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*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.

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Stalin's 1936 "framework" Soviet Constitution, for example, reflected his need for personal flexibility in a society that had yet to mature politically. By contrast, Khrushchev's vain effort to adopt a "new" Soviet constitution during the late 1950s and early 1960s was an attempt to bar new Stalinist "cults of personality" by placing more rigid, legal controls over the Soviet system. Meissner, director of the Institute for Eastern Law at the University of Cologne, finds that both these tendencies persist in the draft Soviet Constitution published last spring after two decades of stalemate. (The constitution went into effect last October.)

According to Meissner, the new Constitution strengthens one-party rule in the Soviet Union by explicitly acknowledging the Communist Party's "vanguard" role in society. Moreover, by simple legislative fiat, it proclaims the end of the "dictatorship of the proletariat" and heralds a "developed socialist stage," called the "society of the whole people." Soviet "federalism" is weakened, and the powers of the central government—particularly the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet, the Russian parliament—are broadened.

The new charter concentrates power in the Party leader's hands by ending the 13-year division of authority between the Party Secretary and the President. With the ouster of President Nikolai Podgorny in 1977, both jobs are now held by Leonid Brezhnev. Nevertheless, Meissner argues, the constitution has theoretically created the beginnings of a genuine constitutional state by obliging all Russian institutions, including the Communist Party, to operate within its guidelines.

***Never Call Retreat***

"*Finis* for 'The American Challenge'?" by Stephen Hugh-Jones, in *The Economist* (Sept. 10, 1977), P.O. Box 190, 23a St. James's St., London SW1A 1HF, England.

A decade ago, French commentator and politician Jean Jacques Servan-Schreiber predicted that by the 1980s, the No. 3 industrial power in the world would be not Europe, but American industry in Europe. His prophecy has been partially fulfilled: U.S. investments on the Continent over the last decade have risen from \$16 to \$55 billion; sales from \$40 to \$200 billion. But *Economist* business editor Hugh-Jones contends that the power of U.S. multinational corporations is on the wane.

American multinationals in Europe, which date back to the turn of the century when Kodak went to Britain and Gillette to France, are now hampered by local competition, government regulation, and trade unionism. As a result of widespread European unemployment, work permits for foreign nationals are increasingly hard to get; in the Netherlands, for example, only one American company out of five employs *any* Americans.

The worries of U.S. businessmen over future investments in Europe are not without cause. Many multinationals there deal in services (hotel chains, car rentals, management systems), which are vulnerable both