

OTHER NATIONS

*Let Them
Eat Oil*

"Agricultural Policy and Development Politics in Iran" by M. G. Weinbaum, in *The Middle East Journal* (Autumn 1977), 1761 N St., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036.

A 13 percent annual increase in food consumption, together with rural out-migration and sluggish farm productivity, threatens the Shah of Iran's ambition to build an industrial society rivaling those of the West, reports Weinbaum, a political scientist at the University of Illinois. Despite crash programs to spur agricultural development, he contends, food policy has fallen victim to the Shah's preoccupation with Iran's industrialization and international status.

Modern agribusinesses, occupying 165,000 acres in the Southwestern province of Khuzistan, are showcases of Iran's agricultural efforts in the '70s. Although they were expected to produce quick profits for foreign and Iranian investors, costly land-leveling and a dearth of farm labor have undermined these prospects. Other "cooperative" ventures have suffered equally, with many small farmers balking at the idea of exchanging their land for intangible shares of stock. As a result, while industry is growing by 20 percent annually, agriculture has consistently fallen short of its modest 4-7 percent annual targets.

Iran's Ministry of Agriculture and Natural Resources—with the help of young, Western-trained economists—is responsible for managing the new development programs, but funding squabbles and an inept bureaucracy hamper the government's ultimate goal: 80 percent food self-sufficiency.

As long as oil revenues run high, says Weinbaum, there is no question of Iran's capabilities—"only of its priorities." But while the Shah hopes to make Iran independent of foreign economic pressures, the country's agricultural imports have jumped to \$1.4 billion a year, half of it coming from the United States. Consumption of red meat alone rose 75 percent in 1976 over the previous year. But Iran's import and pricing policies actually *encourage* dependence on foreign foods. Weinbaum's conclusion: Such shortsightedness may eventually deny Iran the security and influence it so badly wants.

*Ending the
Stalemate*

"Der Entwurf der neuen Bundesverfassung der UdSSR [The draft of the new constitution of the U.S.S.R.] by Boris Meissner, in *Recht in Ost und West* (Sept. 1977), Verlag A. W. Hayn's Erben, Schlesische Str. 26, 1 Berlin 36, Federal Republic of Germany.

Communist governments officially view the state as an instrument to move society from a "socialist" to a truly "communist" stage. But their national constitutions reflect practical considerations as much as Marxist-Leninist ideology.