuti, *Rah Ahan-e Iran*, 413, 412.

54. For a brief biography of Varnus, see "Yeki az khedmatgozaran-e vezarat-e rah," *Nameh-ye Rah* 2:10 (1941): 372–73.

55. Malakuti, *Rah Ahan-e Iran*, 226, 409.

56. COWI Archives, Kasse 106, Boisen, *Banen Skal Bygges Paa Seks Aar*, 138–40.

57. "History of the Persian Gulf Command," pt. 2, chap. 2, History of the Foreign Claims Commission, 10, NARA.

58. "Miting-e kargaran-e rah ahan," *Zafar*, March 1, 1946; "Qat'nameh-ye kargaran-e rah ahan," *Zafar*, March 15, 1946; and "Kargaran-e nahiyeh-ye rah ahan-e jonub," *Zafar*, May 27, 1946. See also "Namehha-ye varedeh," *Mardan-e Ruz*, February 6, 1946.

59. "Namehha-ye varedeh," *Mardan-e Ruz*, February 6, 1946.

60. "Namehha-ye varedeh," *Mardan-e Ruz*, February 6, 1946, and "Kargaran-e nahiyeh-ye rah ahan-e jonub," *Zafar*, May 27, 1946.

61. Ehsani, "Social Engineering."

62. Emami, ed., *Andimeshk dar Aghaz*, 48.

63. Ehsani, "Social Engineering," 385–89.

64. Emami, ed., *Andimeshk dar Aghaz*, 59–61. I would like to thank Seyyed Abbas Emami for sharing his recollections of Sakhteman in the 1950s and 1960s with me.

65. For the two exceptions, "Kargaran-e rah ahan ra beshenasid (Qasem Nabhani)," April 10 and June 26, 1946 (Rajab Ali Maleki). Both had multiple wives.

66. Malakuti, *Rah Ahan-e Iran*, 67.

67. "Bikaran-e rah ahan," *Mardan-e Ruz*, August 15, 1945.

68. "Ey rah ahan baraye to va beh fekr-e to hastim, naomid mabash," *Mardan-e Ruz*, October 2, 1946. For the first half of the article, see *Mardan-e Ruz*, September 25, 1946.

69. For an article attributing theft by employees to underpayment, see "Ezdiyad-e daramad-e rah ahan," *Mardan-e Ruz*, January 23, 1946. For an additional article linking underpayment to theft (in response to accusations by the newspaper *Mard-e Emruz*), see "Nameh-ye varedeh," *Mardan-e Ruz* February 13, 1946.

70. Malakuti, *Rah Ahan-e Iran*, 146, 152.

71. Vezarat-e Toroq, *Rah Ahan-e Sarasar-e Iran*.

72. Vezarat-e Toroq, *Rah Ahan-e Sarasar-e Iran*, 44.

73. Malakuti, *Rah Ahan-e Iran*, 116, 344–45, 348.

74. For examples, see "Marasem-e jashn-e shab-e avval-e zhanuviyeh dar bongah-e rah ahan-e dowlati-ye Iran," *Mardan-e Ruz*, January 10, 1945; "Pol-e piruzi," *Mardan-e Ruz*, February 14, 1945; and "Safheh-ye vizheh-ye kargaran: kargaran-e rah ahan ham del darand," *Mardan-e Ruz*, January 2, 1946.

75. The AIOC also disseminated company publications written in English in an attempt to create an "imagined community" of its employees who lived across wide geographic expanses in the 1920s. See Ehsani, *Social History of Labor*, 264.

76. "Lozum-e vahdat va hamahangi dar rah ahan," *Mardan-e Ruz*, October 12, 1946. For a similar argument, see "Lozum-e tashkil-e sindika-ye karmandan va kargaran-e rah ahan," *Mardan-e Ruz*, June 5, 1946.

77. "History of the Military Railway Service," 119.

78. Abrahamian, *Iran between Two Revolutions*, 348–53.

79. Nuri, *Ruzgar-e Biqarari: Mazandaran va Gorgan dar Eshghal-e Artesh-e Sorkh*, 129.

80. "Gozaresh-e ha'yat-e 'ammeh-ye ettehdiyehha-ye kargaran-e rah ahan," *Zafar*, August 11, 1946. Ladjevardi, *Labor Unions and Autocracy in Iran*, 47.

81. "Telegraf az garmsar," *Zafar*, May 29, 1946.

82. "E'tesab-e kargaran-e depow-ye rah ahan," *Zafar*, March 6, 1946; "Qabel-e tavajjoh-e bongah-e rah ahan," *Zafar*, May 28, 1946; and "Gozaresh-e ha'yat-e 'ammeh-ye ettehdiyehha-ye kargaran-e rah ahan." For protests and strikes organized by railway workers, see Abrahamian, *Social Bases of Iranian Politics*, 229.

83. Schayegh, "Development of Social Insurance in Iran," 552.

84. Nuri, *Ruzgar-e Biqarari*, 249–51.

85. "Lozum-e vahdat va hamahangi dar rah ahan," *Mardan-e Ruz*, October 12, 1946.

86. "Nazari beh vaz'yat-e fe'li-ye rah ahan," *Mardan-e Ruz*, June 20, 1945.

87. "Karmandan-e biganeh dar khedmat-e dowlat," *Mardan-e Ruz*, March 7, 1945. For a more balanced view, see "Ta'sir-e chahar sal hamkari ba mottafeqin," *Mardan-e Ruz*, May 16, 1945.

88. ML14/93/39/1/88.

89. At the same time, Indian workers of the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company were striking in solidarity with Iranian workers during the 1946 Abadan strike. Rostamji's petition could be indicative of the different status of Indians in the two industries. In the railway industry owned by the Iranian state, Indian workers were often resented as foreign workers who condescendingly looked down on Iranians. In the AIOC, however, Indian workers could have situated themselves differently, especially in the context of the immediate aftermath of World War II, in solidarity with Iranian workers. For Indian oil workers in the 1946 strike, see Atabaki, "Indian Migrant Workers," 215–17.

90. "Reduction in Civilian Personnel," September 18, 1944, Record Group 338, Entry 29465, Box 77, Decimal File 230.14, NARA.

91. ML14/93/39/1/65.

92. "Varedeh: magar ma karmand nistim?" *Mardan-e Ruz*, March 7, 1945, and "Baz ham karmandan-e bumi," *Mardan-e Ruz*, April 14, 1945.

93. The fact that this debate valorized migration from northern Iran to southern Iran indicates the importance of the direction of movement. Marian Aguiar discusses an intriguing case in which the direction of movement became the primary marker of difference between Hindu passengers (to India) and Muslim passengers (to Pakistan) in the context of Partition. See Aguiar, *Tracking Modernity*, 85.

94. "Namehha-ye varedeh," *Mardan-e Ruz*, February 27, 1946.

95. "Kargaran-e rah ahan ra beshnasid," May 1, 1946 (Eskandar Ranjbaran).

96. "Kargaran-e rah ahan ra beshnasid," February 27, 1946 (Shahbaz Javadi). See also June 26, 1946 (Rajab Ali Maleki).

97. For other recollections of accidents, see "Kargaran-e rah ahan ra beshnasid" (Get to Know Railway Workers), April 10, 1946 (Qasem Nabhani); May 15, 1946 (Ali Baz Morshedi); July 24, 1946 (Ali and Aziz Qeitarkhorani); and "Payehha-ye pol-e piruzi ra beshnasid," September 25, 1946 (Hoseyn Tojjarpur).

98. "Kargaran-e rah ahan ra beshnasid," February 6, 1946 (Faraj Sabri); February 13, 1946 (Mahmud Siamak); and May 8, 1946 (Hasan Sudmand).

99. "Kargaran-e rah ahan ra beshnasid," January 16, 1946 (Hoseyn Sayyar); January 23, 1946 (Mohammad Taqi Karim Khani Zandi); and February 6, 1946 (Faraj Sabri).

100. "Kargaran-e rah ahan ra beshnasid," February 27, 1946 (Shahbaz Javadi).

101. "Kargaran-e rah ahan ra beshnasid," January 16, 1946 (Hoseyn Sayyar).

102. "Kargaran-e rah ahan ra beshnasid," April 10, 1946 (Qasem Nabhani).

103. "Kargaran-e rah ahan ra beshnasid," March 20, 1946 (Baqer Simkesh).

104. "Kargaran-e rah ahan ra beshnasid," January 30, 1946 (Hoseyn Rahru).

CHAPTER 7

1. Daneshvar, *Didaniha va Shenidaniha-ye Iran*, 8.

2. Daneshvar, *Didaniha va Shenidaniha-ye Iran*, 8, 14–15.

3. Daneshvar, *Didaniha va Shenidaniha-ye Iran*, 13, 15–16.

4. I use the term "public space" in a broad sense to mean "space to which all citizens are granted some legal rights of access." Thus, this definition included but is not limited to sidewalks, parks, shopping malls, theaters, and public transportation facilities. The term "public space" does not preclude a process of selection, however. While municipal governments may remove homeless people from sidewalks and parks, access to such places as cinemas and trains are restricted to paying customers through the commercial interaction of purchasing a ticket. See Light and Smith, introduction to *Production of Public Space*, 3.

5. Ritika Prasad notes how discomforts and indignities in third-class cars functioned as "shared rituals" experienced by Indian passengers under colonial rule. See Prasad, *Tracks of Change*, 56–57. Manu Goswami discusses the structuring of hierarchized colonial space that eventually shaped heterogeneous national space in colonial India. See Goswami, *Producing India*, especially 103–31.

6. Julie O'Brien Kleinman discusses the very different context of Paris, an imperial capital, by analyzing the railway station space through a mechanism to control difference. See Kleinman, *Dangerous Encounters*.

7. Rather than assuming a uniform experience of colonial power relations, Aparajita Mukhopadhyay points out the unevenness of Indian experiences of railway journeys due to the commercial logic that governed the railway administration, which gave Indian passengers some degree of power. In the case of Iran, two factors may have limited the power of passengers. First, the Trans-Iranian Railway was a state enterprise, implemented with limited consideration to precise calculation of profitability. Particularly during the Allied occupation, the main goal was not making profits but supporting Soviet war efforts against Germany. Second, compared to populous

India, the volume of passenger traffic was limited in Iran. The IRO benefited more from freight traffic. See Mukhopadhyay, *Imperial Technology and "Native" Agency*, especially chap. 3, "A Shared Space?" and chap. 4, "Chariots of Equality?"

8. Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*, 7.

9. "Ro'ya-ye sadeqeh: pas az dah sal, 1," *Khalq*, December 16, 1925.

10. "Ro'ya-ye sadeqeh: pas az sah sal, 9," *Khalq*, January 12, 1926, and "Ro'ya-ye sadeqeh: pas az dah sal, 14," *Khalq*, February 16, 1926.

11. "Ro'ya-ye sadeqeh: pas az dah sal, 8," *Khalq*, January 9, 1926; "Ro'ya-ye sadeqeh: pas az dah sal, 9," *Khalq*, January 12, 1926; "Ro'ya-ye sadeqeh: pas az dah sal, 10," *Khalq*, January 16, 1926; "Ro'ya-ye sadeqeh: pas az dah sal, 11," *Khalq*, January 31, 1926; and "Ro'ya-ye sadeqeh pas az dah sal, 12," *Khalq*, February 2, 1926.

12. "Ro'ya-ye sadeqeh: pas az dah sal, 4," *Khalq*, December 22, 1925, and "Ro'ya-ye sadeqeh: pas az dah sal, 7," *Khalq*, January 5, 1926.

13. "Ro'ya-ye sadeqeh: pas az dah sal, 9."

14. "Ro'ya-ye sadeqeh: pas az dah sal, 14."

15. De Certeau, *Practice of Everyday Life*, 111.

16. Marefat, *Building to Power,* 84.

17. Devos, "Engineering a Modern Society?," 276.

18. "Piyadehrow-ye khiyaban," *Ettela'at*, August 6, 1933.

19. For the (re)production of modern urban space through everyday practices of its occupants, see Ghannam, *Remaking the Modern*, and Wang, *Street Culture in Chengdu*.

20. "Piyadehrow-ye khiyaban," *Ettela'at*, August 6, 1933.

21. For the production of new forms of social life and spaces and the simultaneous decline of their traditional counterparts in Tehran, see Rezvani-Naraghi, "Middle Class Urbanism."

22. Poets expressed this excitement through a poem in which women demanded their husbands purchase tramway tickets for them rather than such luxurious commodities as shiny scarves and sequined shoes. Aryanpur, *Az Saba ta Nima*, 156.

23. Siyasi, *Gozaresh-e Yek Zendegi*, 21. For an account that stresses opposition to the tramway and its destruction by "fanatics" and "mobs," see Kharegat, *Tourist Guide to Iran*, 62.

24. An *Ettela'at* article from 1932 cited in Naficy, *Social History of Iranian Cinema*, 1:159–60.

25. For a similar argument in the Indian colonial discourse, see Aguiar, *Tracking Modernity*, 31–32.

26. "Ma ba Cheh Lebas Mashin Savari Mikonim?" *Nahid*, March 1, 1927.

27. Ja'fari, *Dar Josteju-ye Sobh*, 100–101, and Shahri, *Tehran-e Qadim, Jeld-e Aval*, 337–44.

28. "Yek mosaferat beh vasileh-ye teren," *Ettela'at*, April 8, 1928.

29. For a brief overview of dis/enchantment, see Saler, "Modernity and Enchantment."

30. "Mosaferat-e chand sa'ateh," *Khalq*, May 22, 1926.

31. "Mosaferat-e chand saʿateh," *Khalq*, May 22, 1926, and "Ma ba cheh lebas mashin savari mikonim?"

32. "Yek mosaferat beh vasileh-ye teren" *Ettelaʿat*, April 8, 1928.

33. "Yek mosaferat beh vasileh-ye teren" *Ettelaʿat*, April 8, 1928, and "Mosaferat-e chand saʿateh," *Khalq*, May 22, 1926.

34. Shahri, *Tehran-e Qadim, Jeld-e Avval*, 325–36, and Jaʿfari, *Dar Jostehju-ye Sobh*, 101–2.

35. It should be noted that, by the mid-twentieth century, an increasing number of industrial workers had become avid newspaper readers and expressed tastes and desires similar to those of the modern middle class, as illustrated by interviews of railway workers discussed in chapters 4 and 6.

36. For subject formation through scientific knowledge, see Schayegh, *Who Is Knowledgeable Is Strong*, and "Sport, Health, and the Iranian Modern Middle Class in the 1920s and 1930s." For the ambivalent feelings among leftist intellectuals toward the masses, see Vejdani, "Appropriating the Masses."

37. "Mozhdeh-ye bozorg: eftetah-e nim rasmi-ye rah-e Mazandaran," *Nahid*, July 24, 1926, 1.

38. "Beravim Mazandaran," *Nahid*, July 27, 1926, 1, 2, 3.

39. "Beravim Mazandaran," *Nahid*, July 27, 1926, 4.

40. For examples of such travelogues, see a series of *Ettelaʿat* articles published in 1937–38 along the railway route from Tehran to Qom, Borujerd, Salehabad (Andimeshk), and Ahvaz. "Dar rah-e Qom," *Ettelaʿat*, October 22, 1936; "Dar ʿAraq," *Ettelaʿat*, November 2, 1936; "Dar Ahvaz," *Ettelaʿat*, December 25, 1936; "Dar Salehabad," *Ettelaʿat*, December 27, 1936; and "Dar Ahvaz," *Ettelaʿat*, January 6, 1937. The official yearbook *Salnameh-ye Pars* also ran long articles. For example, see "Rah ahan," *Salnameh-ye Pars* (1935–36): 223–34, and "Mazandaran va Gilan ya zarristan-e Iran," *Salnameh-ye Pars* (1936–37): 13–102.

41. For instance, residents of Sari flocked to the new station to see the bathrooms of the first-class carriage. IOR/L/PS/12/3409, "Persia: Memorandum of the Commercial Secretary on the Northern Section of the Trans-Persian Railway, May 16, 1931." For press coverage of celebrations, "Jashn-e vosul-e rah ahan beh Varamin," *Ettelaʿat*, December 31, 1936; "Jashn-e rah ahan dar Hazrat-e ʿAbd al-ʿAzim," *Ettelaʿat*, January 30, 1937; and "Gozaresh-e jashn-e goshayesh-e rah ahan-e shomal," *Ettelaʿat*, February 20, 1937.

42. "Mazandaran 10," *Ettelaʿat*, August 23, 1933.

43. "Yek hafteh dar kenar-e darya 2," *Ettelaʿat*, July 1, 1933, and "Mosaferat-e Mazandaran," *Ettelaʿat*, August 10, 1933.

44. "History of the Persian Gulf Command," 63, Record Group 319, Entry 217, Box 1, NARA.

45. "Passenger Train, July 6, 1944, Record Group 497, Entry 9, Box 893, Decimal File 531.4, NARA, and "Saneheh-ye istgah-e Markaz-e Garm," *Mardan-e Ruz*, July 4, 1945. The northern line from Tehran to Bandar-e Shah had three passenger services and three civilian-military mixed services with the additional fourth-class cars every

week. Both the west line from Tehran to Zanjan and the east line from Tehran to Shahrud operated three services a week. "Agahi: barnameh-ye vorud va khoruj-e qatarha-ye mosaferi az Tehran dar salha-ye 1323–24," *Mardan-e Ruz*, May 23, 1945.

46. Individual repair shop owners had to rely on the supplies of black market tires. "Activities of Alleged Military Police Agent," July 17, 1944, Record Group 497, Entry 9, Box 1, Decimal File 000.5, NARA.

47. Rah Ahan-e Dowlati-ye Iran, *Amar-e Sal-e* 1322–1323, 28–29. For the prevalence of profiteering on motor traffic in Khuzestan, see "Civilian Passenger Service: Ahvaz–Khorramshahr," March 21, 1944, Record Group 497, Entry 9, Box 893, Decimal File 531.7, NARA. Nonetheless, though not as frequently as motorized vehicle fare, railway fare occasionally increased to meet the rapid inflation. For instance, the fare was doubled in September 1943. See Bongah-e Rah Ahan-e Dowlati-ye Iran, *Gozaresh-e Natayej-e Mali-ye Hamkari-ye Bongah-e Rah Ahan*, 10.

48. "PGC Bulletin No. 3, Procedure for Handling Rail Passenger Travel," Operations Division, June 16, 1944, Record Group 497, Entry 9, Box 893, Decimal File 531.8, NARA.

49. "Agahi," *Mardan-e Ruz*, March 21, 1945.

50. "Rah ahan ra bayad baraye reqabatha-ye eqtesadi-ye zaman-i solh amadeh kard," *Mardan-e Ruz*, May 20, 1945, and Rah Ahan-e Dowlati-ye Iran, *Amar-e Sal-e* 1322–1323, 29.

51. Fare evasion was extremely common. For example, in one instance, over forty passengers out of two hundred reportedly were ticketless freeloaders. "Tafsil-e hadeseh-ye asafnak-e rah ahan," *Ettelaʿat*, June 21, 1945.

52. ML14/176/18/1/263.

53. "Saneheh-ye istgah-e Markaz-e Garm," *Mardan-e Ruz*, July 4, 1945.

54. Rah Ahan-e Dowlati-ye Iran, *Amar-e Sal-e* 1322–1323, 72. The practice of using freight cars for pilgrimage traffic existed from the early years of operation during the Reza Shah period. Indian railways also used freight cars for pilgrimage traffic. See Prasad, *Tracks of Change*, 47–50.

55. "Agahi: jarimeh-ye mosaferin-e bedun-e belit," *Mardan-e Ruz*, January 31, 1945, and "Tafsil-e hadeseh-ye asafnak-e rah ahan," *Ettelaʿat*, June 21, 1945.

56. "Vazifeh-ye mosaferin-e rah ahan," *Nameh-ye Rah*, 1:1 (May 1940): 27. The article was reprinted under the same title in *Khandaniha*. See "Vazifeh-ye mosaferin-e rah ahan," *Khandaniha* 1:3 (1940): 30–32.

57. The regulations allowed each passenger to carry thirty kilograms of suitcases, bags, and small packages alone and prohibited bringing items that would exacerbate congestion, meaning such items as samovars and long carrying poles that tramway passengers often carried. Rah Ahan-e Dowlati-ye Iran, *Amar-e Sal-e* 1322–1323, 31.

58. "Vazifeh-ye mosaferin-e rah ahan," *Nameh-ye Rah*, 1:1 (May 1940): 27.

59. Passengers often bribed employees of the Iranian State Railway, including conductors and railway policemen. For instance, rather than purchasing a ticket for a second-class seat from Tehran to Ahvaz, which was 410 riyals in 1945, passengers could bribe the conductor, giving him only 350 riyals, to get seated in a second-class

seat. Because this practice was fairly common, it was well known that "whenever a train goes to and from Ahvaz, a considerable amount of money goes to railway employees, and perhaps their profit was not smaller than that of the Railway Organization itself." For the official fare as of April 1945, see "Agahi: baha-ye belitha-ye mosaferi-ye istgahha-ye mohem," *Mardan-e Ruz*, April 25, 1945. For the anecdote, see Arjomand, *Shesh Sal*, 261–62.

60. "Vazifeh-ye mosaferin-e rah ahan," *Nameh-ye Rah*, 1:1 (May 1940): 29.

61. Mirmirani, *Kureh Rahi dar Ghobar*, 6.

62. Najafi and Jones, *Persia Is My Heart*, 143.

63. For the creeping presence of the poor in nineteenth-century Paris, see Harvey, "Political Economy of Public Space."

64. For compulsory unveiling, see Chehabi, "The Banning of the Veil and Its Consequences." For unveiling and the tension between state-sanctioned women's emancipation and male guardianship, see Amin, *Making of the Modern Iranian Woman*.

65. "A'in-e zendegi-ye banovan," and "A'in-e raftar-e aqayan," *Salnameh-ye Pars*, 1936–37, 145–84.

66. "A'in-e zendegi-ye banovan," and "A'in-e raftar-e aqayan," *Salnameh-ye Pars*, 1936–37, 183.

67. "A'in-e zendegi-ye banovan," and "A'in-e raftar-e aqayan," *Salnameh-ye Pars*, 1936–37, 156, 182.

68. "Marshalling of Military Coaches," January 13, 1944, Record Group 497, Entry 9, Box 893, Decimal File 531.4, NARA.

69. "Persian Buffet Car," November 15, 1943, and January 24, 1944, Record Group 497, Entry 9, Box 893, Decimal File 531.4, NARA.

70. From Ahmad Dehqan to American Transportation Office in the Iranian State Railway, August 19, 1944, Record Group 497, Entry 9, Box 84, Decimal File 250.1, NARA.

71. "Venereal Disease, Desert Camp #2," August 2, 1943, Record Group 497, Entry 9, Box 913, Decimal File 726.1, NARA.

72. For the gendered emergence of nationalism in Qajar Iran, see Najmabadi, *Women with Mustaches and Men without Beards*, especially pt. 2.

73. The venereal disease rate among the Persian Gulf Service Command reached 9.2 percent in 1943; diseases were often contracted through sexual intercourse with prostitutes. "Control of Venereal Diseases," February 13, 1943, Record Group 497, Entry 9, Box 913, Decimal File 726.1, NARA. Rape cases by the Allies were also frequent. For a case of multiple rapes that subsequently led to the murder of an Iranian woman, see Ahmadi, *Man va Zendegi*, 61–62.

74. Arjomand, *Shesh Sal*, 261, 262, 266.

75. It is important to note that Iranian Shi'is who visited Iraq for pilgrimage did not preclude their involvement in other economic and political activities. A pilgrim could simultaneously be a tourist, merchant, or political agent. For this discussion in Qajar Iran, see Morikawa, *Shia-ha Seichi Sankei no Kenkyu*, especially chap. 4,

"Seichi Nite (In the Holy Cities)." For the Iran-Iraq borderlands in the mid-twentieth century, see Bishop, "The Local and the Global," 184.

76. For a map of Qom in the 1940s, see Edareh-ye Farhang-e Shahrestan-e Qom, *Qom ra Beshnasid*.

77. In February 1945, the official taxi fare from Khorramabad to Basra was 120 riyals. Coll 28/115 "Persia [Iran]; Khorramshahr—intelligence summaries." [183r] (368/547), British Library: India Office Records and Private Papers, IOR/L/PS/12/3528A, in *Qatar Digital Library*, https://www.qdl.qa/archive/81055/vdc_100061204074.0x0000a9 [accessed November 26, 2019].

78. "Haji irani ra chetor gardan zadand," *Khandaniha* 4:17 (February 5, 1944): 17 (reprinted from the newspaper *Mihanparastan*).

79. Bishop, "Border Crossing between Iraq and Iran, Summer 1953."

80. IOR/L/PS/12/3400/PZ4332. Khuzistan Diaries, No. 3, March 1937.

81. Memorandum to Movements Officers in Ahvaz, Andimeshk, Tehran, Arak, Qom, April 5, 1944, Record Group 497, Entry 9, Box 893, Decimal File 531.7, NARA.

82. For the rise of Qom in the interwar period as a center of learning, see Mottahedeh, *Mantle of the Prophet*, 228–30.

83. Tomoko Morikawa's study discusses the seasonal nature of pilgrimage in the Qajar period in detail. See Morikawa, *Shia-ha Seichi Sankei no Kenkyu*, 67–70. Even in the interwar period, pilgrims who traveled without mechanized modes of transport left Iran in the summer to arrive in Iraq in the fall. Mohammad Taqi Bohlul, who performed pilgrimage with his aging mother in the early 1930s, left Sabzevar in late August and arrived in Iraq via Kermanshah in November. See Bohlul, *Khaterat-e Siyasi-ye Bohlul dar Dowreh-ye Reza Shah*, 37.

84. COWI Archives, Kasse 106, Buhl, "Mit liv i Orienten" (My Life in the Orient), n.p.

85. Rah Ahan-e Dowlati-ye Iran, *Amar-e Sal-e* 1322–1323, 72–74.

86. For enchanted travels in the age of steam across the Indian Ocean, see Green, *Bombay Islam*.

87. Personal correspondence with Arash Azizi, October 3, 2018. There are variations of this ritual.

88. Kashani-Sabet, *Frontier Fictions*, 165–66 and 222–24.

89. "Saneheh-ye istgah-e Markaz-e Garm," *Mardan-e Ruz*, July 4, 1945.

90. Coll 28/115 "Persia [Iran]; Khorramshahr—intelligence summaries." [200r] (402/547), British Library: India Office Records and Private Papers, IOR/L/PS/12/3528A, in *Qatar Digital Library*, https://www.qdl.qa/archive/81055/vdc_100061204075.0x000003 [accessed November 26, 2019]. For a persistent use of freight cars and concerns about contagion in India, see Prasad, *Tracks of Change*, 192–96. For British attempts at regulating the flow of pilgrims partly to contain contagion, see Low, "Empire and the Hajj."

91. "Haji irani ra chetor gardan zadand," *Khandaniha* 4:17 (February 5, 1944): 17.

92. Coll 28/115 "Persia [Iran]; Khorramshahr—intelligence summaries." [190r] (382/547), British Library: India Office Records and Private Papers, IOR/L/

PS/12/3528A, in *Qatar Digital Library*, https://www.qdl.qa/archive/81055/vdc_100061204074.0x0000b7 [accessed November 26, 2019].

93. Coll 28/115 "Persia [Iran]; Khorramshahr—intelligence summaries." [107r] (216/547), British Library: India Office Records and Private Papers, IOR/L/PS/12/3528A, in *Qatar Digital Library*, https://www.qdl.qa/archive/81055/vdc_100061204074.0x000011 [accessed November 26, 2019].

94. Coll 28/115 "Persia [Iran]; Khorramshahr—intelligence summaries." [105r] (212/547), British Library: India Office Records and Private Papers, IOR/L/PS/12/3528A, in *Qatar Digital Library*, https://www.qdl.qa/archive/81055/vdc_100061204074.0x00000d [accessed November 26, 2019].

95. The movement occurred in both directions as Iraqis entered Iran in the same manner, bribing frontier officials. For example, approximately 300 Iraqi Jews escaped to Khorramshahr and traveled to Tehran in the summer of 1948. Coll 28/97(2) "Tehran Intelligence Summaries" [26r] (51/252), British Library: India Office Records and Private Papers, IOR/L/PS/12/3507, in *Qatar Digital Library*, https://www.qdl.qa/archive/81055/vdc_100055165772.0x000034 [accessed December 28, 2019].

96. "Haji irani ra chetor gardan zadand," *Khandaniha* 4:17 (February 5, 1944): 17–18.

97. Eftekhari, *Khaterat-e Dowran-e Separi Shodeh*.

98. Rossiyskiy Gosudarstvennyy Arkhiv Sotsial'no-Politicheskoy Istorii (RGASPI), f. 495, op. 216, delo 35, pp. 34, 87, 110. I would like to thank Elizabeth Bishop for sharing this archival document with me.

99. RGASPI, f. 495, op. 216, delo 35, p. 87.

100. 'File 43/1 Activitie [sic] of Tudeh Party in the Persian Gulf' [3r] (5/106), British Library: India Office Records and Private Papers, IOR/R/15/2/912, in *Qatar Digital Library*, https://www.qdl.qa/archive/81055/vdc_100025661726.0x000006 [accessed December 28, 2019]. For the strong influence of the Tudeh Party among railway workers and frequent dismissal of Tudeh members from the IRO, see Coll 28/97(2) "Tehran Intelligence Summaries" [26r] (51/252), British Library: India Office Records and Private Papers, IOR/L/PS/12/3507, in *Qatar Digital Library*, https://www.qdl.qa/archive/81055/vdc_100055165772.0x000034 [accessed December 28, 2019], and Coll 28/97(2) "Tehran Intelligence Summaries" [18r] (35/252), British Library: India Office Records and Private Papers, IOR/L/PS/12/3507, in *Qatar Digital Library*, https://www.qdl.qa/archive/81055/vdc_100055165772.0x000024 [accessed December 28, 2019].

101. Tudeh presence was rapidly growing in Khorramshahr. By June 1946, the opening of the Khorramshahr Tudeh Party Club attracted a crowd of approximately one thousand people. Coll 28/115 "Persia [Iran]; Khorramshahr—intelligence summaries." [259r] (520/547), British Library: India Office Records and Private Papers, IOR/L/PS/12/3528A, in *Qatar Digital Library*, https://www.qdl.qa/archive/81055/vdc_100061204075.0x000079 [accessed November 28, 2019].

102. Coll 28/115 "Persia [Iran]; Khorramshahr—intelligence summaries." [180r] (362/547), British Library: India Office Records and Private Papers, IOR/L/

PS/12/3528A, in *Qatar Digital Library*, https://www.qdl.qa/archive/81055/vdc_100061204074.0x0000a3 [accessed November 26, 2019].

103. Bishop, "The Local and the Global," 201.

104. Daneshvar, *Didaniha*, 9, 20.

105. Clawson's analysis focuses exclusively on economy, noting that the Trans-Iranian Railway contributed little to "knit Iran together" and reduce transportation costs. See Clawson, "Knitting Iran Together."

106. Marashi, "Print Culture and Its Publics," 103.

CONCLUSION

1. "San'at va amuzesh," *Mardan-e Ruz*, *April* 11, 1945.

2. Ahmadi, *Man va Zendegi*, 87–88.

3. Amin, *Making of the Modern Iranian Woman.*

4. Morteza Ahmadi mentions the unsolved murder of an Iranian woman during the occupation as an example of injustice committed by Americans. He explicitly states, "We, employees of the railway, had many conflicts with Americans at work." See Ahmadi, *Man va Zendegi*, 61.

5. See https://www.shahrekhabar.com/analysis/152343792079524.

6. "Eftetah-e rah ahan-e Zahedan—Bam, afzayesh-e saderat-e gheir-e nafti," *Sazman-e San'at, Ma'dan va Tejarat-e Sistan va Baluchistan*, June 11, 2009. http://sbco.ir/main.asp?id=662 [accessed October 30, 2012].

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8. "Rahandazi-ye qatar-e Yiwu-Tehran baraye tows'eh-ye tejarat-e Iran va Chin," *Khabargozari-ye Tasnim,* May 9, 2016. https://www.tasnimnews.com/fa/news/1395/02/20/1070783/راه-اندازی-قطار-ایوو-تهران-برای-توسعه-تجارت-ایران-و-چین [accessed March 3, 2019].

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10. "Iran Linking Iraq with Silk Road," *Press TV*, June 25, 2015. https://www.presstv.com/Detail/2015/06/25/417509/iran-iraq-basra-railway [accessed March 3, 2019].

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"*Iran in Motion* exemplifies the gains of approaching modern Iran not through the lens of methodological statism but with a feel for state and non-state actors alike. A fascinating read."

—Cyrus Schayegh, Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies, Geneva

"With fresh insights drawn from a wealth of new archival materials, Mikiya Koyagi transports us through the various stations that dotted Iran's path to modernity. *Iran in Motion* reveals a deep understanding of the mobility networks that connected and divided Middle Eastern communities. A groundbreaking book."

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"Amid the recent transnational turn in Middle East Studies, *Iran in Motion* is a subtle treatment of the unintended consequences of the Trans-Iranian Railway project. Mikiya Koyagi reveals the centrifugal forces unleashed by a project that was designed to bind a nation together."

—Nile Green, University of California, Los Angeles

Completed in 1938, the Trans-Iranian Railway connected Tehran to Iran's two major bodies of water: the Caspian Sea in the north and the Persian Gulf in the south. Iran's first national railway, it produced and disrupted various kinds of movement—voluntary and forced, intended and unintended, on different scales and in different directions—among Iranian diplomats, tribesmen, migrant laborers, technocrats, railway workers, tourists, and pilgrims, as well as European imperial officials alike. *Iran in Motion* tells the hitherto unexplored stories of these individuals as they experienced new levels of mobility.

Mikiya Koyagi traces contested imaginations and practices of mobility from the conception of a trans-Iranian railway project during the nineteenth-century global transport revolution to its early years of operation on the eve of Iran's oil nationalization movement in the 1950s, and considers how the infrastructural mega-project reoriented the flows of people and goods. The railway project simultaneously brought the provinces closer to Tehran and pulled them away from it, thereby constantly reshaping local, national, and transnational experiences of space among mobile individuals.

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