

Foreword

Four Discourses from the Constitutional Revolution *

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As the editor of this issue of *Iran Nameh*, the author defines the major positions and themes of the Constitutional Revolution and relates them to the topics discussed in this issue. He divides the historians of the Iranian Constitutional Revolution into two broad categories of supporters and opponents. Each category, in turn, is divided into two components, each constituting a specific discourse.

The opposition camp consists of a religious and a secular branch. The religious discourse is represented by Sheikh Fazlollah Nury who thought it absurd to think that a movement supported by the "Christian" Malcolm is supportive of Islam, or, alternatively, that a theoretical construct based on the notion of "freedom" and "equality" is compatible with Islamic justice, which is based on "spiritual belief" and on natural differences in "creation." The secular branch, represented by such writers as Mahmoud Mahmoud and Ebrahim Safa'i, thought of the episode as a British conspiracy to dilute the integrity of Iran as a nation, and "to prepare the ground for the 1907 Treaty."

The proponents of the Constitutional Revolution consist of the liberals (e.g., Kermani, Dowlatabadi, Malekzadeh, Kasravi, Adamiyyat) and the materialists (Pavlovich, Iransky, Ivanov). The former see the intellectuals as the conveyors of the ideology and the Ulama and the Bazaar as the mobilizer of the masses. They generally approve of the revolution as a liberating force, even though it may have fallen short of the ideal. The latter focus on the development of the national bourgeoisie and its struggles against the domestic reactionary forces, including royal tyranny, which prepares the scene for the eventual development of capitalism.

The author argues that each group of participants in the revolution fought for its particular moral and material interest. The Constitutional Revolution succeeded because an important part of the traditional and bureaucratic elite joined its ranks.

* Abstracts marked by an asterisk have been translated by *Iran Nameh*.