

of the Revolution; he embodied the Revolution itself. Anyone deviating from this balance faces difficulties.

If we trace the process of nation-building you mentioned through subsequent historical periods, we see this concept manifesting in critical moments such as colonial encounters and invasions from the north and south. Based on this, when conflict arose between colonial powers and Iran, which element of Iranian identity did colonialism most strive to eliminate?

The first thing colonialism attempts to do is to disrupt this balance. It does not want this issue to persist, as it is dangerous for colonial powers. The balance between identity and civilization is a threat. In the face of colonialism, we see Islamic awakening, which is the root of the Islamic Revolution. At every stage of colonial intrusion, there has been a corresponding identity-based Islamic awakening, showing that the Islamic community is vibrant and resistant to exploitation. Unlike African or East Asian societies, Iran's Islamic society is alive and responsive. When enemies have invaded militarily, there has been a military response; when they have invaded culturally, the response has been cultural; and when they have invaded politically, the response has been political. Today, their incursion is civilizational, encompassing military, political, cultural, and economic elements, with stronger software. Consequently, the Islamic awakening's response must also be civilizational.

You view history as a series of "evolutionary ruptures" and believe that Nader Shah and Reza Shah created significant breaks. Following them, colonialism introduced a second rupture, sustaining its impact for 50 years until the historical self-awareness

achieved through the Islamic Revolution ended it. However, we must acknowledge that colonialism afflicted Iranian society and continues to evolve in new and complex forms. In this context, how should we understand this phenomenon to prevent further ruptures? How should a historically self-aware Iranian confront it?

Ruptures are never absolute. Even during the Pahlavi era's disruption, there was continuity, and the Shia community did not disintegrate. If we were to identify who more astutely sought to destroy the Iranian nation, it would be Reza Shah. He aimed to eradicate religion, correctly understanding that completing this task was essential to creating a rupture.

During Mohammad Reza Shah's reign, the rupture was mainly political, with attempts to undermine religion through cultural efforts. However, both underestimated the power of religion. They believed they could reverse-engineer the Safavid initiative and change Iran's religion. However, changing a religion is not an easy task; it is not something to be taken lightly. Meanwhile, the clergy seized the opportunity, preserving the religious aspect of society.

They thought they could impose a secular interpretation of religion, unaware that Shia Islam is constantly evolving and regenerating. Shia Islam is essentially a comprehensive movement, continuing its work independently. They did not anticipate that Shia Islam would emerge so strongly and manifest itself as a national revolution. Our intellectuals also failed to understand the people's true nature.

The current Islamic movement in Iran is entirely inspired by Shia teachings, which enabled it to balance diverse opinions effectively. Many Salafi movements are rooted in Wahhabism, whereas Shia Islam in Iran sought to return to its principles. Additionally, alongside the jurisprudence and teachings of the Ahl al-Bayt, we have philosophy,

mysticism, and Islamic civilization. These elements combined to shape a unique movement.

Why has Iran, despite being one of the world's major powers at certain times, never been a colonialist?

Examining both ancient and modern history reveals that Iranians, even when they were among the world's most powerful nations, largely refrained from colonialism and barbarism. Unlike many empires, Iranian conquests seldom left a legacy of poverty, exploitation, and savagery. In ancient times, Iran stood against the colonial expansions of the Greeks and Romans. During the 10th and 11th centuries, they opposed Portuguese and Spanish aggressors. In later centuries, they endured much suffering at the hands of Western imperialists, especially the British. More recently, Iran has been a staunch opponent of American bullying and excessive demands, striving to remain a proud and dignified nation. This has been particularly evident through the global revolution known as the Islamic Revolution, which defends the identity and character of Iran and other Muslims.

The study of Iranian colonialism encompasses the millennia-long story of a nation that has neither been a dominator nor submissive, remaining vibrant and active to this day. Consequently, the body of work on Iranian colonial studies, and more specifically Iranian Islamic colonial studies, seeks to develop and evaluate a native perspective on this global phenomenon. Colonial powers, alongside their territorial conquests, focused on eradicating the identities of their colonies and imposing new ones, marking a new era in their global strategy. This included efforts to globalize European languages, such as replacing Persian with English in India and promoting French in parts of the Mediterranean and Asia. This focus should not be confused with the natural spread of some languages as the



When we refer to the concept of "Iranian Colonial Studies," it is not about creating a new term but rather about gaining a new scientific understanding of one of the most critical reactions of the Iranian nation to preserve its identity and character against foreign aggression and infiltration.

**Special Issue
on Passing of
President Seyyed
Ebrahim Raisi and
his companions**