



Universiteit
Leiden
The Netherlands

State, society and labour in Iran, 1906-1941 : a social history of Iranian industrialization and labour with reference to the textile industry
Afacan, S.

Citation

Afacan, S. (2015, June 23). *State, society and labour in Iran, 1906-1941 : a social history of Iranian industrialization and labour with reference to the textile industry*. Retrieved from <https://hdl.handle.net/1887/33227>

Version: Corrected Publisher's Version

License: [Licence agreement concerning inclusion of doctoral thesis in the Institutional Repository of the University of Leiden](#)

Downloaded from: <https://hdl.handle.net/1887/33227>

Note: To cite this publication please use the final published version (if applicable).

Cover Page



Universiteit Leiden



The handle <http://hdl.handle.net/1887/33227> holds various files of this Leiden University dissertation

Author: Afacan, Serhan

Title: State, society and labour in Iran, 1906-1941 : a social history of Iranian industrialization and labour with reference to the textile industry

Issue Date: 2015-06-23

**STATE, SOCIETY AND LABOUR IN IRAN, 1906-
1941:**

**A SOCIAL HISTORY OF IRANIAN INDUSTRIALIZATION AND
LABOUR WITH REFERENCE TO THE TEXTILE INDUSTRY**

Proefschrift
ter verkrijging van de graad van
Doctor aan de Universiteit Leiden,
op gezag van Rector Magnificus prof. mr. C.J.J.M. Stolker,
volgens besluit van het College voor Promoties
te verdedigen op dinsdag 23 juni 2015
klokke 11:15 uur

door

Serhan Afacan

geboren te Istanbul

in 1982

Promotiecommissie

Promoter: Prof. dr. Touraj Atabaki (Universitet Leiden)

Co-promoter: Prof. dr. Marcel van der Linden (Universitet van Amsterdam)

Overige leden: Prof. dr. Leo Lucassen, (Universitet Leiden)

Prof. dr. Willem van Schendel (Universitet van Amsterdam)

Dr. Stephanie Cronin (Oxford University)

to my parents Akif & Ayşe Afacan

State, Society and Labour in Iran, 1906-1941:
A Social History of Iranian Industrialization and Labour with Reference to the Textile Industry

© Serhan Afacan, 2015

Front cover photo: Emblem of the Guildsmen's and Workers' Union of Kerman, 1927

Back cover photo: A Petition by the Shoemakers, 1923

Library Museum and Document Centre of the Iran Parliament

CONTENTS

A NOTE ON TRANSLITERATIONS AND CURRENCIES.....	X
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS.....	X
LIST OF TABLES	XI
LIST OF FIGURES	XI
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	XII
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION.....	1
Some Theoretical Considerations	4
Blurring the Boundaries: Petitioners and their Addressees	10
A Brief Assessment of the Current Literature on Iranian Labour History	14
The Focus of the Study	16
The Plan of the Study.....	17
CHAPTER TWO: FROM THE CONSOLIDATION OF THE QAJAR MONARCHY TO THE CONSTITUTIONAL REVOLUTION: IRAN IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY	20
Introduction.....	20
Reforms under the Shadow of Arms: Military, Politics and Reforms in Iran 1813-1848.....	20
From Reform to Revolution: The Age of Ambivalent Reforms and the Coming of the Constitutional Revolution 1848-1905	24
Economy and Society in 19 th Century	27
Land, Industry and Labour.....	28
Textile Industry during the 19 th Century.....	33
Iranian Society on the Eve of the Constitutional Revolution: A People in Flux	43
Concluding Remarks	46
CHAPTER THREE: IRAN FROM THE CONSTITUTIONAL REVOLUTION TO THE END OF REZA SHAH’S REIGN: 1905-1941.....	48
Introduction.....	48
From Mobilization to Revolution: The Making of the Constitutional Revolution.....	48
“Do You Want me to Go and Present this to the Majles?”: Petitioning in Iran	55
Parliamentary Politics: The First Majles, 1906-1908	58
The Crisis of Parliamentary Politics: The Second Majles and the End of an Era.....	67
Constitutionalism without a Parliament: Local Politics and the Rise of Reza Shah	73
From Freedom to Security: Reza Shah and the Period of Pragmatist Modernization.....	79
Concluding Remarks	88

CHAPTER FOUR: INDUSTRIALIZATION AND THE TEXTILE INDUSTRY IN IRAN: 1906-1941.....	89
Introduction:.....	89
Foreign Goods and Native Consumption: Popular Reactions to Foreign Economic Domination	90
To the Sublime Majles: State-Society Relations and the Economy in Iran	96
Industrialization	106
Iranian Industries before Large-Scale Industrialization: The Textile Industry in Iran	106
Fabricating Iranian Modernization: Large-Scale Industrialization in Iran, 1925-1941	113
The Age of Iron: Factorization of Iranian Textile Industry, 1931-1941.....	117
Concluding Remarks:	122
CHAPTER FIVE: SOCIETY AND LABOUR: THE IRANIAN TEXTILE WORKERS, 1906-1941.....	124
Introduction	124
Being of the Working-Class: From <i>Kolah-namadi</i> (Felt-capped) to <i>Kargar</i> (Worker)	126
The Workforce in Iran.....	129
The Nature of Textile Labour	132
Regulating Labour: Attempts at Labour Legislation	135
The Factory Act:.....	141
Working Hours and Wages	144
Sanitary Conditions.....	145
Socialism and Labour Activism in Iran	147
Workers as Petitioners: Discursive Practices	158
A Weeping Traveller: Mohammad Ali of Yazd and Lost Jobs.....	160
Unpaid Wages.....	169
Concluding Remarks	171
CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSION	174
BIBLIOGRAPHY	180
Primary sources	180
Newspapers	180
Parliamentary Proceedings.....	180
Archival Sources.....	180
Library, Museum and Document Centre of Iran Parliament (LMDCIP):.....	180
National Library and Archive of Iran (NLAI):.....	183
Foreign Office Files, Public Record Office:.....	184
International Labour Organization	184
Other Official Sources:.....	184
Secondary Sources	185
APPENDICES	193
1. Representatives of the Guilds in the First Majles.....	193
2.The List of the Items Proposed by the Merchants Union of Tehran to be Banned from Importation ...	196

3. The Declaration of the Merchants Union of Hamadan Issued on 23 February 1927 Regarding the Gravity of Adopting Protectionist Trade Measures	197
4. The List of Textile Factories in Iran in 1940	199
a. Cotton Weaving and Spinning Factories	199
b. Wool Spinning and Weaving Factories	201
c. Knit and Sock Weaving	202
d. Silk Weaving Factory.....	203
e. Bag and Sack Weaving	204
5. The List of the Workers of the ‘Etemadiyeh Weaving and Spinning Factory in Bushehr in 1935.....	205
6. The Results of the Medical Inspection on the Vatan Factory Workers	209
SUMMARY.....	213
SAMENVATTING.....	216
CURRICULUM VITAE	220

A Note on Transliterations and Currencies

For the most part, I followed the *Iranian Studies* scheme for transliterating Persian words, names etc. I have slightly modified the system for such popular names as Isfahan, Tehran and so on, which have not been changed. All transliterations are mine unless included in a quotation, or otherwise noted.

As for the currency, during the period under study the tuman, qran and shahi were the units of currency in Iran; a tuman equalled to 10 qrans and qran equalled to 20 shahis.¹ Qran was the main unit until it was changed in March 1930 to rial. By the turn of the 20th century the rate of pound sterling in qran was around 51.1 in Tehran while in the eve of the First World War it was about 55.5.² Until early 1920's it remained more or less the same and in 1923 it slightly rose to 56.56 but in 1929 it dropped to 54.76.³ By late 1930's the rate of pound sterling in qran it rose as high as 80.⁴

List of Abbreviations

LMDCIP: Library Museum and Document Center of the Iran Parliament

NLAI: National Library and Archive of Iran

FO: Foreign Office

ILO: International Labour Organization

¹ Charles Issawi, *The Economic History of Iran: 1800-1914*, Chicago, The University of Chicago Press, 1971), 387.

² *Ibid.*, 344-45.

³ R. H. Hadow, *Report on the Trade and Industry of Persia 1923* (London: His Majesty's Stationary Office, 1923) , 4; E. R. Lingeman, *Economic Conditions in Persia March 1930* (London: His Majesty's Stationary Office, 1930), 18.

⁴ F. A. G. Gray, *Report on Economic and Commercial Conditions in Iran 1937* (London: His Majesty's Stationary Office, 1937), v.

List of Tables

1.1.	The Daily Purchasing Power of a Weaver in Yazd in 1895	36
4.1.	Large Scale Factories in Iran & Their Labour Force 1890-1914	94
4.2.	Main Exports of Iran	110
4.3.	Comparative Table Showing the Value and the Source of Cotton Yarns and Thread Imported into Iran between 1906-07 and 1913-14	111
4.4.	The Distribution of Laws and Decrees on Industrial Issues According to Years	115
4.5.	Statistics of Large Manufacturing Industry, 1926-41	118
4.6.	The Manufacturing Plants Established Between 1930&1940	121
5.1.	The Percentage and the Number of the Economically Active Male Population	129
5.2.	The Proportion of the Agricultural Workforce to the Population	130
5.3.	The Proportion of the Industrial Workers to the Population	130
5.4.	Workers in the Cotton Industry by Gender and Age	134

List of Figures

Figure 1.	A collective petition from Shiraz dated 27 February 1927 requesting an increase in the municipal budget.	56
Figure 2.	The Petition and the photograph of Hosayn ‘Abbas, a previous worker at AIOC (APOC), in which he asked for financial help for not being able to work after he lost his right arm in a work accident, 20 July 1939	58
Figure 3.	Shoemakers’ petition dated 1923 which requests a law regarding the use of home-made shoes.	105
Figure 4.	Interior of the Vatan Factory, Late 1920’s	116
Figure 5.	The petition of the muslin weavers of Isfahan	165

Acknowledgements

As an Arabic proverb goes “there is an obstacle for everything but for the pursuit of knowledge there are many.” I had the privilege of having around me people who, from the beginning, helped me overcome these obstacles. Their number is too many to be named here so I will only name some of them and I apologize to anyone whose name I omitted. First of all I must thank my family, especially my parents, Akif and Ayşe Afacan, for always supporting me in every possible way. I also want to thank my brothers and sisters, who keenly felt the challenge of having a PhD-pursuing bother. I am especially grateful to my wife, Rabia Afacan, who not only supported and encouraged me as a spouse but was also exposed to many of my premature ideas and patiently listened to and reflected on them before I dared to put them on paper. I should also mention our little son, Ahmed Akif Afacan, who made our life a lot more challenging than before but also a lot more peaceful and meaningful.

I do not know how to express my gratitude to my supervisor Prof. dr. Touraj Atabaki who not only made invaluable contributions to my academic development but also acted as a close friend, a caring father and a source of inspiration. From the day I, as an inquisitive prospective Ph.D candidate, entered into his office in 2008, to the last stage of my research, I always enjoyed his inspiring intellectual stimulation and sensitive personality. His companionship as well as that of his wife, Sharareh Atabaki, made those lovely years even better and a lot more fruitful. I present him this study as the fruit of the efforts he spent for me. I spent the greater part of my Ph.D years in the wonderful city of Leiden where I made many lifetime friendships. First of all, Eric Peterse and Marijke helped me a lot , especially with official procedures, when I arrived in Leiden for the first time and have been very good friends. I am very grateful to them. I am especially grateful to Hossein Pourbagheri, my colleague and good friend with whom I spent, in Holland, Iran, or Turkey, hours and hours talking about life which often, but not necessarily always, included our Ph.D research. These talks which were often accompanied by cups of tea were among the best moments I spent in Leiden. Hossein was among those people who witnessed and contributed to the development of my ideas from the beginning to the end, and he also carefully read and reflected on parts of the study you are holding in your hands. I also thank Ismail Çağlar, my flatmate and travel mate, for his inspiring friendship. Although we were involved in notably different fields of interest, as far as I can tell, we always listened to one another with the utmost curiosity and joy. I should add my colleagues and friends from Leiden University especially Ömer Faruk Gürlesin, Sevgi

Adak, Emre Erol, and Sedat Metinulu for the inspiring chats we had and the lovely times we spent together.

Fortunately, I enjoyed the opportunity of spending lots of lovely time beyond my academic preoccupations. Thus, I thank those people at the Gol Sport and Fatih Foundation who have always been there as friends and with whom I have had long random chats, played football and enjoyed some very good times. Burak Nallı, İsmail Kuzu, Fatih Olgun, Yasin Olgun, Yılmaz Yalçınak and Hasan İnan were some of them. My teammates Fevzi Koç, Sait Özcan, Vehbi Kuzu and Bülent Düz were among my closest friends in Leiden. Bülent was also my flatmate and he certainly deserves a special mention for being a very good friend. Selman Tayyar was certainly one of those people who were responsible for the good days I spent in Holland. I always enjoyed his peaceful friendship and humorous character. Yet, I should add that it was somehow painful for me, as a Fenerbahçe fan, to witness him, as a Galatasaray fan, celebrate consecutive championships... but after all that, life kept going on. I am also grateful to friends in Rotterdam—Ramazan Güngören, Özcan Hıdır, İlhan Döne, and Ethem Güngören, to name but a few. In particular, Ramazan Güngören has been a fatherly friend, and he and his family always made me enjoy a family atmosphere when my own was thousands of miles away. We always liked to talk about Persian poetry and Iran, often in Persian, which he spoke fluently. His multilingual and skilful son, Ahmet Faruk Güngören, has also been a very good friend. I spent the last two years in Istanbul and here enjoyed the companionship of many friends especially Ali Gözeller, İsmail Hakkı Kadı, Rauf Nacak, Özgür Bircan, Filiz Dıđırođlu, Selim Ahmetođlu and Özgün Basmaz. I am grateful to them as well as those whom I did not name here.

My co-supervisor, Prof. dr. Marcel van der Linden always made inspiring comments and critiques about my research. Especially his critiques on the finished version of my study significantly added to its quality for which I am grateful to him. I also enjoyed and benefitted from the time I spent at the International Institute for Social History in Amsterdam and I am very grateful to everybody there. I especially enjoyed the friendship of Maral Jafroudi, Peyman Jafari, and Peyman Amiri. Nader Sohrabi was the first person to draw my attention to the collection of petitions in the Iranian Parliament Archive in Tehran, I am very grateful to him. Koroush Norouzmoradi and Siavash Shohani helped me a lot during my archival research in Tehran, they too deserve special thanks. I am also grateful to Dr. Hossein Abadian and Dr. Hojjat Fallah Tootcar who gave me very useful suggestions for my research. Tootcar also kindly shared his then-unpublished Ph.D thesis on the social and political activities of the

Iranian trade guilds and artisans between 1906 and 1925, from which I learned a lot. I am also grateful to Dr. Willem Floor, who is one of the pioneers of the field I am just entering. He kindly listened to my unripe ideas and helped me develop them in an early stage of my research. I also thank Robabeh Motaghedi from the National Archives in Tehran for kindly helping me access many documents from afar. Manijeh Sadri from the Islamic Azad University was very helpful in accessing many books and publications, she deserves special thanks. I am particularly grateful to the three members of the Doctorate Committee, Prof. dr. Leo Lucassen, Prof. dr. Willem van Schendel and Dr. Stephanie Cronin for kindly reading and commenting on my work. Also, Kaveh Hemmat kindly edited this study and significantly contributed to the final version by his comments and critiques. I am very grateful to him as well. I also thank my colleague and friend Sebastiaan den Juil who kindly translated the summary into Dutch

I also thank the Dutch Ministry of Education and Leiden Institute for Area Studies for the financial support they provided during my PhD research. Many thanks also go to the Centre for Islamic Studies (ISAM) in Istanbul where I completed the last part of the writing process. Last but not least I owe a great debt to the people who appear in the notes of this study and who devoted much thought and effort to pondering many questions about Iranian history. It is upon their works that I could build my own. I sometimes agreed with them, and sometimes resisted their conclusions, but I always appreciated their efforts. Finally, it goes without saying that all errors and faults here are mine and mine alone.