



Iran's Quiet Revolution

Offering a new perspective on Iran's politics and culture in the 1960s and 1970s, Ali Mirsepassi challenges the prevailing view of pre-revolutionary Iran, documenting how the cultural elites of the Pahlavi state promoted a series of striking *gharbzadegi* or "Westoxification" discourses. Intended as ideological alternatives to modern and Western-inspired cultural attitudes, these influenced Persian identity politics and projected Iranian modernity as a "mistaken modernity," despite the regime's own ferocious modernization programme.

Focusing on the cultural transformations that defined the period, Mirsepassi sheds new light on the Pahlavi state as an ideological gambler, inadvertently empowering its fundamentalist enemies and spreading a "Quiet Revolution" through secular and religious civil society. Proposing a new theoretical framework for understanding the anti-modern discourses of Ahmad Fardid, Jalal Al-e Ahmad, and Ali Shari'ati, *Iran's Quiet Revolution* is a radical reinterpretation of twentieth-century Iranian political history that makes sense of these events within the creative, yet tragic, Iranian nation-making experience.

ALI MIRSEPASSI is the Albert Gallatin Research Excellence Professor of Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies at Gallatin and in the Department of Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies in the Faculty of Arts and Science at New York University, where he is also the director of the Iranian Studies Initiative. He is the author of numerous books, including *Islam, Democracy, and Cosmopolitanism* (2014), *Transnationalism in Iranian Political Thought: The Life and Times of Ahmad Fardid* (2017), *Iran's Troubled Modernity: Debating Ahmad Fardid's Legacy* (2018), and co-editor of *The Global Middle East* series, with Arshin Adib-Moghaddam and also published by Cambridge University Press.

The Global Middle East

General Editors

Arshin Adib-Moghaddam, SOAS, University of London
Ali Mirsepassi, New York University

Editorial Advisory Board

Faisal Devji, University of Oxford
John Hobson, University of Sheffield
Firoozeh Kashani-Sabet, University of Pennsylvania
Zachary Lockman, New York University
Madawi Al-Rasheed, London School of Economics and Political
Science
David Ryan, University College Cork, Ireland

The Global Middle East series seeks to broaden and deconstruct the geographical boundaries of the “Middle East” as a concept to include North Africa, Central and South Asia, and diaspora communities in Western Europe and North America. The series features fresh scholarship that employs theoretically rigorous and innovative methodological frameworks resonating across relevant disciplines in the humanities and the social sciences. In particular, the general editors welcome approaches that focus on mobility, the erosion of nation-state structures, travelling ideas and theories, transcendental techno-politics, the decentralization of grand narratives, and the dislocation of ideologies inspired by popular movements. The series will also consider translations of works by authors in these regions whose ideas are salient to global scholarly trends but have yet to be introduced to the Anglophone academy.

Other books in the series

1. *Transnationalism in Iranian Political Thought: The Life and Times of Ahmad Fardid*, Ali Mirsepassi
2. *Psycho-nationalism: Global Thought, Iranian Imaginations*, Arshin Adib-Moghaddam
3. *Iranian Cosmopolitanism: A Cinematic History*, Golbarg Rekabtalaei

4. *Money, Markets and Monarchies: The Gulf Cooperation Council and the Political Economy of the Contemporary Middle East*, Adam Hanieh
5. *Iran's Troubled Modernity: Debating Ahmad Fardid's Legacy*, Ali Mirsepassi
6. *Foreign Policy as Nation Making: Turkey and Egypt in the Cold War*, Reem Abou-El-Fadl
7. *Revolution and Its Discontents: Political Thought and Reform in Iran*, Eskandar Sadeghi-Boroujerdi
8. *Creating the Modern Iranian Woman: Popular Culture between Two Revolutions*, Liora Hendelman-Baavur
9. *Iran's Quiet Revolution: The Downfall of the Pahlavi State*, Ali Mirsepassi

Cambridge University Press
978-1-108-48589-0 — Iran's Quiet Revolution
Ali Mirsepassi
Frontmatter
[More Information](#)

Iran's Quiet Revolution

The Downfall of the Pahlavi State

ALI MIRSEPASSI
New York University



CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Cambridge University Press
978-1-108-48589-0 — Iran's Quiet Revolution
Ali Mirsepassi
Frontmatter
[More Information](#)

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS

University Printing House, Cambridge CB2 8BS, United Kingdom
One Liberty Plaza, 20th Floor, New York, NY 10006, USA
477 Williamstown Road, Port Melbourne, VIC 3207, Australia
314–321, 3rd Floor, Plot 3, Splendor Forum, Jasola District Centre,
New Delhi – 110025, India
79 Anson Road, #06–04/06, Singapore 079906

Cambridge University Press is part of the University of Cambridge.

It furthers the University's mission by disseminating knowledge in the pursuit of education, learning, and research at the highest international levels of excellence.

www.cambridge.org

Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9781108485890

DOI: 10.1017/9781108641852

© Ali Mirsepassi 2019

This publication is in copyright. Subject to statutory exception and to the provisions of relevant collective licensing agreements, no reproduction of any part may take place without the written permission of Cambridge University Press.

First published 2019

Printed and bound in Great Britain by Clays Ltd, Elcograf S.p.A.

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Names: Mirsepassi, Ali, author.

Title: Iran's quiet revolution : the downfall of the Pahlavi state / Ali Mirsepassi.

Description: Cambridge, United Kingdom ; New York, NY : Cambridge University Press, 2019. | Series: The global Middle East ; 9 | Includes bibliographical references and index.

Identifiers: LCCN 2019008501 | ISBN 9781108485890 (hardback) | ISBN 9781108725323 (paperback)

Subjects: LCSH: Iran – History – Pahlavi dynasty, 1925–1979. | Iran – Social conditions – 20th century. | Reza Shah Pahlavi, Shah of Iran, 1878–1944. | Iran – Civilization – 20th century. | Islam and politics – Iran. | BISAC:

HISTORY / Middle East / General.

Classification: LCC DS317 .M57 2019 | DDC 955.05/3–dc23

LC record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2019008501>

ISBN 978-1-108-48589-0 Hardback

ISBN 978-1-108-72532-3 Paperback

Cambridge University Press has no responsibility for the persistence or accuracy of URLs for external or third-party internet websites referred to in this publication and does not guarantee that any content on such websites is, or will remain, accurate or appropriate.

Contents

<i>Acknowledgments</i>	page viii
<i>Note on Transliteration</i>	ix
Introduction: The Quiet Revolution	1
1 The Allure of the “Anti-modern”	15
2 De-politicizing Westoxification: The Case of <i>Bonyad Monthly</i>	27
3 Ehsan Naraghi: Chronicle of a Man for All Seasons	58
4 Iranian Cinema’s “Quiet Revolution” (1960s–1970s)	107
5 A Garden between Two Streets: “Bearing Witness” to “Iranian Modernities”	133
6 The Shah as a “Modern Mystic”?	152
7 The Imaginary Invention of a Nation: Iran in the 1930s and 1970s	173
8 An Elective Affinity: Variations of <i>Gharbzadegi</i>	197
<i>Bibliography</i>	224
<i>Index</i>	232

Acknowledgments

This book was planned as a research collaboration with Mehdi Faraji. We researched and wrote two chapters of the book, “De-politicizing Westoxification: The Case of *Bonyad Monthly*” and “Iranian Cinema’s ‘Quiet Revolution’ (1960s–70s),”¹ and did some more research. However, Mehdi’s academic life became more demanding, and he decided to stop working on the book, while I continued working on and writing the rest of the book. Mehdi later helped me with transliteration and stylistic editing. I am very grateful to him, and he should be credited for important sections of the book. As always, Tadd Fernée helped me in editing this book, and I would like to express my deep appreciation for his considerable contribution.

I would like to thank the two reviewers of an earlier version of the manuscript of this work whose comments and suggestions for revisions helped improve the quality of the book. I would also like to express my gratitude to Maria Marsh, Middle East Editor at Cambridge University Press, for her enthusiastic interest in this book and for her support in its publication.

¹ The two chapters were published as co-authored pieces: “Iranian Cinema’s ‘Quiet Revolution’: 1960s–70s,” with Mehdi Faraji, *Middle East Critique*, September 2017; and “De-politicizing Westoxification: The Case of *Bonyad Monthly*,” *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, December 2016.

Note on Transliteration

The transliteration of Persian words and names follows the system suggested by the *Iranian Studies Journal* (available from <https://associationforiranianstudies.org/journal/transliteration>), with the following exceptions:

- Consonants with the same sound are not differentiated. So *ghayn* and *ghaf* are both represented by *gh*, and *hamza* and *ayn* are represented by *'*.
- Current Persian pronunciation has been followed, except for Arabic words in an Arabic context (for instance, in reciting the Qur'an). In such cases the *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* transliteration rules were followed.
- For individuals' names, their own preferred transliteration was used if it was accessible. If not, the most common transliteration was used. In cases where the same name is transliterated in different forms, one form was chosen for the text of the book (but not the Bibliography and citations) for consistency. In general, omission of *ayn* and *hamza* was preferred when a name is commonly transliterated without those signs.

Dates

In some cases, two dates are used to cite Persian materials (e.g. 1395/2016). In such cases, the first date is based on the solar hijri calendar, which is currently used in Iran, and the second one is its equivalent Common Era date.

Cambridge University Press
978-1-108-48589-0 — Iran's Quiet Revolution
Ali Mirsepassi
Frontmatter
[More Information](#)
