

OUR NATIONAL CHARACTER

As long as foreigners have been coming to Iran - since the days of Shah Abbas - they have written many flattering things about Iranians in their books published in Italy, Germany, France and England. They complimented us highly and listed us as the most polite people in the world and among the most hospitable. They told their readers in Europe and America that we were polite to visitors and very tolerant of men of a different race and religion. Chardin, the astute French observer of the Iranian scene, made a very profound statement on this characteristic of politeness. The foreign travelers in Iran have described us as a gentle people with a wonderfully rich culture - a people that likes to spend long hours in friendly discussion but that abhors any form of physical violence. They wrote that Iranians love poetry, art and beauty and despise vulgarity and incivility.

We Iranians are proud of our reputation abroad and believe that it is justified. There have been times in our past when we have not lived up to our reputation. We remember with shame what happened to Major Imbrie many years ago when a few people forgot our traditions of hospitality and tolerance. We have long been determined that such events do not recur in our country.

But what has happened in Iran since the dictator Mossadeq made an alliance with the Soviet Tudeh Party? In place of our traditional friendliness, politeness, and hospitality, Iranians are becoming rude and unfriendly. Some of our people have been insulting foreigners on our streets. In place of our traditional tolerance, Iranians are acting increasingly hateful towards people who are different. Some of our people have even gone so far as to have thrown acid on the wife of the Argentine Ambassador. In place of our traditional gentleness

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and abhorrence of violence, Iranians are becoming noisy and rough and are resorting to physical violence. Some of our people have attacks foreigners and have stoned foreign cars and many times in recent days groups of our people have fought each other - even in the Majlis. Already our reputation of old is being destroyed in Europe and America. It is reported that Secretary Dulles was advised not to visit our country because of the dangers of physical violence.

Ever since the alliance between the dictator Mossadeq and the Tudeh Party, Iranians have been less polite, less hospitable, and less tolerant. Iranians have been rude, rough, and unfriendly. Many of our people are acting more like Bolsheviks than like Iranians. Dictator Mossadeq, you are corrupting the character of the Iranian people. You have case aside the qualities that have made us a great people and you are destroying our reputation abroad.

Many of us - but not enough of us - are aware that the fundamental tactics of the communists in Iran is to undermine and discredit everything that keeps the country together, such as family ties and parental authority, respect for law and order, loyalty to the government and the throne. If they can corrupt our characters then all the rest that they desire will follow along easily. That is the great trap into which Mossadeq has fallen, to join with the communists in encouraging us to be rude, uncouth and coarse. We Iranians must stop acting like Bolsheviks and remain true to our traditional national character.