

THE PERSIAN SPHINX

*Amir Abbas Hoveyda and the
Riddle of the Iranian Revolution*

A BIOGRAPHY BY
ABBAS MILANI



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*To my son Hamid
"the light of my eyes"*





Hoveyda's maternal grandmother (Izzat al-Dowleh's daughter) reading the Koran.

In spite of this tradition of freethinking in the family, in matters of matrimony the three daughters followed in the footsteps of their grandmother, Izzat al-Dowleh. Afsar al-Moluk was fifteen when she was married off to a forty-year-old husband. As was the custom for nearly all of the women of her generation, she had only one brief and formal meeting with her future husband before the night of their marriage. She never questioned the wisdom of her family's choice. By all accounts, she grew to respect, some say even love, her husband. Her true feelings for the man will never be known. For the women of her generation, open discussion of marital problems was deemed vulgar and undignified. Though her husband died when she was thirty-six years old, and though she lived to be eighty, Afsar al-Moluk never remarried. Even in her most trying moments, and with her most intimate relatives, she only talked with respect and affection for the difficult man who had been her husband for eighteen years and who had sealed her fate for life.*

The husband, Ayn al-Molk, was a surly man, distant and detached, and given to brooding. He had the authoritative bearing of an ill-tempered

Prussian bureaucrat. In most pictures of him, the stern glare of his eyes, piercing through thin metal-rimmed glasses, seem unfailingly purposeful, with little tolerance for frivolity. Amir Abbas describes him as a man reticent with words and emotions. Fereydoun, the younger son, remembers Ayn al-Molk as the archetypal patriarch of Persian mythology. When the father was around, he says, there was fear and trembling in the air; he was the authoritarian lord of the manor.¹⁶

When he married his young bride, Ayn al-Molk was already something of an intellectual, steeped in the cosmopolitan Levantine culture for which Beirut was the capital and the metaphor. He had been educated—like a disproportionate number of influential politicians of twentieth-century Iran—at the American University in Beirut, where he learned Arabic, English, and French. He translated into Persian an eclectic array of books that included everything from the works of the Lebanese poet Khalil Gibran to popular romance novels by third-rate nineteenth-century French authors like Michel Zevago.

Ayn al-Molk was a man of middle-class means and lineage, but he had found his way into the good graces of aristocratic families by a combination of his intellectual acumen and earnest disposition. After finishing school in Beirut, he traveled to Paris where he met Jafar-Gholi Sardar Asaad, one of the more colorful figures of the Iranian Constitutional Revolution; eventually he was chosen as tutor for Asaad's children. Asaad had grown to like the young tutor, Habibollah, and as a token of his affection had asked Ahmad Shah to grant him the title of Ayn al-Molk. Sardar Asaad was a patron of the arts; and it was at his behest that Ayn al-Molk translated some of Ponson du Terrail's popular novels, featuring the mysterious Rocambole. Serialized in late-nineteenth-century Parisian papers, the novel proved no less popular in Iran.¹⁷

Ayn al-Molk's trip to Paris and his meeting with Asaad was apparently the result of a rift with his father, Mirza Reza. Mirza Reza was a trusted disciple of Abbas Efendi (Abdul Baha), the eldest son of Baha'ullah, the founder of the Bahai faith in Iran.¹⁸ Since its inception, those who have followed this religion have been persistently persecuted in Iran.¹⁹ One result of this persecution has been a fog of mystery surrounding the history of the faith and the identity of those who joined it. The uncompromising stance of the Shiite clerics against the new religion, and their insistence that the new faith is nothing but an instrument of British, and later Zionist,

* Afsar al-Moluk lived the last four years of her life with Maryam Ensha. According to Ensha, Afsar al-Moluk did not once remember her husband with anything other than praise. Others who were close to her also cannot remember any disparaging comments.

conspiracies, turned the Bahais into the pariah of Iranian politics. To be called a Bahai became a grave charge—hard to substantiate, even harder to refute. For this reason, the allegation has often been used with malice, especially in the political arena.

There is no doubt that Hoveyda's paternal grandfather, Mirza Reza, was a Bahai. There is also some evidence that at least early in his life Ayn al-Molk was also a follower of Abbas Efendi. He might have been one of Efendi's scribes for a while.²⁰ A brief note by Abbas Efendi to his followers in Tehran is the most substantial, albeit circumstantial, evidence connecting Hoveyda's father to the Bahai faith. In the note, the exiled Efendi, living at the time in Acre, today part of Israel, enjoins his friends in Tehran to help find a suitable job for the young Ayn al-Molk. He writes, "Habibollah is the son of the esteemed Aqa Reza. Do everything in your power and that of other friends to hopefully procure for him a position, even if it is outside the capital or the country. For me this is important, because of the sentiments I have for Aqa Reza." Beyond this connection, nothing else is certain.*



AMIR ABBAS WAS ABOUT TWO YEARS OLD when his father, by then a member of the Iranian foreign service, was appointed Iran's consul general to Damascus. Today, a trip between Tehran and Damascus can be a two-hour flight. In 1921 it took Ayn al-Molk's family more than three months to arrive at their destination. It was, in Hoveyda's words, "a trip reminiscent of *A Thousand and One Nights*."²¹

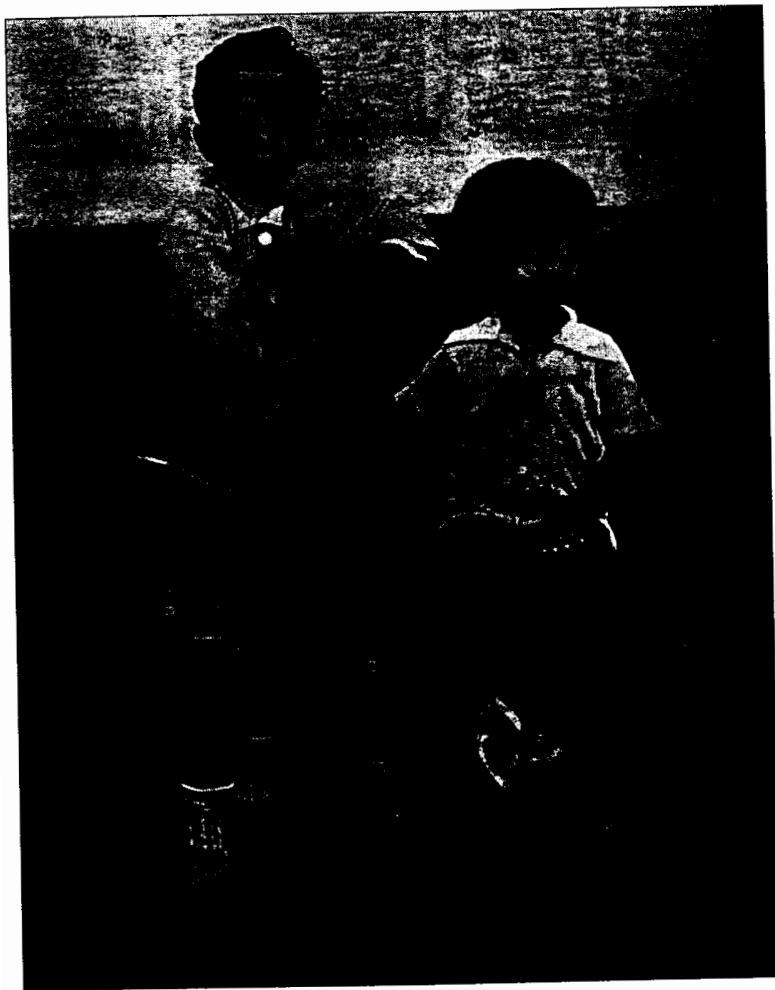
From Tehran, they hired a horse carriage that took them and their belongings to the coastal waters of the Persian Gulf. There, they found passage on a ship bound for Bombay. In Bombay, they searched for a boat headed for a Mediterranean port. Eventually they had to settle for one going to Cairo. After a brief stay in the city, they crossed the Suez Canal, and there they hired a car to take them to Damascus.²² The desert in those days, Hoveyda tells us, had no marked roads. T. E. Lawrence, who hap-

pened to be traversing the same sands in the same era, called it "a pathless sea of sand."²³ At short intervals, the Arab driver, to the utter amazement of his Persian passengers, would disembark, kneel on the desert, bring his ears close to the sand, and with the help of the mysterious sounds he heard, navigate his way through the potentially treacherous terrain.

Writing about this journey, Hoveyda depended on his mother's recollections for most of the details. He writes, "My images of my childhood are opaque. Sometimes the images blur into my mother's stories about my childhood, and thus I cannot distinguish my own memories from her tales." This shared sense of memory between Hoveyda and his mother can be seen as a metaphor for the intense emotional tie, or attachment, he developed for her. In a picture taken when he is about twelve years old, we see him and his young brother standing next to Afsar al-Moluk. The young son's upright and separate stance is starkly different from Amir Abbas, who is leaning on, or more accurately hanging onto, his mother. (See page 54.)

His deep attachment to his mother—or in the parlance of psychoanalysis, the intensity of the oedipal relationship—seemed to be partly the result of Ayn al-Molk's aloof behavior and an inadvertent consequence of exile. The fact that only nineteen years separated the son from his young, exuberant, and energetic mother must have helped the intensity of this relationship. In another passage of his "Memories of Days of Youth," describing his life in Beirut and Damascus, Hoveyda laments the lack of "love-objects" in his childhood. In a tone at once tinged with melancholy and clinical in its clear articulation of a problem, he mourns the impermanence inherent in the nomadic life of a diplomat, the tormenting transience of a childhood lived in exile. Those who have spent their childhood going "from one country to another, those who have never had a corner of the world to call their home and the place of rest, those who have never had an object that could become part of their memory," he writes, "are really nothing more than orphans."²⁴ And he confesses that "throughout the years living abroad, I have always had the sad sense that I don't even have a chair, or a desk of my own."²⁵ In the Damascus apartment of his childhood, every time Amir Abbas or his brother sat down, they were admonished to "be careful, be careful, these chairs and desks do not belong to us, they belong to the government."²⁶

* When the scholar Fouad Misaghi heard that I was writing a biography of Hoveyda, he generously provided me with a copy of this very important note hitherto unpublished in any account of Hoveyda's life. The source from which the note was copied did not appear on the page he sent me. Misaghi promised to give me the information the next time we met. Unfortunately he died of leukemia before we could meet again. Until the Bahai archives are opened to public scrutiny, questions about the length of Ayn al-Molk's association with the Bahai faith cannot be answered conclusively.



The two Hoveyda brothers, Amir Abbas and Fereydoun, in Damascus, circa 1927.

Indeed, the trauma, and transience, of a childhood spent in exile convinced him, once he was home, never again to leave Iran. "Those who have not lived a long time abroad," he writes, "might not understand me when I say I have no desire to leave my country, even for a short sojourn."²⁷ He said the same thing to his brother in no uncertain terms: "I never want to

become an exile again."²⁸ Such sentiments take on particular significance when, on the eve of the Islamic Revolution, Hoveyda is offered the chance to leave Iran for a life of exile.

Of his first years in the French elementary school of Damascus, he writes, "I did not have many friends and lived a lonely life."²⁹ His desolation must have been exacerbated by his stern, and mostly absent, father. Hoveyda calls him "a hard man. Though he had much affection for us, he kept it all inside himself and it would take months for us to at least see an outward sign of his affection."³⁰ He was by nature more "bent on anger."³¹

During those years, the Saudi Arabia that T. E. Lawrence had an inadvertent hand in creating was seething with ethnic and religious strife, and a new kind of violent politics—the "creed of the desert"—had been introduced by the fiercely fundamentalist Wahhabi branch of Islam. In their efforts to avert a confrontation with the new rulers, the Iranian government often sent Ayn al-Molk on diplomatic missions to Saudi Arabia.³²

When he was at home, official duties consumed nearly all of his time. The consulate office was in the same building as the family residence, obliterating any distinction between home and office, work and leisure. The everyday affairs of the house and his children's education were his wife's domain. He "never asked about our progress," Hoveyda remembers, and adds, "when children most need to see their fathers, we only spent our summers with our father."³³

Ayn al-Molk's presence was intimidating. There was more solemnity and less gaiety in the house when he was around. Even the servants behaved differently. They were normally on casual, at times even insolent, terms with Hoveyda's mother but became respectfully subservient in the father's presence. Insolence or informality he did not suffer gladly.

As for religious matters, the father's beliefs, past or present, were a taboo subject in the family—a taboo, incidentally, that lasted long after his death and was certainly maintained in the published segments of Hoveyda's memoirs. According to Fereydoun Hoveyda, the Bahai faith was never mentioned in the family. "I was fourteen years old," he says, "when I first heard the word 'Bahai' and learned what it meant from a friend."³⁴

Nor did Islamic rituals or prayers figure prominently in the daily life of the Hoveyda siblings. Amir Abbas's recollections of his childhood, as well as his brother's memoirs covering those years, are in this sense remarkable for their lack of any pretensions of piety.³⁵

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report that says, "the governor of one of Iran's largest banks told an embassy officer that he had brought to the Shah's attention some business ventures that put Ashraf in a bad light. The Shah merely shrugged the matter off. The bank governor commented to the embassy officer that such deals would land other people in jail for ten years."¹⁰ Even Parviz Sabeti was threatened by the shah when he filed one particularly damaging report about the illegal financial activities of some members of the royal family.¹¹

In their lucrative economic activities, the royal family was joined by a few of the shah's close friends, who were also deemed impervious to prosecution. There was Alam who, even according to his own protégés and supporters, was involved in many shady deals. There was the infamous Amir-Houshang Davalou, known as Iran's "King of Caviar." And there was the "Duke of Dark Corners," Dr. Karim Ayadi, described in a U.S. Embassy document as "the shah's personal physician [who] is a shareholder in numerous companies, such as the Pars Oil Company, and owns 15 to 40 percent of these firms. In such cases the shares are registered under variations of his name such as Abdle-Karim, Karim or Eyadi. General Ayadi holds an exclusive right to develop shrimp fishing in the Persian Gulf."¹² In another report, this time by the CIA, Ayadi is called "the major channel through which the Shah dabbles in commercial affairs. He is said to have been a childhood friend of the shah... It is said that Ayadi accompanied the Shah on his honeymoon with his second wife, Soraya. Ayadi was reported at one time for fronting for the Shah in the Southern Iran Fishing company... Ayadi, a Bahai, is credited by one observer with being one of those who protects the sect against persecution by the more fanatical Iranian Moslems."¹³

* An example of Hoveyda's attempt to fight corruption can be found in his labyrinthine confrontation with a flashy and gaudy entrepreneur who happened to be a Bahai. The entrepreneur used what bankers call a "float" to purchase bank stocks. By 1975, the new governor of Iran's Central Bank, Hassanali Mehran, discovered that these unauthorized "floats" had reached the staggering figure of one billion toman—close to 140 million dollars. Mehran decided to act and solicited Hoveyda's help. Hoveyda called the entrepreneur to his office and in harsh words warned him to stay clear of the banking industry. A couple of days later, the Central Bank received a letter from the court ministry: the shah had insisted that the man was a hard-working capitalist and that the government must not impede his growth. The day the letter was received at the bank, the victorious capitalist went to the prime minister's office—this time, uninvited—and flicked his thumb, the Persian equivalent of the middle finger, at Hoveyda's chief of staff, saying, "Tell your boss, here! I got the bank." Eventually, an agreement was reached after negotiations involving the shah himself. The entrepreneur agreed to sell his shares in all banks except for his forty percent equity. For financial details of the "float" saga, I have relied on Hassanali Mehran, interviewed by author, Washington, D.C., 16 February 1997. For details of the entrepreneur's trips to the prime minister's office, I spoke with Hoveyda's chief of staff, Mohammad Safa, interviewed by author, 21 November 1997.

By the mid-1970s, some members of the royal family along with these courtiers and a couple of Hoveyda's friends and at least a couple of his ministers had developed a badly tarnished reputation for "having their hands in the public till." A 1978 U.S. Embassy report declared, "Corruption has become a major political issue in Iran in recent weeks, with much of the criticism of the shah being couched in terms of the corrupt activities of his closest advisors and even members of his family... [The] issue is not likely to disappear without first profoundly shaking Iran's most basic political institution—the monarchy."¹⁴



AS IRAN'S OIL REVENUES INCREASED, the country's development took on a staggeringly fast tempo. From 1968 to 1972, the industrial sector grew at an annual rate of fourteen percent. The big leap, however, was yet to come. In December 1972, the price of oil began its sharpest rise. Within a year, the price of a barrel of oil increased from about five dollars to close to twelve. The country's economic plans had to be fundamentally revised in light of new revenue figures. It was also at about this time that the shah began to talk about his "Great Civilization." Before the end of the century, he promised, Iran would become the world's fifth industrial power; it would surpass Japan and leave behind the tormenting vicious cycle of underdevelopment and poverty. Indeed as early as 1966, he boasted to Averell Harriman that "only Japan and Iran have the possibility of attaining, within the next 20 years, the state of development reached by European countries..." adding, "Iran has more abundant natural resources than does Japan."¹⁵

Economists have argued that behind the idea of the Great Civilization lies the strategy commonly known as the "big push." According to this strategy, economic development in Third World countries is constrained by "vicious circles" of poverty. If an economy is to break free, the state needs to industrialize "on a wide and diversified front."¹⁶ Advocates of this strategy know, of course, that in each country, the big push has to be commensurate with that society's "absorptive capacity."¹⁷ The shah wanted the big push but had no patience for such murky and mundane concepts as absorptive capacity. But economic realities are stubborn facts, oblivious to royal commands. One would expect, however, that Hoveyda, given his

It was a much-anticipated document. Hoveyda was, after all, the highest official of the *ancien régime* to fall into the hands of Islamic authorities. He had been at the center of power for the past fifteen years, and his name had become synonymous with the glories and the failings of the fallen monarchy. The revolution had won power on the strength of slogans, which were wide in appeal and short in detail. Dislodging the monarchy had been offered as a panacea for all social ills. Now the revolution had a chance to make a reasoned argument for its legitimacy. Furthermore, breaches of human rights, military tribunals, and show trials had figured prominently in the roster of complaints against the old regime. The revolution could show, by example, the kind of justice it hoped to deliver. It could put the past on trial and set the record clear. In the end, however, passion for a quick revenge won. Of high drama, memorable rhetoric, historical revelations, judicial acumen, there was little in Hoveyda's trial. Instead, the Islamic Revolution had chosen flagrantly to disregard even the rudiments of a fair trial.

The indictment read:

Amir Abbas Hoveyda, son of Habibollah, birth certificate number 3542, issued in Tehran, born in 1295 [1917], previously minister of the deposed royal court, and the shah's ex-prime minister, a citizen of Iran, is accused of:

1. Spreading corruption on earth.
2. Fighting God, God's creatures and the Viceroy of Imam Zaman, may praise be upon him.*
3. Acts of sedition detrimental to national security and independence, through forming cabinets that were puppets of the United States and England and defending the interests of colonialists.
4. Plotting against national sovereignty by interference in elections to Majlis, appointing and dismissing ministers at the behest of foreign embassies.
5. Turning over underground resources: oil, copper and uranium, to foreigners.
6. Expansion of the influence of American Imperialism, and its European allies, in Iran by destroying internal resources and turning Iran into a market for foreign commodities.

* Imam Zaman is the anticipated twelfth Imam of the Shiites. The reference to his viceroy is an allusion to Ayatollah Khomeini.

7. Paying national revenues from oil to shah and Farah and to countries dependent on the West and then borrowing money at high interest, and enslaving conditions from America and Western countries.

8. Ruining agriculture and destroying forests.

9. Direct participation in acts of espionage for the West and Zionism.

10. Complicity with conspirators from CENTO and NATO for the oppression of the peoples of Palestine, Vietnam and Iran.

11. Active member of Freemasonry in the Foroughi Lodge according to existing documents and the confessions of the accused.

12. Participation in terrorizing and frightening the justice seeking people including their death and injury and limiting their freedom by closing down newspapers and exercising censorship on the print media and books.

13. Founder and first secretary of the despotic "Rastakhiz of the Iranian People" party.*

14. Spreading cultural and ethical corruption and direct participation in consolidating the pillars of colonialism and granting capitulatory rights to Americans.

15. Direct participation in smuggling heroin in France along with Hassan-Ali Mansur.

16. False reporting through the publication of puppet papers and appointing puppet editors to head the media.

17. According to minutes of cabinet meetings and of the Supreme Economic Council, and the claims of private plaintiffs, including Dr. Ali-Asghar Hadj-Seyyed-Djavadi, and taking into account documents found in SAVAK and the office of the prime minister, and the confessions of Dr. Manouchehr Azmoun,† Mahmood Jafarian,‡ Parviz Nick-khah,§ and the confessions of the accused, since the commission

* The Rastakhiz of the Iranian People Party was the single resurgence party.

† Manouchehr Azmoun was a communist in his youth, then joined SAVAK, and eventually became a cabinet minister. The Islamic Republic executed him.

‡ Mahmood Jafarian, a high-ranking official in Iranian radio and television, was also rumored to have been a member of SAVAK. The Islamic Republic executed him.

§ Parviz Nick-khah was a member of the opposition and spent four years in prison until he decided that the "White Revolution" had indeed helped move Iran toward a more modern and equitable society. Bravely defiant at his trial, the Islamic Republic executed him.

of the crimes is certain, the prosecutor of the Islamic Revolutionary Court asks the court to issue the judgment of the death penalty and the confiscation of all your property.¹²

The form of the indictment, long on its catalogue of general accusations, was revealing in its commissions and omissions. Contrary to persistent rumors that had haunted Hoveyda ever since he had taken office as prime minister, he was not accused of being a Bahai. On the eve of the revolution, many documents, including registries, belonging to Bahai circles fell into the hands of the new regime. Had there been any credible evidence connecting Hoveyda to the Bahais, it would have certainly figured prominently in the indictment. Equally important was the indictment's silence about personal graft and corruption. Hoveyda had always taken pride in his own financial probity; for what it was worth, the indictment was a vindication of this pride.

Nonetheless, like the revolution, the indictment trafficked in slogans. It offered an eclectic mix of old leftist catch phrases and new Islamic radicalism.

Aside from the alleged confessions, the indictment gave as evidence of Hoveyda's guilt "the claims of private plaintiffs, including Dr. Ali-Asghar Hadj-Seyyed-Djavadi." Ironically, there is far more judicial acumen, and a much more detailed discussion of the question of Hoveyda's constitutional and political responsibility in that private complaint than in all of the court's indictment. Written in June 1977, the complaint was in fact an essay, mimeographed and distributed in limited numbers in Tehran. It was one of the first political salvos in the unfolding movement toward a more democratic Iran. A dissident of long standing, Hadj-Seyyed-Djavadi had, in his own words, "wanted to attack the shah. But in 1977 a direct assault on the shah was still deemed recklessly dangerous."¹³ Hoveyda was thus attacked primarily as a ruse for attacking the monarch.

The essay accused "Mr. Hoveyda and all of his ministers" of breaking at least fifty-six principles of the Iranian constitution, including those mandating freedom of press and association, as well as the independence of the judiciary. It talked of torture and censorship during Hoveyda's tenure and his tenacious denial of their existence.¹⁴ It referred to different articles of the Amendments to the Constitution that stipulated clearly that the shah must reign and not rule. It pointed out that the constitution warned that ministers were not responsible to the shah but to the

parliament, and that no written or oral command of the king could absolve any minister, or prime minister, from legal responsibility. It talked about the collective responsibility of the cabinet and thus declared that Hoveyda and all of his ministers were responsible and accountable for every crime committed by SAVAK.

The last section of the essay referred to articles of the Iranian constitution and the Declaration of Human Rights positing freedom of association as an inalienable right of every man and woman. Referring to the Resurgence Party, Hadj-Seyyed-Djavadi claimed that during Hoveyda's tenure people's rights of free association were repeatedly abrogated. The essay went on to chronicle a number of other breaches of the law and challenged Hoveyda to come to a court of law, "Even under the current judicial system, so entirely under the yoke of your police."¹⁵ Hoveyda never took up the challenge. In August 1977, he told a confidant that "the recent expression of dissent and the spate of letter-writing have their origin not in Iran."¹⁶ Hadj-Seyyed-Djavadi was invited to participate in Khalkhali's so-called trial but refused to take part.¹⁷

No sooner was the dread litany read than Hoveyda began to object. On the day after the victory of the Islamic Revolution, when he was forced to participate in a news conference, there was defiant buoyancy in his tone. He even went so far as to reprimand a belligerent interviewer for acting more like a prosecutor than a journalist. "This is a news conference," he had said indignantly, "not a court of law."¹⁸ But now, as he began to speak, the sharp edges of his wit seemed dulled by a gradually deepening sense of resignation and fear. "I have never seen, or read, this indictment before," he declared. He asked whether he should not have been given some time to prepare for his defense? He objected to the timing of the trial. He reminded the court that he had met with a prosecutor that very afternoon and that he had been given twenty questions. "I was to be given ample time to prepare my defense," he said. He confessed that he had already

* Until a few months ago, Persian newspapers from the early months of the revolution, along with a handful of memoirs were my only sources about what actually transpired in the trial. The government has never published a full and reliable record of the proceedings. In a recently published Persian biography of Hoveyda, however, the last two chapters are devoted to the trial, and though no source is given in the text, the structure of the narrative, the kind of punctuation used, all make it look like an actual transcript of the trial. I have used this source only when I have been able to corroborate its material with accounts provided in Iranian newspapers of the time. See Khosrow Moatazed, *Hoveyda, Siyasatmadar-e peep asa va orkid* [Hoveyda: The Politician of Pipe, Cane and Orchid] (Tehran, 1999).

list of principles of the “Shah and People Revolution”—Hoveyda drove back to his office with one of the participants in the meeting, Ehsan Naraghi. During the audience, Naraghi had, with the help of a pithy anecdote, suggested that civil servants must be taught to disobey illegal orders. In the car, while Hoveyda drove, as was his wont, with the guards in the backseat, he engaged Naraghi in a conversation. As with all sensitive discussions, this one, too, was in French. “If what you say is true,” Hoveyda said, “then we are all guilty. Under the present circumstances, we have no choice but to obey the sometimes unjustifiable orders of our superior.”²⁸ Indeed, Hoveyda had wagered, as he never tired of telling his friends, that such submission was the necessary price of progress in Iran. Throughout his years as a prime minister, many of his friends would remind him that his submission to every whim and will of the shah had gone beyond the pale of pragmatic politics. They had suggested that he should resign. Now, he was paying with his life for that wager. Yet, unjustified and unconstitutional as the wager might have been, Khalkhali’s ignorance of the law, his insensitivity to any fine point of ethics, his habit of trafficking in inflammatory rhetoric, and his insistence that Hoveyda refrain from any discussion of specific points aborted the possibility of the trial ever becoming a serious forum for deciding guilt or innocence. Like Ockrent in her prison interview, the judge insisted that it was inconceivable that he, as prime minister, had no power over policy and no knowledge of SAVAK’s work. Incredible as Hoveyda’s claim seemed, there is much evidence to vindicate his claim. Yet, on one point Khalkhali was not only insistent but uncharacteristically correct. On more than one occasion, he repeated the notion—sound by the standards of the Iranian constitution under the Pahlavi regime itself—that as the prime minister, Hoveyda could not shirk responsibilities for breaches of law and sovereignty committed during his tenure. “You should have resigned,” Khalkhali said, “when you realized that all you could do was enforce the orders of the king.”²⁹

In the course of these discussions, two new points were briefly raised. Hoveyda was asked whether it was true that he had in his possession a secret file documenting the corruption of the royal family and whether he would be willing to turn over the documents to the court. Hoveyda declined with diplomatic finesse. “If I am given some time,” he said, “I will certainly write a book about the history of the last twenty-five years. Many ambiguous points will be clarified, and I certainly do have some documents.”³⁰

The other question was about Hoveyda’s alleged role in financing, or facilitating, repairs to some of the religious sites of the Bahai faith located in Israel. Hoveyda was surprised by the question. No such allegations had been made in the indictment. This was, in fact, the one and only time that the question of the Bahai faith had been broached in the entire proceeding. Hoveyda denied any involvement with the repair efforts.³¹

The belligerent and unequivocal tone of Khalkhali’s declamations seemed to have convinced Hoveyda that the proceedings were just a mere formality, that his fate was doomed. When the judge began yet another of his attacks, Hoveyda stopped him and said, “your honor, how can a judge talk against the accused.”³² In desperation he asked the judge, “What is it that you want me to do?”³³ Proclaiming his verdict even before the defendant had a chance to offer the summation of his defense, the judge intoned, “You are a corrupter of the earth, all you can do now is offer your last defense.” Instead of attempting to make a summation of his defense, Hoveyda decided to engage Khalkhali in a discourse about the wisdom of accusing someone of “spreading corruption on earth.” There was something sadly quixotic about Hoveyda’s line of argument. Here was a judge already infamous for his brisk brutality,³⁴ thirsting for his blood, pronouncing a verdict even before the end of the kangaroo court, and part of Hoveyda’s defense was to engage him in a discourse about the fine points of the Arabic language and Islamic doctrine.³⁵

Hoveyda then went on to admit that he had made some mistakes but also stressed his many contributions to Iranian society. He asked to be judged for all he had done, not just for his errors. By then he seemed to have regained his almost defiant, and always dignified, posture. He then offered the most direct defense of his record. He declared that his vision for this country was just and progressive; the government only failed, he suggested, because it did not have enough time to fully implement its goals. Then he began to give statistics on social progress during his tenure, facts and figures he had asked his family to gather.³⁶ He had hardly begun reciting the figures when Khalkhali interrupted. “Don’t delve into details,” the judge declared. “I am trying to save my life here,” Hoveyda retorted, “I have to talk about details.” Khalkhali was not convinced. “Continue your argument, but no details,” he commanded.³⁷

In a final gesture of defiance, Hoveyda fluttered his right hand in the air to indicate that he would say no more to this court. It took Khalkhali

for Freedom] (Tehran, 1962), 78–84.

10. Willem Floor, "Les Premiere Regles de Police Urbaine à Tehran," in Adle, *Tehran: Capitale Bicentenaire*, 173–98.

11. Shahri provides a wonderful account of this event in his one volume history of Tehran. See Jafar Shahri, *Tehran-e Ghadim* [Old Tehran] (Tehran, 1977), 24.

12. Hoveyda, "Yad-e Ayam-e Javani," 328.

13. For a brilliant account of Nasir-al Din Shah's life and his troubled relationship with Amir Kabir, see Abbas Amanat, *Pivot of The Universe: Nasir al Din Shah Qajar and the Iranian Monarchy, 1831–1896* (Berkeley, 1997), 106–68. Other historians have indicated that the princess was sixteen when she was ordered to marry the prime minister. See Fereydoun Adamiyat, *Amir Kabir va Iran* [Amir Kabir and Iran] (Tehran, 1969), 24.

14. For a history of the famous "Qajar Coffee," see Bastani Parizi, *Talash-e Azadi* [Struggle for Freedom], 118.

15. Maryam Ensha, interviewed by author, 27 July 1998. Much of the information about Hoveyda's mother's family came from an interview with Afsar al-Moluk's niece, Maryam Ensha.

16. Hoveyda, "Yad-e Ayam-e Javani," 330–33. Fereydoun Hoveyda, interviewed by author, 6 December 1997.

17. For an account of his life, and the list of books he helped translate or publish in Iran, see Sardar Asaad, *Khaterat-e Sardar Asaad Bakhtiari* [Memoirs of Sardar Asaad], ed. Iraj Afshar (Tehran, 1993), 3–7.

18. E. G. Browne, *Materials for the Study of the Babi Religion* (Cambridge, 1918), 4. Browne has provided one of the most reliable, albeit sympathetic, early accounts of the rise of the Bab and of the Bahai religion in English. See also his *A Year Among the Persians* (Cambridge, 1893).

19. E. G. Browne, *Materials*, see also E. G. Browne, *A Year Amongst*. For a more recent, scholarly treatment of the same topic, see Abbas Amanat, *Resurrection and Renewal: The Making of the Babi Movement in Iran, 1840–1850* (Ithaca, 1989).

20. The claim of Ayn-al Molk's role as a scribe can be found in Bahram Afrasyabi, *Tarikh-e Jameh-ye Bahaiyat: No Masoni* [The Complete History of Bahai Society: A New Masonic Trend] (Tehran, 1982), 72. As the title of the book indicates, the narrative is founded on the conspiracy theory of the Bahai faith's rise as a form of Masonic ideas. Very little is offered by way of evidence for most of the book's claims, including the nature of the ties between Ayn al-Molk and Efendi.

21. Hoveyda, "Yad-e Ayam-e Javani," 32.

22. *Ibid.*, 329.

23. T. E. Lawrence, *Seven Pillars of Wisdom* (New York, 1927), 34.

24. Hoveyda, "Yad-e Ayam-e Javani," 328.

25. *Ibid.*, 332.

26. *Ibid.*, 328.

27. *Ibid.*

28. Fereydoun Hoveyda, *Les Nuits Feodales: Tribulations d'un Persan au Moyen-Orient* (Paris, 1954), 23.

29. Hoveyda, "Yad-e Ayam-e Javani," 331.

30. *Ibid.*, 324.

31. *Ibid.*, 337.

32. For a succinct account of the Wahhabi ideology and political structure, see Aziz Al-Azmeh, "Wahhabi Polity," in *Islam and Modernities* (London, 1993), 104–22.

33. *Ibid.*, 337.

34. Fereydoun Hoveyda, interviewed by author, 3 September 1998.

35. Hoveyda, *Les Nuits Feodales*.

36. Frank J. Sulloway, *Born to Rebel: Birth Order, Family Dynamics, and Creative Lives* (New York, 1997), 22.

37. For a comprehensive account of Reza Shah's rise to power, see Cyrus Ghani, *Iran and the Rise of the Reza Shah: From Qajar Collapse to Pahlavi Rule* (New York, 1998).

38. Hoveyda, "Yad-e Ayam-e Javani," 330.

39. *Ibid.*

40. *Ibid.*, 331.

41. *Ibid.*, 332.

42. *Ibid.*

43. *Ibid.*, 336.

44. Fereydoun Hoveyda, interviewed by author, 26 June 1998. Amir Abbas, in "Yad-e Ayam-e Javani," might be discreetly alluding to the same fact when he writes of his father's unflinching fidelity to his friends.

45. Fereydoun Hoveyda, interviewed by author, 26 June 1998.

46. Hoveyda, "Yad-e Ayam-e Javani," 336.

47. *Ibid.*

48. Fereydoun Hoveyda, interviewed by author, 26 June 1998.

49. Ahmad Ghoreishi, interviewed by author, 14 August 1998.

50. Amir Abbas Hoveyda, "Yad-e Ayam-e Tahsil dar Orupa" [Memories of School Days in Europe], *Donya*, 23rd annual ed. (Tehran, 1968), 337.

51. Fereydoun Hoveyda, *Les Nuits*, 171.

52. Fereydoun Hoveyda, on more than one occasion told me of his brother's affinity for the Baron de Clapique. In Malraux's memoirs (called, with the particular panache of the French, *Anti-Memoirs*) Baron de Clapique appears in the narrative as a person Malraux meets in real life. See André Malraux, *Anti-Memoirs*, trans. Terrence Kilmartin (New York, 1968), 264–334.

53. André Malraux, *Man's Fate*, trans. Haakan M. Chevalier (New York, 1934), 37.

54. *Ibid.*

55. *Ibid.*, 46.

56. *Ibid.*, 259.

57. *Ibid.*, 279.

58. *Ibid.*, 314.

59. *Ibid.*, 257.

60. Sulloway, *Born to Rebel*, 316.

61. Simon Schama, *Citizens: A Chronicle of the French Revolution* (New York, 1980), 651.

62. Fereydoun Hoveyda, interviewed by author, 6 September 1998.

63. Renée Demont, interviewed by author, Brussels, Belgium, 1 June 1998.

64. For a history of the Templars, see Peter Partner, *The Murdered Magicians: The Templars and Their Myth* (Rochester, 1987), xiv–xvii. In recent years, several writers have turned the Templars into subjects for successful novels. Umberto Eco's *Foucault's Pendulum* and Lawrence Durrell's *Monsieur* are two of the most successful examples.

65. Hoveyda, "Yad-e Ayam-e Javani," 332.

66. Jean Baptiste Racine, *The Complete Plays of Jean Racine*, vol. 1, trans. Samuel Solomon (New York, 1967), 220.

67. Fereydoun Hoveyda, interviewed by author, 26 June 1998.

68. Both Renée Demont and Fereydoun Hoveyda remembered the tale of Amir Abbas in his Dandin improvisation.

69. Amir Abbas Hoveyda, private correspondence to Renée Demont (n.d.).

70. *Ibid.*

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13. For a brief overview of the Bahrain developments, see Rouhollah K. Ramazani, *Iran's Foreign Policy 1941-1973: A Study of Foreign Policy in Modernizing Nations* (Charlottesville, 1975), 410–23.
14. Fereydoun Hoveyda, who was a member of the committee, told me about the long hours spent pondering the question and their shock at hearing the news of the shah's secret agreement. Fereydoun Hoveyda, interviewed by author, 6 December 1997. According to Fereydoun, when Amir Abbas Hoveyda heard of the shah's agreement, he suggested to the shah that the prime minister should claim responsibility for the deal, lest there be a public uproar against it. The shah refused the offer.
15. Zahedi, interview.
16. Several reports from the American Embassy in Tehran refer to the Pan Iranist Party as one whose leadership was controlled by the government. For example, one report indicated that "Pan Iranist deputies elected...to Majlis can be expected to serve primarily as a propaganda instrument." National Archive, "Confidential Airgram: Pan Iranist Party, August 30, 1967." In another dispatch called "the Noisy Pan Iranists in Parliament" the embassy reports that "it should be emphasized that for many of these men—particularly the older ones—membership in the party has brought tangible rewards. Largely because of its close SAVAK connections, the party has been able to advance the careers of its members." NA, "The Noisy Pan Iranists in the Parliament, January 27, 1968."
17. Zahedi, interview.
18. Alam, *Yadashtha-ye Alam* [Alam's Diaries], vol. 2, 88.
19. *Ibid.*, 88–89.
20. Zahedi, interview.
21. NA, U.S. Embassy, Tehran, Iran, "Confidential Cable, GOI Cabinet Changes," September 1971.
22. Zahedi, interview.
23. Sally Quinn, *The Party: A Guide to Adventurous Entertaining* (New York, 1997), 206
24. Alam, *Yadashtha-ye Alam* [Alam's Diaries], vol. 3, 366.
25. Several cabinet ministers, including Madjidi and Shadman, told me about the story. Ahmad Kashfeian, in charge of the discretionary fund, explained the process to me.
26. Laila Emami, interviewed by author, Paris, France, 9 March 1999.
27. Laila Emami, interviewed by author, Paris, France, 8 March 1999.
28. Laila Emami, interviewed by author, Paris, France, 8 March 1999.
29. Mohammad Safa, interviewed by author, 21 November 1997.
30. Laila Emami, interviewed by author, Paris, France, 26 July 1999.
31. Laila Emami, interviewed by author, Paris, France, 26 July 1999.
32. Laila Emami, interviewed by author, Paris, France, 11 March 1999.
33. Laila Emami letter to Jean Brumett, 22 April 1971. After her marriage, Brumett chose her husband's last name of Becker. Letter courtesy of Jean Becker.
34. Jean Crooker to Jean Brumett, private correspondence, Monday, 1972 [sic]. Letter courtesy of Jean Becker.
35. Parviz C. Radji, letter to author, 7 November 1997.
36. Abdol-Madjid Madjidi, "Interview with Abdol-Madjid Madjidi," Foundation for Iranian Studies: Program of Oral History, April-October 1982, 49.
37. *Ibid.*
38. Abbas Tofiq, interviewed by author, Los Angeles, California, 14 October 1998.
39. "High Ranking Security Official," interviewed by author, 23 November 1998.
40. Ebrahim Golestan, personal correspondence, 20 January 2000.
41. *Ibid.*
42. *Ibid.*

43. Ebrahim Golestan, *Az Ruzegar-e Rafteh Hekayat* [Tales of Old Times] in *Mad o Meh* [High Tide and the Moon] (Tehran, 1969), 65.
44. Ebrahim Golestan, interviewed by author, 12 September 1999.
45. Ebrahim Golestan, *Asrar-e Ganj-e Dareh-ye Jeni* [Mysteries of the Treasure at the Ghost Valley] (Tehran, 1974), 154.
46. *Ibid.*, 139.
47. *Ibid.*, 114–115.
48. *Ibid.*, 158.
49. Ebrahim Golestan, interviewed by author, 12 September 1999.
50. "High Ranking Security Official," interviewed by author, 28 September 1999.
51. For an account of the incident, I have relied on interviews with Fereydoun Hoveyda and Ebrahim Golestan. The quoted words are from Ebrahim Golestan, personal correspondence, 20 January 2000.
52. *Ibid.*
53. Several sources, including Parviz Radji and Cyrus Ghani, have recounted this conversation. Here I have quoted Ebrahim Golestan, personal correspondence, 20 January 2000.

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1. *New York Times*, 24 July 1999, 16.
2. Alam, *Yadashtha-ye Alam* [Alam's Diaries], vol. 3, 61.
3. Cyrus Ghani, interviewed by author, Lake Tahoe, Nevada, 20 August 1999.
4. For an account of the creation and work of this group, I have relied on Cyrus Ghani and Fereydoun Mahdavi. Cyrus Ghani, interview. Fereydoun Mahdavi, interviewed by author, 3 September 1999.
5. I have relied on Cyrus Ghani and Fereydoun Mahdavi for an account of these meetings.
6. Alam reports that early in 1973 he told the shah that he had received information that "the prime minister has paid off many of those around the queen and other servants." He claims the shah ordered an investigation. See Alam, *Yadashtha-ye Alam* [Alam's Diaries], vol. 3, 22.
7. Houshang Nahavandi, interviewed by Shahrokh Meskoob, 29 May 1985, Paris, France, tape no. 5, Iranian Oral History Collection, Harvard University.
8. Farokh Najmabadi, personal correspondence, 24 January 2000.
9. Ghani, interview.
10. CIA, "Elites, and the Distribution of Power in Iran," NSA, no. 1012, 66.
11. "High Ranking Security Official," interviewed by author, 18 September 1999.
12. U.S. Embassy, Tehran, Iran, "Representative List of Intermediaries and Influence Peddlers," NSA, no. 780.
13. CIA, "Elites and the Distribution of Power in Iran," NSA, no. 1012.
14. U.S. Embassy, Tehran, Iran, "Corruption in Iran," 15 December 1978, in *Documents from the U.S. Espionage Den*, vol. 13 (Tehran, n.d.), 12.
15. U.S. Embassy, Tehran, Iran, "Shah-Harriman Talk," in *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1964-1968*, Vol. XXII (Washington, 1999), 329.
16. Hossein Razavi and Firouz Vakil, *The Political Environment of Economic Planning in Iran, 1971-1983: From Monarchy to Islamic Republic* (Boulder, 1984), 67.
17. *Ibid.*
18. Several people, including Fereydoun Hoveyda, Laila Emami, and Abdol-Madjid Madjidi, told me about Hoveyda's reaction to his China trip.
19. Razavi and Vakil, *The Political Environment*, 69.

the November elections of 1980. For his views on the "October Surprise," shared, in many important details, by Gary Sick who was one of President Carter's national security advisors, see Abol Hassan Bani Sadr, *My Turn to Speak: Iran, the Revolution and Secret Deals with the U.S.* (New York, 1991). For Gary Sick's version of events, see Gary Sick, *The October Surprise* (New York, 1991).

15. Maryam Ensha, interviewed by author, Los Angeles, California, 15 February 1998.
16. Fereshteh Ensha, interviewed by author, Paris, France, 2 June 1998.
17. Khalkhali, "Khaterat," 30 September 1992. For a journalist's account of the trial, see *Kayhan*, 19 Farvardin 1358/10 April 1979.
18. Khalkhali, "Khaterat," 30 September 1992.
19. Henry Precht, interviewed by author, 10 January 2000.
20. Charles Naas, interviewed by author, 11 January 2000.
21. Naas, interview.
22. Moatazed, *Hoveyda*, 1032-40.
23. Khalkhali, "Khaterat," 30 September 1992, 7.
24. Moatazed, *Hoveyda*, 1041.
25. *Kayhan*, 19 Farvardin 1358/10 April 1979, 2.
26. *Ibid.*
27. Moatazed, *Hoveyda*, 1042.
28. Ehsan Naraghi, interviewed by author, Paris, France, 2 June 1998.
29. *Kayhan*, 19 Farvardin 1358 / 10 April 1979, 1.
30. *Ibid.*
31. *Ibid.*, 2.
32. Moatazed, *Hoveyda*, 1047.
33. Khalkhali, "Khaterat," 30 September 1992, 7.
34. Khalkhali was not only aware of this reputation but seemed, by then, to relish it. See his "Khaterat," 1 October 1992, 6.
35. *Ibid.*, 7.
36. In anticipation of his trial, Hoveyda had asked his family to collect statistics for him. He wanted figures on everything from the number of students in high school to the total production of steel in the country. The family found and provided him the data he had requested, but it would all turn out to be of no avail. Fereshteh Ensha, interviewed by author, Paris, France, 4 June 1998.
37. *Kayhan*, 19 Farvardin 1358/10 April 1979, 3.
38. Khalkhali, "Khaterat," 30 September 1992, 7.
39. *Kayhan*, 10 April 1979.
40. Khalkhali, "Khaterat," 8 Mehr 1371/1 October 1992, 6.
41. Khalkhali, "Khaterat," 30 September 1992, 7.
42. Fereydoun Hoveyda, interviewed by author, 17 January 1999.
43. Karimi told the incident to Ehsan Naraghi. Ehsan Naraghi, interviewed by author, Paris, France, 2 June 1998.
44. This account of Hoveyda's last minutes was provided by Karimi, the man who fired the coup de grâce. He told of his role in a conversation with Ehsan Naraghi. Apparently a videotape of the execution was secretly made by a journalist who now resides in France. Dr. Ensha has, so far unsuccessfully, tried to purchase a copy. Ehsan Naraghi, interviewed by author, Paris, France, 3 June 1998. Also, Fereshteh Ensha, interviewed by author, Paris, France, 4 June 1998.
45. Fereshteh Ensha, interviewed by author, Paris, France, 4 June 1998.
46. V. S. Naipal, *Among the Believers: An Islamic Journey* (New York: 1981), 56.
47. Khalkhali, "Khaterat," 8 Mehr 1371/1 October 1992, 6.

48. For the use of "the machine" in the French Revolution, see Schama, *Citizens*, 619-22.
49. Maryam Ensha, interviewed by author, Los Angeles, California, 15 February 1998.
50. Fereshteh Ensha, interviewed by author, Paris, France, 4 June 1998.
51. Fereshteh Ensha, interviewed by author, Paris, France, 4 June 1998.
52. Fereshteh Ensha, interview.
53. Fereshteh Ensha, interview.
54. Maryam Ensha, interviewed by author, Los Angeles, California, 15 February 1998.
55. Homer *Odyssey*, tr. Robert Fagels (New York, 1998), 252.
56. *Ibid.*, 125.
57. Fereshteh Ensha, interviewed by author, Paris, France, 4 June 1998.
58. Maryam Ensha, interview.
59. Fereshteh Ensha, interviewed by author. I have confirmed the story about Dr. Garman's role in the whole affair from another source as well.
60. Ensha, interview.
61. Khalkhali, "Khaterat," 8 Mehr 1371/1 October 1992, 6.
62. Fereshteh Ensha, interviewed by author, Paris, France, 4 June 1998.
63. Maryam Ensha, interviewed by author, Los Angeles, California, 11 June 1998.
64. Ensha, interview.
65. William Shakespeare, *Romeo and Juliet*, in *The Collected Works of Shakespeare*, ed. David Bevington (New York, 1992), act 3, scene 1, 1000.

Note to the foreword
 16/10/99