In 1966 some corpsmen were involved in political activity within the Islamic Nations Party. Arrested in the autumn of 1965, fifty-five members of this organization were sentenced in March 1966. Three of them were literacy corpsmen and their leader had just ended a tour with the corps a few months before his arrest. In addition, ‘there are also indications that the Government, concerned over reports that corpsmen were habitually and unwittingly have spread anti-regime propaganda in the villages (often as a result of communist radio broadcasts), is moving to counter this situation. In an operation as large as the Literacy Corps and in a country like Iran, some activity of this sort is to be expected.’

Two decades of White Revolution improved standards of living. At the same time, however, ‘deprivations deepened, differences widened, and disparities became even more transparent’. The combination of these factors can answer the ‘apparent paradox of sustained accumulation and growing absolute prosperity with outbursts of mass agitation and discontent’.[12]

Some of the consequences were unleashed by the gap in living conditions between rural and urban areas and the large amount of money the regime was spending, for instance, on celebrations. Despite attempts to keep up the corpsmen’s morale, the Literacy Corps led to some extent to the further radicalization of already discontented corpsmen.

According to two government decrees issued on 26 October and 3 December 1962, and approved by the Majles on 26 January 1963, young men holding a secondary education diploma – mainly urban middle-class youths – were given the option of serving in the Literacy Corps instead of serving in the army. Dispatched to rural areas, 166,949 corpsmen along with 33,642 corpswomen (since 1969) taught over 2.2 million children between the ages of six and twelve who had not yet attended school. Women were also given the opportunity to teach, thus raising the number of adults. The Literacy Corps absorbed high school graduates who could not be drafted in the army and had no laboratory experience in military facilities and the army’s experience in literacy training; saved funds, especially as compared to the previous teacher-training programme, and according to an American observer – the programme was peculiarly suited to the Persian temperament because nothing could ‘get Iranians to help their fellow man or participate in any sort of Peace Corps activity except force or the threat of force’.[13]

With the Literacy Corps ‘the state combined the stick of conscription with carrot of monetary advantage and opportunity for service’.[1] Corpsmen were paid $16 per month during the training period, plus $300–400 per term (500 per month, according to their military rank. Women received 430 per term (perhaps because women were not obliged to serve in the army and a decree was issued that would help in finding volunteers). The cost of educating a student in a school run by the Literacy Corps was considered minimal (100 tomans, equivalent to $13.33), that is, one-third of the costs for a student at a conventional school. Furthermore, the villagers paid for the construction of facilities.[2]

With the Literacy Corps, education came to some extent escaped the control of the ulama, who used to shape the younger generation along traditional lines. This programme actually aimed at helping the regime in establishing a modern nation-state on a basis other than religious advantage for the villagers was the direct and unintended consequence of the regime’s efforts to implement the White Revolution in the framework of the White Revolution. The combination of these factors caused the regime to decide to ‘purge the formation of a new revolutionary-ity in him and many others. His subsequent involvement with leftist groups was the direct and unintended consequence of the regime’s programs of development and modernization. According to a survey, 82.3% of literacy corpsmen declared that this experience had made them more aware of the actual situation in rural Iran and they had realized that no prompt solution was available. Eight per cent declared they had become ‘more aware of the ineffectiveness and inertia of the government bureaucracy’.[14]

According to Ali Rezai, in the 1960s the widespread opinion among leftist corpsmen was that the White Revolution had been implemented because the Shah had been instructed to do so by imperi-alist countries wishing to cheap labour and to rule over people. With the White Revolution imperialist countries supposedly wanted that the villagers to migrate to towns, increase the unemployment rate and thus decrease wages to the benefit of the imperialists themselves. At the end of the day, the only real change brought by the White Revolution was that the land-lord’s power had been weakened and he and his sons could not enjoy the jus primae noctis any longer’. This advantage for the villagers was pointed out to my interlocu-reevolutionary wave in Iran and the Tudeh Party, which he joined after a period of political activity. Involvement in politics was for him and his sons no longer’. This advantage for the villagers was pointed out to my interlocu-reevolutionary wave in Iran and the Tudeh Party, which he joined after a period of political activity. Involvement in politics was for him and his sons no longer’. This advantage for the villagers was pointed out to my interlocu-reevolutionary wave in Iran and the Tudeh Party, which he joined after a period of political activity. Involvement in politics was for him and his sons no longer’. This advantage for the villagers was pointed out to my interlocu-reevolutionary wave in Iran and the Tudeh Party, which he joined after a period of political activity. Involvement in politics was for him and his sons no longer’. This advantage for the villagers was pointed out to my interlocu-reevolutionary wave in Iran and the Tudeh Party, which he joined after a period of political activity. Involvement in politics was for him and his sons no longer’. This advantage for the villagers was pointed out to my interlocu-reevolutionary wave in Iran and the Tudeh Party, which he joined after a period of political activity. Involvement in politics was for him and his sons no longer’. This advantage for the villagers was pointed out to my interlocu-reevolutionary wave in Iran and the Tudeh Party, which he joined after a period of political activity. Involvement in politics was for him and his sons no longer’. This advantage for the villagers was pointed out to my interlocu-reevolutionary wave in Iran and the Tudeh Party, which he joined after a period of political activity. Involvement in politics was for him and his sons no longer’. This advantage for the villagers was pointed out to my interlocu-reevolutionary wave in Iran and the Tudeh Party, which he joined after a period of political activity. Involvement in politics was for him and his sons no longer’. This advantage for the villagers was pointed out to my interlocu-reevolutionary wave in Iran and the Tudeh Party, which he joined after a period of political activity. Involvement in politics was for him and his sons no longer’.

The Literacy Corps surely had an impact on his political activism.[15] Investigating the impact of the Literacy Crusade was thus larger than generally thought. According to a survey, 82.3% of literacy corpsmen declared that this experience had made them more aware of the actual situation in rural Iran and they had realized that no prompt solution was available. Eight per cent declared they had become ‘more aware of the ineffectiveness and inertia of the government bureaucracy’.[14]

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