

Bilateral Approach of Iranian Migration in the Qajar Period

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Abstract: Qajar dynasty in Iran began with the great evolutions of the world which also influenced developments of Iran. European countries began widespread trade with the countries of the East and pushed them towards a monoculture economy and as a result Iranian farmers cultivated commercial crops. English's need for the benefits of opium business and high price of cotton as a result of civil wars of America helped the growth of commercial and profitable farming in Iran. This process had no positive outcome for the rural population of Iran and eventually affected Iran's craft and new industry. It also facilitated migration of a large number of unemployed people of agricultural and industrial sectors out of the country.

Key words: Commercial agriculture, rural, migration, evolutions, population

INTRODUCTION

In the 19th century AD and 13th century AH, Iran was on the path to global trade. Given that at that time, agriculture was the main source of income. Commercialization of agriculture was not in favor of the Iranian villagers. Because cultivation of commercial crops such as opium and lack of sufficient attention to some crops such as wheat led to shortage of food crops in the country. There was no conclusive security in property affairs as other affair and government could seize people's property under any pretext (Kaatusian, 1961).

On the other hand, increasing pressure of old landowners and new people who bought state property (Afshin, 1914) to exploit the surplus of rural property had joined the owners had made the conditions difficult for the villagers. The result of this pressure was migration of villagers and in some cases villages became empty. In the mid-19th century, we also saw the sale of public lands to private individuals, there were two reasons for the sale of public lands the first one was financial needs of the state and the second was its efforts for revitalizing the estates that were ruined.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Commercialization of agriculture and cultivation of profitable crops accelerated the process of Iran's integration into global system and increased power of the old owners because the harvest of opium which was desirable in some countries was more profitable than other crops such as wheat. Profits of this kind caused many families to buy agricultural land (Furan, 1999).

In other words, the combination of Export and Import goods of Iran was a significant change during this

period. In Foran's word it became closer to the classic colonial model. However, performance of Qajar about customs was not satisfactory because as a result of their policy, foreign radiation was entering the country without any control and this process led to the ruins of artisans and made many people unemployed. They had to move but in many cases, rural migration was seasonal and not permanent.

According to the related reports, the number, diversity and stability of the new industries that were established by efforts of some of the Iranians and foreigners could not satisfy the unemployed groups in traditional sectors of industry and agriculture. In addition to the indiscriminate entry of foreign goods, competition and obstructionism of the two countries of Russia and Britain were involved in the closure of the newly founded industry in Iran in the years 1914-1850 (Lambton, 1957).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Rural migration has had both internal and external process, in other words it must be said that people in some border areas, especially in the North and North West of the country migrated from Iran and a number of people who could not reach the borders turned to the inland areas where new jobs had emerged recently. Although, the new condition was not too great to employ the excessive unemployed group of the countryside. History of British oil monopolies in the south reveals that the settled population and sometimes nomads of that region and central regions of Iran, comprised the main and unskilled workers of the oil industry. Usually simple tasks and all sorts of things that did not need any specific skills were performed by peasants, for example excavation of wells that did not need migration was done by the peasants of the region.

The mentioned process indicates deterioration of traditional agriculture and some of its patterns. Before that migration from Iran at an annual rate of about one hundred thousand people were calculated (Iranian had migrated to Russian, Ottoman, Saudi Arabia, Egypt and India) According to some sources, the number of Iranian immigrants in places like Baku was not more than three hundred people, of whom only five or six were businessmen and some people from Gilan and Mazandaran were shopkeeper, others were simple worker who worked in the Dock.

When migration of Iranians was accelerated, Baku became one of the areas that mostly accepted Iranian immigrants. According to one of the immigrant's letter, Nazem al-Kermani writes something that is thought provoking. In August 1285, he wrote for one of the clerics of Tehran that about fifty thousand of Iranians are in Baku this year. These people have abandoned their own (country, family and estate) due to cruelty and oppression of the government officials. He also referred to the number of Iranians in Russia as amounting to one million people. He also referred to the impassioned speech of Taghizadeh on the 4th of Farvardin 1286 in parliament. He noted that "the landowners are condemned for their cruel treatment and are blamed for ran of three hundred and thousand Iranian farmers to Caucasus, Ottoman Empire and India".

He also referred to a bill on behalf of the Iranians settled in Badkoobehi that they wanted to choose a member for themselves in Parliament. Part of the bill is: "Notice senior lawyers of National Council, we are poor congregation and tradesman and live in in Badkoobehi and other parts of the Caucasus, we told the Azerbaijan Lawyers that allowing us to send some lawyers on behalf of our community (Malek, 1956).

No doubt the number of Iranians living in Badkoobehi has been to the extent that they reserve their right to have a lawyer in the Iranian parliament. No doubt the continuous migration of labor from Iran was not a good sign for the social and economic situation of that time. But in the migration process, some concepts were transferred that made a significant impact on political developments in Iran. A number of Iranian immigrants became familiar with the new revolutionary concepts and transmit it to the native people of their own country. These people had a major role in enlightening the public. Some also escaped the domination and pressure of Qajar

and joined parties in other countries, especially in regions such as the Caucasus joined (like the effort party that was a social democratic party) and later they tried to launch those parties in Iran. Many of the writings that were not published in Iran were printed abroad and by entering the country were effective in enlightening people. In short, the process of migration had two distinct strains, on the other hand it paves the way for transfer of the new concepts so that people could become aware of the development of a new world. Constitutional Revolution and the changes that took place in the country all benefited from this process.

CONCLUSION

Qajar rulers were in no way prepared to enter specific developments in the nineteenth century and colonial relations. They had no financial potentials, military power and in many cases clear political vision and knowledge to enter the political development of that time. Their wrong economic policies left nothing other than deterioration of Iran's agriculture and, newly founded industries in the relentless competition with foreign products did not survive. The unemployed groups of agriculture and industry migrated to neighboring countries, although this group damaged the country's economy but in the course of time they played an inevitable role in Iran's political development. Perhaps this process could be labeled as bilateral approach to immigration in Qajar era which had a very crucial role in Constitutional Revolution and its subsequent developments.

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