

politics  
culture  
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دوره  
پهلوی اول  
فرهنگ  
سیاست  
ایران

# Culture and Cultural Politics in Early Pahlavi Iran, 1921-1951

## International Symposium, 26-28 June 2009

International Symposium  
Marburg, 26-28 June 2009

### Culture and Cultural Politics in Early Pahlavi Iran, 1921-1951

فرهنگ و سیاست فرهنگی  
در اوایل دوره پهلوی  
۱۲۲۰-۱۳۰۰

Convened by:  
Bianca Devos and  
Christoph Werner

Contributions by:  
Mohammad Ali Akbari ..... Tehran  
Houchang Chehabi ..... Boston  
Roja Dehdarian ..... Bamberg  
Bianca Devos ..... Marburg  
Katja Föllmer ..... Göttingen  
Roxane Haag-Higuchi ..... Bamberg  
Elham Malekzadeh ..... Tehran  
Afshin Marashi ..... Sacramento  
Cyrus Schayegh ..... Princeton  
Karim Soleimany ..... Tehran  
Christoph Werner ..... Marburg

مرکز پژوهش‌های خاورمیانه  
Centrum für Nah- und Mittelost-Studien  
Center for Near and Middle Eastern Studies

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[www.uni-marburg.de/iranistik](http://www.uni-marburg.de/iranistik)

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The reign of Reza Shah marks a crucial phase in the history of modern Iran, when centralised efforts were made to rebuild the state in Iran in terms of a progressive nation. As in many authoritarian regimes, especially the cultural sector was affected by the attempt to impose state control on all elements of society. Restrictions and censorship on films, music, newspapers etc. as well as cultural guidelines from government institutions caused tensions between persons engaged in cultural activities and officials. Can we identify a cultural policy behind the government's actions and did these create a pattern for later developments?

The symposium assembles an international group of scholars, both from inside and outside Iran, in order to assess the present state of studies on the cultural history of the Reza Shah period. Taking the great array of culture and cultural politics into account, this workshop intends to bring together research on political reforms and particular aspects of the cultural sphere of the 1920s and 1930s including performing and visual arts, media, and literature, anthropology, sociology, and politics. By offering alternatives to a limited comprehension of cultural politics, the workshop wants to contribute to contemporary and future debates on the relationship between politics and culture in 20th century Iran.

Convened by

Bianca Devos and Christoph Werner

Supported by

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## Programme

### Friday, 26 June 2009

#### 14.00: Welcome and Opening Session

#### 14.30 - 18.00: Panel 1 "Communication and Cultural Politics"

**Föllmer**, Katja: *Structure and Dynamics of Communication in Public Discourse*

**Soleimany**, Karim: *Press Censorship under Reza Shah (1925-1941)*

**Marashi**, Afshin: *Imagining Hafez: Rabindranath Tagore in Iran, 1932*

16.00 - 16.30: Coffee Break

**Werner**, Christoph: *Drama and Operetta at the 'Red Lion and Sun': Theatre in Tabriz 1921-51*

**Dehdarian**, Roja: *"Newly Hatched Chickens". Bozorg Alavi Remembering the Young Literary Scene of the 1930s*

17.30 - 18.00: Summary Discussion

#### 18.00: Reception

### Saturday, 27 June 2008

#### 9.30 - 12.00: Panel 2 "Cultures of Modern Science"

**Devos**, Bianca: *Engineering a Modern Society: Regulations and Instructions on How to Adopt Technology in Iran, 1925-1941*

**Malekzadeh**, Elham: *How to Give Birth to a New Generation: Midwifery in Reza Shah's Health Care System*

10.30 - 10.45: Coffee Break

**Schayegh**, Cyrus: *From Bio-medical to Social Sciences: The Shifting Frameworks of Iranian Sociocultural Reforms, 1930s-1950s*

11.30 - 12.00: Summary Discussion

12.00 - 14.00: Lunch Break

#### 14.00-16.00 : Panel 3 "Teaching Culture"

**Chehabi**, Houchang E.: *Mir Mehdi Varzandeh and the Introduction of Modern Physical Education in Iran*

**Haag-Higuchi**, Roxane: *Modernization in Literary History: Malek al-sho'arāBah ār's "Stylistics"*

**Akbari**, Mohammad Ali: *Teaching History in School Books and the Project of Nation Building in the Early Pahlavi Period*

15.30 - 16.00: Summary Discussion

16.00 - 16.30: Coffee Break

16.30 - 17.00: Final Discussion

#### 19.00: Dinner

### Sunday, 28 June 2008

08.30 - 10.00: Breakfast & Departure of Participants

## Abstracts

*Mohammad Ali Akbari (Tehran)*

### Teaching History in School Books and the Project of Nation Building in the Early Pahlavi Period

The period of the first Pahlavi Shah has a particular importance in the contemporary history of Iran, especially in reviving the experience of the early constitutional period, because politicians of that era utilized the opportunity of domination through the modernist totalitarian government to make basic changes in the social, economic, political, and cultural aspects of Iranian society. The renovation and recreation of Iranian "nationality" on the basis of archaic and nationalist-oriented attitudes, was one of the basic infrastructural strategies of the Pahlavi state. This strategy caused the formation of an important project, "nation- building," which was an organized effort towards the transition from a multicultural and mosaic society to an equalized and integrated totalitarian one.

According to historical documents, the nation-building project of Pahlavi the first was based on the unity of elements such as language, race, homeland, and common historical experiences. Therefore, we can take the Persian language, the Aryan race, the Aryan homeland, and historical background as the major elements of this project. Achieving the goals of the nation-building project, for sure, was bound to designing and applying different programs in political, social, economic, and cultural fields, of which educational policies and preparation of textbooks were the best and the most suitable ones to enroll the population, especially since the government, exclusively, was in charge of programming the primary and secondary education levels. The High Council of Education was responsible for this duty on behalf of the government.

Policy-makers of nation-building knew that history, as a lesson, is of enough capacity to be used as an infrastructural thought maker to have young people accept the new project. Thus, it is not surprising that they would have paid special attention to "history" among the other classical lessons. In this contribution, the writer aims to provide, first, the basic elements and various aspects of the nation-building project in the Pahlavi the first era on the basis of archival and historical documents, second, a clear picture of the educational objectives, lesson materials, and contents of textbooks by studying the programs of primary and secondary education levels, and finally, the relations between the teaching of history and pushing forward the nation-building project.

*Houchang E. Chehabi (Boston)*

### Mir Mehdi Varzandeh and the Introduction of Western Physical Education in Iran

Mir Mehdi Varzandeh (1880-1982) was the main architect of Iran's modern physical education system. He spent his early years in Istanbul, where he caught the eye of Selim Sirri Turcan, the founder of modern physical education in the Ottoman Empire. Encouraged by Turcan, he went to Brussels to study at the Ecole Normale de Gymnastique et d'Escrime Militaire. In 1914 he returned to Iran and found employment as teacher of physical education for the Swedish-officered gendarmerie. His activities attracted the attention of ministry of education officials, who created a permanent position for him as physical education teacher in state schools.

Varzandeh propagated the introduction of physical education classes into school curricula, and in 1919 the system of gymnastics system developed by Per Henrik Ling in Sweden was adopted for Iranian schools under the minister of education Ahmad Bader. In 1926 he was appointed director of the new physical education teacher training college (Dar al-mo'allemin-e varzesh). But when the Iranian state appointed an American, Thomas Gibson, to organize Iran's modern sports, Varzandeh was offended, withdrew from public service, and concentrated on the sports clubs he had founded. In the 1970s he returned to Istanbul, where he died at the age of 102. This paper provides biographical details of his life, analyzes his ideas on the basis of his published articles, and asks why he made so little effort to integrate traditional Iranian physical culture in his system.

*Roja Dehdarian (Bamberg)*

## „Newly Hatched Chickens“: Bozorg Alavi Remembering the Young Literary Scene of the 1930s

The reign of Reza Shah was a period of intense literary activity in Iran. In spite of censorship and state restriction some of the most influential writers of modern Persian prose literature reached the peak of their talent at that time.

This paper focuses on the circle of young, Western educated and modern-minded intellectuals, known as *Rab'eh* or Group of Four, composed by Sadeq Hedayat, Bozorg Alavi, Mojtaba Minovi and Mas'ud Farzad. They conceive themselves as literary rebels of their time: young, autonomous and critical of the political and literary establishment of 1930s Iran.

The analysis is based on the memoirs and writings of Bozorg Alavi pointing out the self-perception of the *Rab'eh* members within the Iranian cultural sphere. Especially their positions in the predominant cultural discourse of Iranian nationalism and modernity will be discussed. The purpose of this paper is to expose the complex relationship between state-controlled cultural policy and the young writers who played an active role in the cultural life of early Pahlavi Iran.

*Bianca Devos (Marburg)*

## Engineering a Modern Society: Regulations and Instructions on How to Adopt Technology in Iran, 1925-1941

Returning to Iran in 1931 after an absence of almost 13 years, the newly appointed German envoy Wipert von Blücher found the great number of cars and trucks the most striking change since his last stay. During the twenty years of Reza Shah's reign, it was first and foremost the technical progress that had transformed the appearance of the country and caught the eyes of foreign travellers – to the delight of the Shah and nationalistic modernists who regarded a fast visible change of Iran and its society as pivotal in their agenda of modernisation.

Developing towards a proto-totalitarian regime and extending its control over most parts of the society, the Pahlavi state was also concerned about regulating the adoption of modern technology in everyday life. Besides that, modernists felt responsible to guide the Iranian common people, who were mostly unfamiliar with the new technology, in adapting to modern life. Mainly based on newspaper material and published official documents, this paper focuses on regulations by the Pahlavi state aimed at maintaining and extending its authority and the modernists' educational mission to instruct the Iranian populace on how to use the new technologies in the "right" way.

*Katja Föllmer (Göttingen)*

## Structure and Dynamics of Communication in Public Discourse

Since the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century traditional and modern forms of communication have been used in Iranian public sphere. Whereas the protest against the tobacco monopoly (1896) was shaped by traditional communications by Shiite clerics, the constitutional movement (1905-11) made use of the new print media that flourished at that time. If we look at the communication practice, we see that e.g. religious didactic and popular modes of communication were traditionally based on direct face-to-face communication. As a consequence of the development of new media such as the press, and the gradually increasing literacy of the Iranian common people, especially in the 1930s, written mass communication became more important in Iranian society and those who had traditionally been recipients became increasingly active in public communications as well as political and social self-awareness. Discourse in the print media was initially led by the growing new intellectual class in urban centres. These had access to foreign sources of information, and published their own critical newspapers that were read by a growing public.

Censorship and technical development continued, and were intensified by government measures in the Pahlavi period. The outcome of social change, migration and increasing literacy was the need for other forms of communication than the traditional ones that had been commonly used. Mass media were the preferred means of communication for both State and opposition, while the clerics generally still ignored it. On the basis of some examples of different modes of communication, the paper will examine how communication in Iran in the 1930s was structured, and what parameters were essential for it.

*Roxane Haag-Higuchi (Bamberg)*

## Modernization in Literary History: Malek ash-sho'arā Bahār's *Stylistics*

Bahār's *Sabk-shenāsi* is considered a pivotal text in the formation of a coherent and still dominant view of Persian literary history. Written down as a textbook for the doctoral course in Persian Literature at the newly established University of Tehran, the institutional aspect of *Sabk-shenāsi* cannot be neglected. The text indicates the two basic requirements for Bahār's work, namely, the transformation of the amorphous field of Persian prose literature into a structured academic discipline; and the propagation of Persian as a unifying national language.

A closer look, however, reveals that the three volume oeuvre testifies to a concept of modernity and national culture that is far more refined than that suggested by his political commissioners. Bahār who is primarily known as the poet who filled progressive contents into traditional poetic forms, displays considerable creativity in applying new theoretical conceptions to the large stock of literary material he is dealing with. The result is a work that surpasses the simple construction of modernization as equal to Westernization, but this work can be considered as a successful amalgamation of traditional learning and modern scientific approaches. The paper pleads in favor of a scrutiny of the cultural products of the time which illustrate that the political guidelines when put to practice, may have produced unexpected, sometimes even contradictory, nuances.

*Elham Malekzadeh (Tehran)*

## How to give Birth to a New Generation: Midwifery in Reza Shah's Health Care System

The reign of Reza Shah in Iran was an era where the government decided to change the situation of women in society. According to the rules of the Pahlavi Shah, women could become active in social, economic and even political fields. In the course of the government's actions, specific problems of women regarding hygiene and health care were also addressed. In order to meet with success, both step by step and long-ranging measures had to be taken. One of the most important steps in this course was the integration of midwifery as a new profession into Reza Shah's health care system.

By analyzing unpublished documents from the National Archives of Iran as well as newspaper articles and other published sources, this paper examines the influences which the profession of midwifery had on the new generation of Iranian children, who were born into a period of radical change. The paper will address the following questions: What impact had the change of the profession's name from *shoghhl-e qābelegīto māmā'ī*? What attitude had intellectuals and women involved in social issues towards the new profession of midwifery? Which governmental programs for the establishment of obstetric schools and their curricular can be defined on the basis of foundation charters and provisions? Which information can be found in minutes of the examinations about the curricular and the procedure of examination? How can the field of activity of graduates from the new obstetric schools, their admission to practice and their employment in state-owned and private medical centers be described? How did foreign media report about the profession of midwifery in Iran? And what result gives the comparison of the new system of midwifery with the traditional form of it? What impact had this new profession on the changing social order as well as on the childcare for the new generation in Iran? Moreover, approximate statistics of Iranian and non-Iranian women who were trained and worked in obstetrics will be given.

*Afshin Marashi (Sacramento)*

## Imagining Hafez: Rabindranath Tagore in Iran, 1932

In April and May of 1932, Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941), the Indian poet, playwright, novelist, and 1913 Nobel Prize laureate, traveled to Iran on an official visit. He had been invited to Iran as the official guest of Reza Shah and the Pahlavi state. Using an array of primary source material, including newspapers, memoirs, official pronouncements, and Tagore's own travelogue of the journey, this article examines the cultural, political, and ideological implications of this trip for the emerging discourse of nationalism in interwar Iran and India. The article argues that both Tagore and his Iranian hosts conceived of the trip as an occasion to assert the existence of "Indo-Iranian Civilization" as the common moral and aesthetic basis of their respective nationalisms. Indian and Iranian intellectuals of the era were experimenting with a variety of claims of authenticity as the cultural-ideological basis for their newly emerging polities. These claims sought to assert the political independence of their emerging nation-states while also

crafting those claims within assumptions common to the global system. Tagore's 1932 visit to Iran provides one occasion for examining the articulation of these claims. The article, therefore, has implications for understanding the relationship between the global interwar discourse of "civilizations" and the emerging discourse of non-western nationalism during the early twentieth century.

*Cyrus Schayegh (Princeton)*

### From Bio-medical to Social Sciences: The Shifting Frameworks of Iranian Sociocultural Reforms, 1930s-1950s

This talk forms the base of a chapter of a current book project on Pahlavi Iran. Departing from conventional views of the (autocratic monarchic) Pahlavi state as a unit that barely changed form from its rise in the early 1920s to its fall six decades later, I explore a variety of decisive transformations of governmental practice during this period. The process I am interested in here revolves around the slow decline of bio-medical sciences and the concomitant advance of social sciences as main matrix of reform in Iran from the 1930s to the 1950s (crucially, the rise of social sciences affected governmental practices; as importantly, however, it was by no means limited to that sphere).

In my talk, I will first outline why bio-medical sciences became a dominant matrix of reform following the Constitutional Revolution; by way of example, I will also demonstrate how a particular bio-medical field, developed on the intersection between medicine, genetics, and the pseudo-science of eugenics, was applied. Then, in the talk's main part, I will show how a number of social, cultural, and occupational factors (accelerating urbanization; resulting fears of new social pathologies; the rise of new urban middle class professions) expedited the rise of social sciences starting in the 1930s and 40s; how particularly sociology, influenced by Durkheimian models and American modernization theory, informed a new understanding of societal processes; and how, from the 1950s onwards, that understanding was integrated into new governmental practices.

*Karim Soleimany (Tehran)*

### Press Censorship under Reza Shah (1925-1941)

Reza Shah came into power due to a coup d'état on Esfand 3rd, 1299 (February 21, 1921), in which he himself was actively involved. After the downfall of the Qajar dynasty, he gradually consolidated his political power and distributed many governmental and administrative posts among his military comrades. Under military regimes, the press often does not enjoy freedom and has to be in compliance with the government. Oftentimes, the press is even entrusted with the task to praise and justify the ruling elite. Probably for this reason, Reza Shah never got the idea to act in accordance with an already existing (halfway positive or progressive) press law which had been passed in the aftermath of the Constitutional Revolution on Moharram 5th, 1326 (February 8th, 1908). Reza Shah hardly showed the intention of respecting the existing laws. In addition, he established a censorship apparatus, which acted arbitrarily and functioned according to the will the respective persons, who headed the apparatus.

Regarding press censorship, the entire reign of Reza Shah can be divided into three phases: The first phase began with the appointment of Taimurtāsh as court minister (Āzar 28, 1304 / December 19, 1925) and lasted up to his dismissal at the Dai 3rd, 1311 (December 24th, 1932). During this time Taimurtāsh played a crucial role in the strict practice and spreading of the press censorship. The second phase started with the dismissal of Taimurtāsh from his post and ended with the establishment of the so-called "Office for Press Guidance" (*Edāra-yi rāhnamā-ye nāma-negāri*) in 1316 (1937). In this phase especially police headquarters (*Edāra-yi koll-i shahr-bāni*) and the Ministry of Culture (*Vezārat-e ma'āref / farhang*) were responsible for censoring the press. The third phase began with the establishment of the "Office for Press Guidance" (*Edāra-yi rāhnamā-ye nāma-negāri*) and continued until the abdication of Reza Shah on Shahrivar 25th, 1320 (September 16th, 1941). Finally, in the winter of 1317 (1938), the *Sāzmān-e parvareš-i afkār* was created in close cooperation with "Office for Press Guidance" to provide a comprehensive censorship practice and to intersperse it on all public levels.

*Christoph Werner (Marburg)*

## Drama and Operetta at the „Red Lion and Sun“: Theatre in Tabriz 1921-51

There appears to be a general consensus among those writing on the history of drama in Iran that theatre in the early Pahlavi period was either unspectacular or virtually inexistent. This negative evaluation is ascribed to the general intellectual climate of the time, the rigorous censorship under Reza Shah and the premise that the idea of modern theatre in the European tradition, unrelated to either religious practices (ta'ziya) or folklore remained widely alien to Iranian culture and public interest.

However, recent collections of primary sources in Iran present a completely different picture. In many cities a number of independent groups of actors existed as well as troupes that were regularly on tour throughout the country. It also becomes obvious that theatre during this time was not part of an intellectual framework of high culture or participated in literary discourses of modernity. Theatre had its place in the middle of society where it was appreciated largely because of its entertaining qualities and thus served the needs of a general public. The line between theatre, drama and operetta was not clearly drawn at this time. Theatre should thus be seen as a precursor to cinema as a popular pastime, at a time when neither radio nor television really existed. This paper takes a closer look at the situation in Tabriz. In the capital of Azerbaijan the theatre scene was particularly vivid because of a longstanding tradition inside the strong Armenian community, the vicinity to Turkey and the Caucasus and the multilingual setting. Themes, venues, programs and troupes in Tabriz at their most active time in the 30s and 40s will be of particular interest.

*Culture and Cultural Politics in Early Pahlavi Iran, 1921-1951  
International Symposium, 26-28 June 2009*

## Participants

**Mohammad Ali Akbari** is Associate Professor at the Department of History, Shahid Beheshti University in Tehran. He received his B.A in History at the Shahid Beheshti University in 1988 and continued his studies at the University of Tehran where he received an M.A. in 1990. He received his Ph.D. in the field 'Contemporary Iranian History' 1999 at the Shahid Beheshti University. His dissertation dealt with *State and Social Identity in Contemporary Iran*. His research interests include political violence in contemporary Iranian culture and state programs in the research institution "Ayande". One of his important projects was "Programme Development in Iran's Social Welfare" in *High Research Institution of Social Welfare* (2000-2001). His most recent publications are *The Genealogy of Iran's New Identity (Qajar and Early Pahlavi Era)*, Tehran: Elmi va farhangi, 2006; and *The Pioneers of Modern Thinking in Iran'*, Tehran: Researches and Development of Human Sciences Institution Press, 2006.

**Houchang E. Chehabi** is Professor of International Relations and History at Boston University (Licence, Universite de Caen; Diplôme, Institut d'Etudes Politiques de Paris; MA, PhD, Yale University). He specializes in Middle Eastern Politics and Cultural History, and International Law. Professor Chehabi has taught at Harvard, Oxford, and UCLA, and has held Alexander von Humboldt and Woodrow Wilson fellowships. He has published two books, *Iranian Politics and Religious Modernism: The Liberation Movement of Iran under the Shah and Khomeini* (1990) and *Distant Relations: Iran and Lebanon in the Last 500 Years* (2006). He has also co-edited *Politics, Society, and Democracy: Comparative Studies* (1995) and *Sultanistic Regimes* (1998). Professor Chehabi has written numerous articles, book reviews, and translations.

**Roja Dehdarian** is Researcher at the Department of Iranian Studies at the University of Bamberg. She received her M.A. in Iranian Studies, Spanish and Islamic Art History and Archaeology from the University of Bamberg in 2005. She is currently working on a research project dealing with the exile experience of the Iranian writer Bozorg Alavi (1904-1997), as well as on her doctoral dissertation.

**Bianca Devos** is Lecturer and Researcher at the Center for Near and Middle East Studies at the University of Marburg (Germany). She has received her M.A. in Islamic Studies and Economics from the University of Freiburg in 2005 where she also coordinated the database project Digital Persian Archives ([www.asnad.org](http://www.asnad.org)) from 2005 till 2007. She is currently working on her doctoral dissertation about the Iranian press during the early Pahlavi period. Her book *Kleidungspolitik in Iran – die Durchsetzung der Kleidungsvorschriften für Männer unter Riza Shah* was published in 2006 (Würzburg: Ergon).

**Katja Foellmer** is Lecturer and Research Assistant at the Institute of Iranian Studies at Göttingen University, Germany. She has a doctorate in Iranian Studies. Her research and teaching are focused on Iranian culture in modern times, Iranian media, communication and identity, gender issues, classical and modern Persian literature and satire. She took part in various national and international conferences with papers on Iranian film, literature and satire and published articles in that field. In 2008 the following books were published: *Satire in Iran von 1990-2000* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz) and *Farid ud-Din Attar: Die Konferenz der Vögel* (translated, Wiesbaden: Marix).

**Roxane Haag-Higuchi** is University Lecturer of Iranian Studies at the University of Bamberg (Germany). She received her PhD in Islamic Studies at the University of Freiburg with a thesis on historical Persian narratology. Her main fields of research are Persian literature as well as cultural history of the Qajar and modern periods.

**Elham Malekzadeh** received her M.A. in History from Azad University in 1997 where she also teaches at the History department of the Islamic Azad University Shahr-e Ray Branch since 1999. She pursues a PhD at Al-Zahra University with a doctoral thesis "A Study of Effective Elements in the Creation and Development of Charitable (Welfare & Health) Institutions during the Reign of Reza Shah". Her research interests center around women's endowments and philanthropic work from the Qajar period to the present era. She also works on the socio-political condition of women during the Ilkhanid period. She was the recipient of the Best Researcher & Best Student Award in 2004/2005/2006/2007/2008. Her publications include: *Asnad-e daneshjuyan-e Irani dar Urupa, 1313-1307*, ed. with A. Navai (2003), *Tarikh-e ravabet-e Iran va Veniz*, ed. with A. Navai (2005), *Ruznameh-ye khaterat-e Nasir al-din Shah*, ed. with A. Navai (2005), *Sargozasht-e Safariyan* (2003), *Omur-e khayriyyeh dar doureh-ye Qajar* (2006), *Sam va Bahram*, with A. Navai (2008).

**Afshin Marashi** is Associate Professor at the Department of History, California State University, Sacramento. His research interests include the cultural and intellectual history of Iran during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. His book, *Nationalizing Iran: Culture, Power, and the State, 1870-1940* was published by the University of Washington Press in 2008.

**Cyrus Schayegh** is Assistant Professor at the Near Eastern Studies Department, Princeton University. He received his Ph.D. from Columbia University (2004) and has taught as Assistant Professor at the Department of History and Archaeology of the American University of Beirut from 2005–08. His book *Who is Knowledgeable is Strong: Science, Class, and the Formation of Modern Iranian Society, 1900-1950* has been published by the University of California Press in 2009. His current projects concern the post-World War I Arab East ('Cross-Border Movements and State Techniques in the Mandate Levant, 1918–1945') and post-World War II Iran ('Dams: Techno Politics, Development, and the Cold War in Iran, 1945–1965').

**Karim Soleimany** is Academic Faculty Member (Assistant Professor) at the Department of History at the Shahid Beheshti University in Tehran. He received his B.A. and M.A. in Iranian History from the University of Esfahan (1987) and the University of Tehran (1990) respectively, and his Ph.D. from the University of Bamberg (Germany) in 1998. His publications include *Alqāb-e rejāl-e doure-ye Qajariye* (Tehran 2000) and several articles and academic projects. His most recent article is *Tejārat-e tanbāku miyān-e Irān va Mesr in Faslnāma-ye elmi-pazhuheshi-ye olum-e ensani*, University of Ahvaz (2009).

**Christoph Werner** is Professor of Iranian Studies at the University of Marburg (Germany). He received an M.A. (1994) and a Ph.D. (1999) in Iranian Studies from the University of Bamberg where he also taught as Assistant Professor from 1997 to 2002. From 2002 to 2007 he was Junior Professor of Islamic Studies/Iranian World at the University of Freiburg. His research interests include the social and economic history of the Iranian World with special emphasis on the Qajar period and topics related to Persian diplomatics and historiography, and more recently also cotemporary Persian literature. Publications include *An Iranian Town in Transition* (2000), "Ein Vaqf für meine Töchter" *Der Islam* (2003) and „Die brautschmückende Feder verbreitet Moschusduft" *Iran und iranisch geprägte Kulturen*. A major ongoing project is devoted to build up a Digital Archive of Persian Documents, accessible at [www.asnad.org](http://www.asnad.org).