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Land Reform in Qazvin during the Second Pahlavi Period

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ABSTRACT

The objective of land reform was to implement a series of complementary and interconnected measures aimed at bringing about fundamental changes in agriculture, including the ownership of agricultural lands, farming and land-use systems, and methods of production, as well as increasing agricultural output and, consequently, improving farmers' income and welfare. These reforms sought to redistribute land and eliminate the influence of large landowners. With their implementation, Qazvin Province was also incorporated into the land reform program, and the government at the time purchased part of the state-owned properties located within the counties of Qazvin Province. The aim of the present study is to examine the outcomes of land reform in Qazvin. This study adopts a descriptive-analytical approach and is based on documentary evidence and primary sources. The findings indicate that land reform in Qazvin Province triggered a large influx of migrants during this period, leading to rapid urban growth and the expansion of informal settlements on the urban periphery. This development, in turn, eliminated opportunities for systematic planning for the future expansion of the city and for the balanced distribution of essential urban facilities and land uses across the city and its neighborhoods.

Keywords: Land reform, Qazvin, migration, informal settlements

Introduction

The White Revolution was among the measures undertaken by the Shah of Iran on the recommendation of John F. Kennedy, then President of the United States, with the aim of preventing the emergence of a Marxist revolution in Iran. The central component of this revolution was land reform, which was implemented out of concern over the possibility of a peasant revolution similar to the Chinese Revolution of 1949. These reforms undoubtedly had extensive social, economic, and political effects on the structure of Iranian society. In most major Iranian cities, land reform led large numbers of poor peasants, smallholders, and landless rural residents to migrate to urban areas, particularly large cities, thereby contributing to the expansion of peripheral and informal settlements. The most important component of this program, which had been announced in a six-point charter, became known as "land reform." Land reform comprised a series of measures aimed at transforming the structure of a country or several regions by reforming social relations in order to create the conditions necessary for the application of agricultural techniques and the expansion of agricultural production. In other words, land reform, or the abolition of the landlord–



peasant system, refers to fundamental changes in the extent and nature of land ownership, particularly the ownership of agricultural land and pastures, with the objective of increasing the overall productivity of society. The transfer of agricultural landownership from feudal lords or large landowners to smallholders and its redistribution among farmers was implemented in three stages through the enactment of the Land Reform Law and subsequent amendment laws and regulations, including amendments to the Land Reform Law, the Executive Regulations of the Land Reform Law, the Law on the Division and Sale of Leased Lands to Tenant Farmers, and the law adding eight articles to the Land Reform Regulations. These reforms were based on the premise that traditional systems of landownership impeded economic development and that land reform therefore constituted a means of eliminating such deficiencies. Land reform was accordingly implemented in Iran, and although it achieved a number of successes, it failed to attain its intended objectives in accordance with its predetermined implementation goals and program. During the first and second stages of the reforms, landowners prevented the division of their estates by nominally transferring properties to their children and spouses and by presenting their estates as mechanized farms; they also imposed their preferred prices on farmers. During the third stage, agricultural corporations, despite their administrative and managerial weaknesses, encountered problems such as the lack of farmer participation and greater abuses by local and governmental managers. Thus, throughout the various stages of implementation, numerous shortcomings and obstacles impeded the complex course of the program and undermined its successful implementation. Following land reform, Iranian society underwent considerable transformation. Cities expanded substantially, while many villages became depopulated. Qazvin was no exception. As one of the major regional centers of the country, Qazvin experienced economic, social, and cultural transformations after land reform, partly because industrial activities became concentrated in Qazvin County and partly because of its proximity to Tehran. Land reform can therefore be regarded as one of the factors contributing to these transformations. Understanding landownership and systems of land exploitation in Qazvin is essential for researchers. This issue may constitute one of the most important questions in the social and political history of the region, since many of Qazvin's historical problems have been directly related to land.

Research Background

No independent study has thus far been conducted specifically on land reform in Qazvin. Books such as *Land Reform and Collective Units*, *Rural Sociology of Iran*, *Fragile Resistance*, and *Landlord and Peasant in Iran* have addressed related issues; however, their authors have adopted a general perspective and have discussed the land reform system and its consequences in Iran during this period only briefly and in broad terms. Master's theses and doctoral dissertations dealing with land reform in Iran are also relatively scarce, and only a few master's theses have examined the subject. The thesis entitled "The Reaction of the Fars Tribes to Land Reform (1962–1964), with Emphasis on the Boyer-Ahmadi Tribes," written by Mohammadreza Qashqai under the supervision of Dr. Hossein Abadian, was defended at Imam Khomeini International University in Qazvin in 2010. Another thesis entitled "An Examination of the Status of Land Reform in Birjand County during the Second Pahlavi Period: Process and Consequences," supervised by Dr. Zahra Alizadeh Birjandi, was defended at the University of Birjand in 2013. As can be observed, the first thesis focused exclusively on the reaction of a single social group—the tribes—and specifically the Boyer-Ahmadi tribes, to the Land Reform Bill and did not examine the reactions of people in other areas of Fars. In the second thesis, the author restricted the study to only one region of the country, Birjand, and addressed the subject to a considerable extent. An article on land reform was also written by Esmail Shahbazi and

Abbas Norouzi in 2020, in which the authors sought to examine land reform by recognizing its significance in the process of Iran's agricultural development in both the present and the future. Lambton's book *Landlord and Peasant* explains land relations in Iran from the ancient period to the contemporary era. This work is particularly useful for examining the background and causes of land reform in Iran. Another book by the same author, *Land Reform in Iran, 1961–1966*, also exists. In this book, the author provides a highly significant and detailed account of the implementation of land reform throughout Iran between 1961 and 1966, the equivalent of which can rarely be found in Persian-language sources on the implementation of land reform. Mohammad Javad Amid's *Agriculture, Poverty, and Land Reform in Iran* introduces the principal characteristics of Iran's land reform program, its laws and governmental decrees, and the main features of the country's landownership system, while also briefly addressing the economic effects of these reforms. The present study examines the outcomes of land reform in Qazvin.

Methods of Exploiting Agricultural Lands before Land Reform in Qazvin

Under the landlord–peasant system, the farmer cultivated the land, and the harvested crop was divided between the landlord and the farmer. The farmer received two shares and the landlord one share, a system known as “two to one.” In the village of Dorchak, this arrangement was referred to as *se kot*. The method of crop division, however, varied among villages in Alamut. For example, in Hasanabad village in the Alamut district, the crop was divided equally, with one-half allocated to the landlord and one-half to the farmer, whereas in the villages of Fishan and Aftabdar, the landlord received three shares and the farmer one share.

Another method of agricultural land exploitation was partnership farming. Under this arrangement, one person provided the land and seed, while another supplied the ox, and the parties cooperated throughout the cultivation and harvesting process. Ultimately, each received an equal share of the harvested crop. This system was also common in Shams Kalayeh village in Alamut. (1) In villages such as Madan, Aveh, and Marg, where independent smallholding prevailed, each individual cultivated his own land, while mutual assistance existed among farmers for various agricultural activities. In a number of smallholding villages and villages where land remained under landlord ownership, water rights were attached to the land, and when the land was sold, the associated water rights were also transferred. In some villages, however, land could be bought and sold independently of water rights. Alongside direct landownership, other methods existed through which agricultural land was made available to cultivators, including sharecropping, half-share cultivation, and tenancy arrangements. (2)

Traditional Organization of Production before Land Reform in Qazvin

In Iran, cultivable lands were divided into smaller production units known as *boneh*, within which agricultural work was carried out. These traditional units were known by different names in various regions of Iran. They were called *sahra* in Khorasan, *boneh* in Tehran, and *haraneh* in Shiraz and Kerman. (1) In Alamut, Qazvin, rain-fed farms were called *sahra*, while irrigated farms were called *dasht*, and the division of these fields into plots was carried out by landowners. The water-rotation cycle was organized according to *dang*. Every four or five landowners, who were generally relatives, owned one *dang*, and the *dang* was named after the principal landowner who had sold the land to the farmers. Water rotation was organized in such a manner that all village lands were irrigated once every fifteen days. A person appointed by the village headman (*kadkhoda*) was responsible for irrigating village lands and was known as the *owdar*. In some villages, however, there was no designated irrigator, and the landowner personally irrigated his land at the time assigned by the village headman and the farmers. Other members of the *dang*

monitored the duration of his irrigation to ensure that the rights of others were not violated. Nevertheless, this system of irrigation occasionally led to disputes, physical assaults, and even killings in the region.

The units used to measure agricultural land area in the villages of the Alamut district of Qazvin varied. According to documentary evidence and interviews with knowledgeable local informants, the units of agricultural land measurement in Alamut were as follows:

Changeh: One changeh = forty *gowkar* = land requiring approximately 40–50 *man* of seed for sowing (Hasanabad village).

Zivar: One zivar = seven *man* of *sahra*; four changeh = one zivar; twelve zivar = six *dang* of land (Dorchak village).

Gowkar: One gowkar = one *man* of seed-sowing land = one hundred paces by one hundred paces (Tavan village).

Man: One *man* of land = land requiring one *man* of seed (Aveh and Fishan villages).

Tokhm-shan: One tokhm-shan = one hectare (Torkan and Aftabdar villages).

A farmer sometimes had a collaborator known as a *takei*, who owned oxen and agricultural implements. Once the farmer had completed his own agricultural work, he would assist with the agricultural activities of the *takei*. If the *takei* did not own agricultural land, a portion of the crop, cash payment, or another mutually agreed form of compensation was allocated to him as remuneration when the harvest was divided. (3)

Implementation of Land Reform in Qazvin

Before implementation of the Land Reform Law in Qazvin, Takestan County, which formed part of the Crown or state estates, was transferred by the Shah to the government in 1960 for distribution among cultivators. In other areas of Qazvin, the Land Reform Law was also implemented in three stages. During the first stage, the Land Reform Law was applied to estates owned by the government. According to *Ettela'at* newspaper, the first stage of land reform in Qazvin concluded on Saturday, June 17, 1963, when the event was publicly announced during a formal ceremony: "Yesterday afternoon, 10,450 farmers from villages around Qazvin became landowners. Lieutenant General Riahi, Minister of Agriculture, distributed the title deeds to these farmers, and with the distribution of these documents, the first stage of the Land Reform Law in Qazvin came to an end. The ceremony was also attended by the head of the National Land Reform Organization, the commander of the Qazvin brigade, the governor, the mayor, heads of administrative organizations, and a group of farmers from Qazvin. Dr. Mahdizadeh, head of the Qazvin Land Reform Organization, stated that the total number of documents currently prepared for transfer to farmers was 10,450, and that with their transfer, a total of 53,350 people would be added to the ranks of Iran's free peasants. Through continuous day-and-night activity, the Land Reform Organization succeeded in completing the first stage of the law in the Qazvin region. The title deeds were then distributed by the Minister of Agriculture to representatives of the farmers amid the farmers' most sincere expressions of devotion toward the Shah. At this point, the Minister of Agriculture approached the microphone and stated: 'If I claim that today is one of the best days of my life, I am not exaggerating, because within the past 24 hours, from 4:30 yesterday afternoon until now, 41,500 title deeds have been distributed among peasants. This is a decisive response to those who have claimed that land reform has been halted and who are secretly seeking to disrupt implementation of the Land Reform Law. But the natural course of the law will move forward. We will reach the final stage, and ultimately the Iranian nation will demonstrate its national and historical maturity through implementation of this law.'" (4)

Implementation of the second stage of the Land Reform Law in the Qazvin Plain began on the morning of Saturday, March 13, 1964, in a special ceremony attended by a number of land reform employees from counties subordinate to Tehran Province. Forty-six land reform officials from different areas of Tehran Province, who had been assigned to implement the law in Qazvin, together with a number of heads of various organizations affiliated with the Ministry of Agriculture, gathered in the Ministry of Agriculture's lecture hall. At the beginning of the meeting, Dr. Valian, head of the National Land Reform Organization, described the organization's activities over the preceding forty days and, referring to progress in implementing the law in pilot regions, stated: "Now that the signs and elements of unity and power in our beloved homeland have become evident through the fruition of the Revolution of January 26, and now that a new chapter has opened in the social life of our nation and positive plans have been implemented—measures that were achieved in the Great French Revolution and other revolutions only through the shedding of the blood of thousands—the employees of the National Land Reform Organization will work day and night to implement the land reform laws correctly and explicitly throughout the country and thereby realize the sacred intentions of our justice-promoting Shah in the shortest possible time and provide grounds for His Majesty's satisfaction.

He added: "Given the circumstances that have emerged in our country, whereby all individuals and social classes can work under the leadership of the symbol of our nationality, His Imperial Majesty the Shah, according to their merit, competence, and abilities and can benefit from the fruits of their work, we, the employees of the Land Reform Organization, will make every possible effort to ensure implementation of the law. Moreover, because complete implementation of the second stage of the law throughout the country necessarily requires a minimum period of time, it is expected that every dear compatriot, with due regard to the special attention of His Imperial Majesty the Shah and the approved regulations and laws of land reform, and by making use of all available material and moral resources, will make every possible effort to increase the level of production and cultivation and to establish a more prosperous Iran, with confidence that their legal rights will be fully protected in every respect."

Finally, it was predicted that implementation of the second stage of the Land Reform Law in Tehran Province would be completed within approximately three months. Lieutenant General Riahi, Minister of Agriculture, also addressed the Qazvin land reform personnel and stated: "I congratulate you, my dear colleagues, on this honor and mission. Implementation of the second stage, which is based on agreements between landlords and farms, began in October 1963, and thus far more than one thousand villages have been dealt with under its provisions. The people of the country are as interested as you are in the proper implementation of the law, and they are also observing and witnessing the manner in which you carry out your work.

"I invite any of my compatriots who wish to observe the work of the land reform officials to come to the Ministry of Agriculture and see for themselves how the land reform officials perform their duties." (4)

During the second stage, implementation of the regulations governing relations between landlords and farmers took place through three alternatives: division, sale, and lease.

During the third stage, estates that had been made available to farmers under lease arrangements in the second stage were transferred through either division or sale, and both cultivated and uncultivated lands were transferred to the farmers. The principal objective of this stage was the definitive transfer of lands held under farmers' established cultivation rights to the farmers themselves. During implementation of the third stage of land reform in Qazvin, the region faced low precipitation and shortages of agricultural water. Government officials decided to address the problem by drilling deep wells. Under the Third Development Plan, a considerable allocation was made

for drilling deep wells and increasing agricultural production through the Agricultural Bank, with funding amounting to more than thirty million rials. At the outset of this initiative, drilling of a deep well in Hesar village, Qazvin, named after “Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi,” commenced. These measures were undertaken during the third stage of land reform with the stated purpose of improving farmers’ welfare. The costs of drilling and maintaining the region’s deep wells were collected from farmers in six-year installments. According to the then Prime Minister, Dr. Ali Amini, the Qazvin region possessed considerable agricultural potential, and studies were underway to have foreign experts develop the extensive plain between Qazvin and Tehran, thereby alleviating Tehran’s grain shortage. (4)

Given the high costs of agricultural projects and the ambitious plans of government officials such as Prime Minister Ali Amini, who believed that development of the Qazvin Plain should be entrusted to foreign organizations, a report published in issue No. 11705 of *Ettela’at* on August 12 indicated that the government wished to make use of the capacities of Western states to promote agricultural development and resolve the region’s water shortages: “Today, Dr. Arsanjani, Minister of Agriculture, told our correspondent that the United States Development Loan Fund has submitted proposals to the Ministry of the Interior for drilling 200 wells around Qazvin, which are currently under consideration by the Irrigation Agency. The study of the project may be completed within the next week, after which representatives may come to Tehran to sign the agreement between Iran and the American authorities. The cost of drilling these wells will be financed by the institution and repaid over 20 to 30 years at an interest rate of three and one-half percent from the revenues generated by use of the wells. Dr. Arsanjani added that it was intended to drill one well in each area, taking into consideration both the capabilities of the local farmers and underground water resources, and that the water would be pumped by an electric power unit and directed toward agricultural fields. Our correspondent asked whether these programs were compatible with land reform. The Minister of Agriculture replied: ‘Every step taken in this area will be coordinated with the land reform programs.’ He concluded by noting that changes would soon be made in the organization of the Ministry of Agriculture in order to accelerate progress.” (4)

Part of the state-owned estates located within the counties of Buin Zahra and Western and Eastern Alamut, which had been owned by the Shah of Iran and major landowners, were purchased by the government, specifically by the Organization for Rural Cooperatives and Affairs. During implementation of the first stage of the Land Reform Law, these lands were subsequently transferred to farmers. Other lands and registered properties privately owned by individuals and cultivated by farmers were subjected to the second and third stages of the Land Reform Law.

Before implementation of the Land Reform Law, only approximately 2–3% of the population possessed formal title deeds. Following enactment of the law and pressure exerted by the government, however, more than 75% of landlords, farmers, and smallholders acquired land reform title deeds. Implementation of land reform in most provinces, including Qazvin, initially created problems for farmers because accurate measuring instruments were unavailable. Land reform deeds defined divisions on the basis of traditional units such as *man* and shares, but the value of these units differed across various parts of the province, and the quantities specified in land reform deeds did not correspond precisely to the actual agricultural land. (5) With the introduction of more accurate measuring devices and pursuant to Article 54 of the Law on Removing Barriers to Competitive Production and Improving the National Financial System, land reform deeds were examined and reconciled with the actual physical boundaries of the land. This procedure was implemented throughout the Qazvin region on a parcel-by-parcel basis.

The headline “Division of Lands in Qazvin” was published in *Ettela’at* newspaper on Saturday, May 5, 1962, announcing to farmers in Ramand, Qazvin, the implementation of the Land Reform Law in that area: “Today the

Land Reform Organization published an announcement concerning implementation of land reform in Ramand, Qazvin. Ramand in Qazvin is the same region concerning which the Minister of Agriculture had promised in his latest interview that implementation of the Land Reform Law would soon begin. Our correspondent reports that officials of the Ministry of Agriculture have carried out the necessary surveys in this area and have also established a cooperative company so that no difficulty will arise in this respect when the law is implemented.

“With implementation of the Land Reform Law in Ramand, Qazvin, individuals who possess agricultural estates exceeding the statutory ceiling must complete the relevant declarations and submit them within no more than forty days either to the regional Land Reform Organization, which will be established, or to the Land Reform Organization in Tehran. Accordingly, the division of the estates of Qazvin’s large landowners will begin forty days from now.” (4)

Issue No. 10979 of *Ettela’at* published a report on the implementation process of the Land Reform Law in Qazvin, quoting Dr. Mahdizadeh, head of the Land Reform Organization: “Our correspondent in Qazvin reports that according to Dr. Mahdizadeh, head of the Qazvin Regional Land Reform Organization, 47 villages within Qazvin County have thus far been purchased from landowners subject to the Land Reform Law, and seven million rials have been paid as the first installment for these villages. In addition, executive operations have been completed in five areas, and in ten areas of Qazvin, a total of 325 villages have thus far been identified as subject to land reform. Twenty landowners have voluntarily submitted declarations, and given the cooperation of some landowners in the division process, it is hoped that the purchase of estates in the Qazvin region will be completed by the end of January of the current year. Dr. Mahdizadeh added that our officials initially faced extraordinary difficulties and made little progress, but now landowners themselves are preparing to divide their estates and transfer them to the government. A few days ago, Mr. Ali Asghar Afshar Ghahremani, one of the landowners in the Qazvin area, transferred two villages from his eligible estates to the government free of charge for distribution among farmers. Thus far, 200 declarations have been submitted by Qazvin landowners to the Land Reform Organization, and approximately 2,500 deeds will be ready for distribution among farmers by the end of December. Cooperative companies have thus far been established in eighteen villages.” (4)

A fundamental point concerning implementation of the reform law in Qazvin and elsewhere in the country was that as the number of smallholders increased, large estates were divided into smaller plots. Fragmentation of land created small-scale ownership; however, in subsequent years, and sometimes almost immediately, these holdings were further divided through inheritance. The remaining shares often became insufficient to support a household, forcing owners to migrate to the provincial center in an effort to improve their livelihoods.

Regarding the distribution of title deeds to farmers in the Qazvin region, *Ettela’at* newspaper published a report in issue No. 10993 on January 7 concerning the transfer of villages by landowners to the government, the allocation of village lands to farmers, and the issuance of land deeds to Qazvin cultivators: “Our correspondent in Qazvin reports: Yesterday, one of Qazvin’s landowners, Mr. Ahmad Nik-Khah, owner of Meymunak village in Lower Tarom, transferred his estate to the government free of charge and signed the relevant documents at Notary Office No. 1 in Qazvin. Dr. Mahdizadeh, head of the Qazvin Land Reform Organization, stated that all executive operations and the transfer of eligible villages within Qazvin have been completed. The purchase of estates has been finalized, although implementation has been postponed in three areas—Rudbar, Alamut, and Lower Tarom—because of unfavorable seasonal conditions and road closures. Land reform officials in these areas are nevertheless conducting surveys and preparing the preliminary arrangements. Four thousand title deeds are currently ready and will be distributed among farmers from ninety villages in a special ceremony on January 12. Rural cooperative

companies have been established in fifty villages, and 685,000 tomans have been collected from villagers in these settlements as cooperative contributions. Thirteen million rials have also been allocated by the Agricultural Bank to the cooperative companies. In addition, eighteen Qazvin landowners who were not subject to the law voluntarily transferred their estates to the government.” (4)

Development of the Qazvin Plain as a Pretext for the Israeli Presence

The presence of Israelis in the Qazvin Plain during the 1960s under the title of “development of the agricultural industry and development of the Qazvin Plain” is among the less frequently studied subjects in the contemporary history of Qazvin. The Qazvin Plain project was arguably Israel’s largest economic project in the Middle East at the time and, in addition to providing substantial economic benefits to the Israelis, generated other advantages in various fields, including a covert political presence in Iran.

In 1961, Iran’s Minister of Agriculture, Hassan Arsanjani, traveled to Israel to establish a basis for agricultural cooperation. As relations between Iran and Israel expanded during the government of Asadollah Alam, resulting in the dispatch of Iranian delegations to Israel and visits by senior Israeli officials to Iran, the Qazvin Plain agro-industrial project emerged as the most important agricultural project undertaken by Israelis outside the occupied territories.

The project was considered sufficiently important by Israeli officials that Moshe Dayan, then Israel’s Minister of Agriculture, visited the Qazvin Plain twice: first in 1962, after the Buin Zahra earthquake, and again in 1964, after the project had begun. By late 1965, approximately four hundred Israelis were reportedly stationed in the Qazvin Plain.

The event that provided the immediate context for implementation of the “Qazvin Plain Development Project” was the devastating Buin Zahra earthquake on the evening of September 1, 1962. The presence of Israeli forces and specialists in Qazvin for the reconstruction of destroyed villages, only fifteen years after the establishment of Israel, created an opportunity for Israeli influence in Iran to expand under the cover of the Qazvin Plain development project. The Qazvin project office was reportedly established by Meir Ezri, Israel’s political representative in Tehran, with approximately sixty employees and functioned in a manner comparable to an embassy.

Ezri was an Iranian-born Jew who played an important role in relations between Iran and Israel. In 1958, he was appointed by David Ben-Gurion, then Prime Minister of Israel, as Israel’s political representative or chargé d’affaires in Iran, where he remained until 1973. In his memoirs, he claimed that in the days following the earthquake, the Iranian government requested international assistance and that Israeli agencies initially sent six tons of medicine, tents, and blankets to Iran. Israelis of Iranian origin subsequently assumed responsibility for organizing additional aid and collected substantial funds for earthquake victims.

To prepare the plan for reconstruction of the Qazvin Plain, Ezri contacted Moshe Dayan, then Israel’s Minister of Agriculture, who appointed Aryeh Eliav to form a team to develop proposed plans. The team was affiliated with the state-owned Tahal company, which specialized in water-supply and water-treatment projects. Its members were highly qualified experts in water supply, irrigation, ecology, urban planning, and civil engineering. The Israeli team traveled to Iran and assessed conditions in the earthquake-affected areas of Qazvin. Their proposal to the Iranian government included reconstruction of the earthquake-affected areas and creation of zones for agricultural development and livestock grazing. Following Ezri’s efforts, the Iranian government accepted Israel’s reconstruction proposal three months after the earthquake and approved its plans for development of the Qazvin Plain. The Israeli

expert team returned to Iran and immediately began its work. During the following five years, approximately two hundred Israelis worked in close cooperation with Iranian experts to advance and implement various stages of the project.

Shabtai Shavit, a former director of Mossad, stated in a documentary produced by Israelis under the title *The Emissary* that the Qazvin reconstruction project represented a major step for Israel because the area of Qazvin was larger than Israel itself.

Mohammad-Hossein Khaksaran, in his memoirs published by the Islamic Revolution Documents Center, referred to the activities of the Israeli company Tahal in Qazvin and to the transfer of responsibility for the Qazvin Plain—one of Iran's most fertile agricultural regions—to Israeli authorities. He regarded this action by the Second Pahlavi government as a manifest injustice toward the people of Qazvin. Although the declared objective was the agricultural development of the region, he argued that the primary objective was to preserve and strengthen the regime's relationship with Israel. Despite public opposition and protest, as well as a reaction expressed by Ayatollah Khomeini in one of his speeches, the company continued its activities in Qazvin. (6)

Implementation by Israelis of the ten-year project known as the "Development and Rehabilitation of the Qazvin Plain" was halted midway because of U.S. policy toward the Arab–Israeli conflicts. It subsequently became apparent that the project had not only failed to produce the anticipated achievements but had also resulted in the loss of a substantial proportion of existing resources.

The Israeli presence in the Qazvin Plain under the pretext of rehabilitation and development produced long-term destructive consequences, including damage to underground aquifers, destruction of thousand-year-old qanats, transformation of agricultural culture, rural-to-urban migration, dismantling of the traditional irrigation network of the Qazvin Plain, establishment of the Qazvin Development Organization, land reform and its consequences, and other related effects.

The Israelis' performance in this project indicated that they sought to employ models previously used in the occupied territories and apply similar methods to the Qazvin project. However, without adequately considering climatic, demographic, and cultural differences, they proposed solutions based largely on experiences that bore limited relevance to conditions in the Qazvin Plain. Consequently, drilling deep and semi-deep wells lowered groundwater levels to such an extent that qanats in regional villages dried up, and villagers were deprived of even their limited water resources to the benefit of capital owners. (4) On Saturday, July 29, 1965, *Ettela'at* newspaper published on page 14 a headline reading "Qazvin Is Burning from Water Shortage" and presented a detailed report on water scarcity and drought in the Qazvin Plain: "Qazvin is burning from water shortage. This is a phrase that has generated anxiety in Qazvin County and its surrounding villages in recent days and is being repeated from person to person. Qazvin, a city surrounded by several kilometers of vineyards, is now engulfed by water scarcity, and drought has intensified. Agricultural activity in Qazvin has stagnated because of water shortages, while the vast plains surrounding this water-starved city resemble barren deserts. Yet unfortunately, there is no water, nor is there rainfall. The drilling of deep wells in the region has reduced underground water reserves and inflicted irreparable damage on the water resources of the Qazvin Plain. Villages in Qazvin have been depopulated because agricultural activities have stagnated, and farmers have migrated elsewhere in search of livelihoods. The situation has reached the point that only two people remain in Vosuqabad village, three kilometers from Qazvin, and both are guards responsible for protecting the landlord's property. For several years, officials of the Plan Organization, surveying teams, and irrigation personnel have come to Qazvin to study dam construction and the diversion of Shahrud River

water to Qazvin. However, each of these groups has left Qazvin after some time, and no acceptable result has been achieved for the inhabitants of the Qazvin Plain....” (4) Moreover, in production, the criterion was maximum profit in the shortest possible period rather than sustainable production. The consequence of this cultivation pattern was rapid soil degradation and erosion, and the Qazvin Plain remains severely affected by environmental degradation whose foundations were laid during these interventions.

The Israeli presence in this region, in addition to causing irreparable damage to agriculture, also resulted in the plundering of Iranian historical and cultural heritage in the plain, particularly at the archaeological site of Sagzabad. This highly important prehistoric site in the Qazvin Plain, dating from the late tenth millennium BCE to the Achaemenid period, is located approximately seven kilometers north of the small town of Sagzabad in Buin Zahra County.

The head of the Institute of Archaeology at the University of Tehran, confirming the matter and commenting on the process of destruction at the Sagzabad archaeological site, stated that the site covers approximately fifty hectares. Following the 1962 Buin Zahra earthquake, when qanats dried up and agriculture declined, local inhabitants unfortunately began excavating and damaging the ancient mound. Numerous unauthorized excavations and acts of trafficking followed, and findings from these excavations were reportedly sold to Israelis, Japanese, and Belgians. Pottery fragments found in the area indicate that the site encompasses remains from the Achaemenid, Median, and Iron Age III periods. (2)

Social and Cultural Consequences of the Land Reform Law in Qazvin

Establishment of Houses of Justice and Arbitration Councils

One of the principal responsibilities of the ruling dynasties in Iran had historically been the establishment of justice and social security, confrontation with factors disrupting public order and security or violating individual rights, and resolution of disputes and conflicts. Accordingly, establishment of a judicial system and courts of justice constituted a necessary and unavoidable component of governmental responsibility. In the modern era, following the emergence of the principle of separation of powers, the judiciary became one of the three branches of government. Historically, the Iranian judicial tradition was based on two domains: religious law (*shar'*) and customary law (*'urf*). Religious courts dealt with private and civil disputes and cases such as marriage and divorce, legal capacity, and inheritance, and were administered under the supervision of religious scholars and clerics. The independence of the religious scholars from the state, particularly within Shi'ism, contributed to the strengthening of these courts. In theoretical terms, the religious courts as a whole were ultimately supervised by a *mujtahid*.

One historical feature of the Iranian judicial tradition was the informal, self-regulating, and relatively autonomous character of this institution in relation to the governmental apparatus. In the modern period, as Iranians became familiar with European judicial institutions and more aware of the shortcomings of traditional institutions, modernization of judicial institutions and procedures became one of the reform initiatives pursued by Qajar and Pahlavi statesmen. Judicial modernization constituted one such reform. During the 1960s, when the social and economic reforms known as the White Revolution were introduced, one of its important principles concerned the judiciary. The ninth principle of the White Revolution was devoted to establishing Houses of Justice and Arbitration Councils, with the aim of extending judicial justice and establishing judicial institutions in rural areas. In 1965, the Law on the Establishment of Houses of Justice was approved by the National Consultative Assembly and the

Senate. The judiciary thereby became responsible for implementing one of the important principles of the White Revolution. However, the first House of Justice had already been inaugurated on an experimental basis on October 13, 1963, in Mahyar village, Isfahan.

Some supporters of the program maintained that the ninth principle of the Charter of the Revolution of the Shah and the People, through the establishment of Houses of Justice and Arbitration Councils, extended justice to villages and rural areas. During the reign of Mohammad Reza Shah, abolition of the landlord–peasant regime and the need to protect peasant rights required expansion of judicial institutions into rural areas. However, given the small populations of villages, the relatively simple nature of disputes, and the possibility of resolving them through village elders and respected community figures, the House of Justice program was implemented. A House of Justice constituted a form of rural court. The judges of these local courts were five trusted and respected village elders elected by villagers for three-year terms according to a specific procedure and under the supervision of district courts. They were entrusted with maintaining justice and peace in villages without formal procedures and without charge. Members of the Literacy Corps served as secretaries of the Houses of Justice and were responsible, with impartiality, knowledge, and commitment, for preparing preliminary case files. Houses of Justice were established to involve villagers in determining their own judicial affairs and resolved disputes through methods that had long been customary in rural communities. Had local courts not been established to address rural problems, the advantages and benefits of land reform could have been eroded through disputes, misunderstandings, and unrest.

(5)

Houses of Justice and Arbitration Councils were established in villages and various areas of Qazvin with the objective of utilizing existing traditional procedures and local personnel while reducing both the burden of judicial cases and governmental bureaucracy in adjudication. In this manner, informal dispute resolution was incorporated into a formal judicial framework.

Establishment of Rural Cooperative Companies

The third stage of land reform, implemented alongside the government's agricultural modernization policies, consisted of three components: establishment of agricultural joint-stock companies, sale of leased lands, and encouragement of investment in agro-industrial enterprises. The decline in agricultural production following the first and second stages of land reform prompted the government to intervene directly and compensate for reduced production through state investment and greater reliance on mechanized agricultural methods. One new form of agricultural organization, the legislation and regulations for which were enacted in 1967, was the agricultural joint-stock company. The first such company was established in 1968 in Takht-e Jamshid, Shiraz. By the end of 1969, approximately 140 agricultural joint-stock companies had been established, and by the end of 1977 numerous such companies had been formed even in the most remote regions of Iran. These companies were organized as part of a policy of consolidating agricultural lands. Brief accounts of meetings held to elect their central boards of directors were published in prominent contemporary newspapers, including *Ettela'at*, to inform the public of the names of newly appointed members.

Before abolition of the landlord–peasant system, although landlords frequently committed injustices, they nevertheless possessed the authority and managerial capability required to administer village affairs. With abolition of the landlord–peasant regime and removal of landlords, a vacuum of authority and management emerged. Agricultural lands were divided among peasants who lacked capital and agricultural equipment and, in many cases,

managerial capacity. To compensate for these deficiencies, farmers became members of cooperative companies so that these civil and social institutions could support them. Their lands, particularly small plots, were incorporated within agricultural joint-stock companies in order to be managed as effectively as possible and cultivated without oppression, injustice, and inequity, while the farmers themselves worked within these companies. Accordingly, the realization of economic and industrial development and coordination and balance between industrial growth and agricultural progress was—and remains—an important necessity.

On Monday, December 17, 1962, *Ettela'at* newspaper reported on page 17: "The Union of Rural Cooperative Companies of Qazvin was established at the Qazvin Governor's Office in the presence of representatives of the Ministry of Agriculture and the Agricultural Bank of Iran. It consisted of 14 cooperative companies and 2,500 members from villages divided pursuant to the Land Reform Law, with capital amounting to two million rials. Messrs. Shojaei, Nouri Hosseini, Mahdavi, Mafi, Kiani, Sharif, and Akbari were elected by the farmers as representatives of the companies and members of the board of directors." (4) The positive activities of rural cooperative companies during their years of operation encouraged member farmers to express support for their performance. An example appeared in *Ettela'at* on Thursday, June 13, 1963: "Messrs. Ilkhani and Sefatollah Rahimi, chairman and managing director of the rural cooperative companies of villages in the Qazvin region, wrote in a telegram: 'As representatives of 3,000 farmers who are members of cooperative companies in the villages of the Qazvin region, we once again declare our decisive support for the six great laws of the Shah. In the view of the farmers of the Qazvin region, all of whom are sincere and devout Muslims, Islam is nothing other than the law of human freedom, brotherhood, and equality, and the Shah's six laws strengthen the foundations of the sacred religion of Islam.'" (4)

In this context, rural cooperative companies were established in various villages and areas of Qazvin, including Takestan, Buin Zahra, Eastern Alamut, Western Alamut, Sagzabad, and Ziaabad, with the aim of assisting farmers in achieving the objectives of the Land Reform Law.

Establishment of Rural Cultural Houses

The government of Mohammad Reza Pahlavi implemented various programs in several stages to achieve the economic, political, and cultural objectives of land reform. One development associated with the third stage of land reform, which had begun in 1967, was the establishment of Rural Cultural Houses on September 14, 1968. Mohammad Reza Pahlavi established Rural Cultural Houses to raise the general and social knowledge of the population, provide opportunities for developing the athletic, artistic, and technical talents of rural residents, guide farmers' attitudes toward national development programs, strengthen social responsibility, disseminate the principles and ideas of cooperation and habituation to collective service, expand communication among neighboring villages, and familiarize villagers with national culture and traditions and the principles of the White Revolution. In other words, Mohammad Reza Shah established Rural Cultural Houses to respond to Iran's emerging cultural needs and appointed his eight-year-old crown prince as head of the National Association of Rural Cultural Houses. A commemorative stamp for the Rural Cultural Houses is presented in the appendices.

In 1966, *Ettela'at* published a report entitled "Mohammad Reza Shah Meets Members of the Board of Trustees of the Country's Public Libraries," in which his emphasis on the necessity of establishing rural cultural centers was noted and his directive to construct a public library in every village was announced. He was quoted as stating that a cultural house should be constructed beside every rural cooperative company and should contain a well-equipped library responsible for extending public culture among rural communities. (7)

In another issue of the same newspaper, in the "Current Affairs" section, the author quoted Mohammad Reza Shah as describing the establishment of Rural Cultural Houses, the provision of libraries for newly literate rural populations, and the liberation of society from the darkness of illiteracy and cultural poverty as the most important component of a great cultural and social revolution. His objective was described as the creation of an active and dynamic population, knowledgeable and aware of contemporary circumstances, with access to a hopeful future in which the people would enjoy at least as much power, credibility, dignity, and pride as they had in earlier periods. (7)

Rural Cultural Houses were established in several areas of Qazvin, including Ziaabad, Takestan and its surrounding villages, and Sagzabad village in Buin Zahra, to familiarize rural populations with national customs, traditions, culture, and the principles of the White Revolution.

Reasons for Establishing Rural Cultural Houses

With land reform and the division of land among farmers, agricultural cooperation and collective work rooted in the feudal mode of production were transformed into individual labor and private activity. The distribution of land among farmers, the expansion of owner-cultivation and private agricultural capitalism, the introduction of new agricultural equipment, the development of mechanized farming, the construction and expansion of communication routes, and the widespread diffusion of mass communication media such as radio, television, newspapers, and books all contributed to the transformation of feudal culture.

Accordingly, in response to the new economic and social conditions that had emerged in Iranian villages, a new culture was taking shape to meet new needs and requirements. Rural Cultural Houses were established in response to these emerging cultural needs in order to disseminate aspects of the new culture in villages and replace traditional or feudal landownership culture. (7)

Functions of the Rural Cultural Houses Organization

Some of the activities of the Rural Cultural Houses Organization included recruiting social assistants, organizing literacy classes for rural girls, holding instructor-training courses, establishing kindergartens, and undertaking other related activities. The organizational structure of Rural Cultural Houses included several committees, each of which was assigned specific responsibilities. However, familiarizing villagers with Iranian culture and traditions, safeguarding Iran, and preparing farmers for self-help and cooperation were among the principal objectives of their programs. Rural Cultural Houses operated under the supervision of the Ministry of Land Reform and Rural Cooperatives.

The organizational structure of these cultural houses was based on eight committees, each of which was assigned specific duties and objectives.

Membership Committee: This committee consisted of five members and was responsible for the following duties:

Encouraging villagers and facilitating the membership of eligible individuals; explaining to prospective members the objectives, principles, foundations, programs, and regulations of Rural Cultural Houses; reviewing and commenting on membership applications; and forwarding them to the board of directors for decision-making.

Handicrafts Committee: Some of the responsibilities of this committee included:

Regularly convening committee meetings, reviewing measures already undertaken, deciding on new activities, allocating responsibilities among committee members, following up until results were achieved, and attempting to implement programs aimed at developing handicraft-related activities, among other responsibilities.

Physical Education and Healthy Recreation Committee: Part of the statutes governing Rural Cultural Houses was devoted to sports. In its initial stage, this committee sought to establish sports grounds, engage young athletes, and organize competitions with rural cultural houses throughout the country. One example was the Golden Wheat Cup football competition held in Tehran.

Exhibitions and Celebrations Committee: One of the programs receiving particular attention from Rural Cultural House officials consisted of celebrations and invitations to villagers to participate in ceremonies marking important annual occasions, including Nowruz, the Sadeh Festival, Mehregan, Farmers' Day, national celebrations, and other events. These activities were intended to bring villagers closer together, encourage collective participation in celebrations, create and strengthen a willingness to cooperate, and relieve fatigue caused by continuous daily work.

Other responsibilities of this committee included organizing photographic exhibitions depicting the country's various activities and achievements, cooperating in the creation of mobile museums to enhance villagers' knowledge and awareness, and arranging traveling exhibitions of artistic works and handicrafts from different parts of the country.

Scouting Committee: Scouting and related programs were conducted in most elementary schools. Some duties of this committee included regularly holding meetings, reviewing actions already taken, deciding on new activities, dividing responsibilities among members, following up activities until completion, attempting to familiarize villagers with the objectives and responsibilities of scouting, seeking to implement and expand scouting programs, and cooperating with government officials and representatives of the National Scouting Organization of Iran to advance relevant programs.

Culture, Arts, and Education Committee: The responsibilities of this committee included cooperating with relevant organizations in preserving and protecting archaeological and historical remains; collaborating with elementary school principals, teachers, and members of the Literacy Corps in combating illiteracy; encouraging villagers to send their children to elementary school and participate in literacy classes; cooperating with the Institute for the Intellectual Development of Children; and utilizing the capacities of Literacy Corps personnel.

Social Affairs Committee: The responsibilities of this committee included encouraging and guiding villagers to join rural cooperative companies; cooperating with agricultural companies, village associations, and rural units to facilitate successful implementation of programs; guiding villagers to participate in economic, social, developmental, health-related, public-benefit, and village-modernization activities; and cooperating in the establishment of elementary schools, sports facilities, and sports grounds.

Other responsibilities included explaining the benefits of saving and encouraging villagers to deposit their money in banks, as well as cooperating with relevant organizations in confronting unexpected events and natural disasters such as earthquakes, floods, and droughts.

Financial Affairs Committee: This committee cooperated with the managing director and treasurer in collecting membership dues and generating financial resources by attracting assistance and donations for implementation of the programs. For example, in 1974, inhabitants of several villages in the Jabal Barez district of Jiroft announced their willingness to pay 30% of the cost of constructing a Rural Cultural House. (7)

Among all the programs planned for Rural Cultural Houses, youth sports, film screenings, reading programs, library activities, and photographic exhibitions received the greatest public acceptance and participation. Administrative circulars issued by the Land Reform and Rural Cooperatives Organization indicate the establishment of cultural houses in all villages of Takestan in 1969, including Narjeh, Radkan, Seyfabad, and others, as well as in Sagzabad village in Buin Zahra in 1967.



Figure 1. Establishment of Rural Cultural Houses in Villages of Qazvin

Increase in the Young Population in Different Areas of Qazvin

With implementation of the first stage of land reform in Iran, most inhabitants of Qazvin's villages acquired land and consequently became more hopeful about continuing their lives in rural areas. Rural optimism concerning the outcomes of land reform was another factor contributing to population growth. The migration of rural women, among whom fertility levels were relatively high, contributed to population growth after their arrival in Qazvin city. At the same time, the arrival of young men without their families for employment or education altered the sex and age composition of the city's population.

With implementation of the Literacy Corps program, which included most villages, the number of schools also increased. Following land reform, the state became increasingly present in rural areas. The government expanded its rural presence by dispatching the Literacy Corps to combat illiteracy, constructing Health Houses to educate people about health issues, sending the Agricultural Extension Corps to train villagers in agriculture, irrigation, and plant-pest control, and deploying veterinarians to combat livestock diseases. During the 1960s, people's incomes, particularly those of villagers, increased. One reason was their acquisition of agricultural lands, which contributed to population growth in the province. During this decade, the government had not yet adopted a serious population-control program and, in fact, supported population growth. (3) Because of the factors mentioned above, the population of Qazvin Province doubled between the 1956 census and the November 1966 census. (3)

Gradual Disintegration of the Boneh Social Organization in Villages

The *boneh* represents one form of rural cooperation and mutual assistance in Iran and has deep historical roots and a long history, particularly in rural communities, where it constituted an ancient tradition. A *boneh* was an

independent agricultural production unit in which a number of peasants with specified positions and occupational experience cultivated one or more designated plots of land for one agricultural year, based on a division of labor determined by economic privileges and social status and with specified amounts of water and plowing power. In summary, a *boneh* was an agricultural work group composed of plowing power and labor that cultivated a share of a village's arable lands using movable and immovable equipment belonging to the *boneh*, in accordance with local custom and the share of irrigation water allocated to it through the village's water-rotation system. (1) The most prominent forms of rural cooperation could be observed in the organization of agricultural landholdings, cooperative groups such as *boneh*, *sahra*, and *haraseh*, water-right systems, dredging of canals and qanats, and collective methods of livestock husbandry. These practices had traditionally been widespread among villagers, especially farmers and livestock breeders, and developed in accordance with the needs of rural society and its social and economic structure, customs, and traditions. Rural mutual-assistance organizations in Iran have existed for several centuries and possess their own historical foundations and independent cultural identity.

Reasons for the Formation of the Boneh

Boneh-bandi refers to the annual redistribution of agricultural lands, or *bonehs*, by lottery while taking into account soil quality and farmers' irrigation conditions. To improve the use of water within agricultural work units, farmers exchanged their agricultural lands each year in accordance with local custom. *Boneh-bandi* was related to both land and water management, and thus both land *boneh-bandi* and water *boneh-bandi* existed. (1)

A form of collective exploitation emerged within the *bonehs*, in which farmers worked collectively and divided the product equally among themselves while the land remained jointly held. Following land reform, in some regions the land was stabilized under the control of holders of established cultivation rights. In other areas, water-based *boneh-bandi* survived while land-based *boneh-bandi* disappeared. In many villages, no trace of *boneh-bandi* remained. (3) The size of a *boneh* corresponded to the quantity of water available and its capacity for cultivation. The size differed from one village to another and could range from the equivalent of one pair of oxen to four pairs. The amount of water available in each village was determined according to the local water-rotation cycle, which usually extended from 6 to 12 days, during which one full 24-hour irrigation period irrigated a specified amount of land. During one agricultural year, the *boneh* remained fixed in terms of land, water, and equipment associated with cultivation and plowing. (1) To appreciate the scale, importance, and influence of the *boneh* in Iran's agricultural economy, it may be estimated that by 1941, when Iran's population was approximately 14 million, at least one million Iranian farmers were members of or participated in these production cooperatives.

Implementation of the Land Reform Law and the Qazvin Plain Development Project brought about social changes in the organization of production and production relations among villagers. These transformations also altered the structure and composition of rural leadership. Because the *sarbonehs* lacked knowledge of mechanized agriculture, they lost their supervisory role in production and administrative affairs. This process also contributed to declining social participation and the marginalization of the *boneh*, which had previously constituted an active rural social and economic institution with multiple functions. As the *sarbonehs* withdrew, the *boneh* gradually lost its effective existence and became an inactive unit with little practical role. Furthermore, the relationships and solidarity created among farmers by the *bonehs* as organizations of agricultural production, together with the role of the *sarbonehs* as fundamental agents of unity and organizational strengthening and the kinship ties that reinforced leadership organization and concentration of authority, gradually weakened and moved toward decline and disappearance. In

areas where the Development Organization remained active, however, this process was partially mitigated through training provided to *bonehs* and *sarbonehs*, enabling them to continue for several additional years.

One factor contributing to the emergence of *bonehs* in Iran was the particular manner in which land had to be cultivated under varying climatic conditions and difficult natural circumstances. In regions with favorable natural conditions, farmers could achieve satisfactory levels of production through individual activity. In less favorable regions, where yields depended heavily on the quantity of water and the methods used to exploit it, the *boneh* emerged as the most efficient form of cultivation, particularly in relation to water management. In many Iranian villages, irrigation was based primarily on qanats and canals. The canals carrying water to agricultural land were often extremely long, making individual irrigation impracticable. Because human labor was abundant while productive resources were scarce, special organizations were necessary to maximize productive efficiency. Thus, the use of water and irrigation of farms whose ownership or crops belonged to more than one individual led to the formation of organized groups. (8)

The *boneh* is a term used in rural sociology. It was a traditional agricultural unit within the former landlord–peasant system and consisted of one or more irrigated or rain-fed agricultural plots on which several farmers engaged in agricultural production. In *bonehs*, farmers generally worked collectively and, after accounting for the landlord's share, divided the crop among themselves. Accordingly, close cooperation existed among farmers within these units.

The position of *sarboneh*, or head of the *boneh*, depended on occupational experience as well as financial advantages and was sometimes determined through kinship or the geographical origin of particular groups. Each *sarboneh* had one or two assistants known as *paboneh* and *yavarboneh*. (1)

Rural-to-Urban Migration and the Expansion of Qazvin City

The central government's efforts to establish administrative order and attract and concentrate population around Qazvin city accelerated the city's growth. The city's status as a regional center resulted in the establishment of numerous governmental organizations and administrative agencies, which themselves played an important role in attracting population and creating employment in various administrative and service sectors. Consequently, Qazvin prospered through intraprovincial migration.

Land reform affected the peasant society of the Qazvin region because the agricultural sector increasingly experienced instability and transformation, while urban areas received greater attention through the expansion of assembly industries. The deterioration of the agricultural sector therefore created a push factor driving villagers away, while urban areas simultaneously constituted a pull factor attracting them. Another reason for migration to cities was the substantial disparity between urban and rural standards of living, particularly with regard to basic welfare, health, educational, and recreational facilities and, more generally, the attractions of urban life. As the country's oil revenues increased, most government investment was concentrated in cities, and such investment could arguably be regarded as directed more toward the outward modernization of cities than toward establishing sustainable cultural, social, and economic foundations. Alongside these factors, the concentration of educational, health, and medical service centers in cities, excessive expansion of the service sector, growth in construction activities and land speculation, and neglect of rural regions were among the factors that compelled villagers in the region to migrate. (4)



Figure 2. Notice Issued to a Village Landowner Concerning the Repair and Dredging of a Qanat

The expansion and population growth of Qazvin resulted from the city's natural population increase, migration from surrounding villages, and urban expansion. Economic factors and the uncontrolled growth of the service sector attracted migrants to the city, particularly because construction activities, land speculation, and greater returns on capital appealed to rural migrants. By contrast, the weakness of agricultural industries in villages and high production costs reduced farming activity and generated frustration among rural inhabitants. In addition, easier access to educational, health, and recreational services in Qazvin and imbalances in the provision of social services represented other important drivers of migration. This process resulted in the growth of peripheral populations and the emergence of informal settlements around the city. At the same time, inadequate health and welfare facilities, unemployment, drought, irregular seasonal rainfall, poverty, and fragmentation of land into increasingly smaller plots through inheritance were among the factors encouraging villagers to migrate to Qazvin. The growth of small industries, governmental and nongovernmental employment, and service-sector jobs in the city constituted additional pull factors. (9)

Conclusion

Land reform in Iran generated numerous inequalities in the economic, political, and social spheres. Although the stated objective of land reform was to create a class of independent and self-reliant peasants, its actual outcome was largely the opposite. Most peasants lost their independence and self-reliance because of inadequate access to credit and capital and insufficient or unsuitable land. Contrary to expectations, the influence of landowners did not disappear. At the same time, political power shifted increasingly toward the state. The government strengthened the remaining landowners and wealthier peasants, and these developments collectively intensified poverty and inequality in rural areas. The gap between poor and affluent groups continued to widen, while the level of rural development failed to improve and in some respects even declined. One characteristic of the land reform program in Qazvin was the correspondence between land distribution and the traditional stratification of rural society. In this framework, some rural groups were characterized as relatively prosperous non-cultivating rural bourgeois groups. Following the division of land among farmers and the expansion of interaction between urban and rural communities, urban shopkeepers brought consumer goods into villages to meet the growing consumption needs of rural inhabitants. Alongside growth of the peasant class, a rural working class also expanded, and a substantial

proportion of villagers who failed to acquire land became wage laborers in other sectors of the economy. The declining capacity of agriculture to absorb the active rural labor force intensified this problem and increased unemployment. These individuals consequently migrated to urban centers and other regions in search of employment.

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Authors' Contributions

All authors equally contributed to this study.

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The authors of this article declared no conflict of interest.

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Transparency of Data

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