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**POLITICAL REPRESSION, SOCIALIZATION, AND FRAME OF
INTERPRETATION: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF THE
ESTABLISHMENT OF A CONSTITUTIONAL REGIME (1906) AND AN
ISLAMIC REGIME (1979) IN IRAN**

by

BEHNAM BEHNIA

A thesis submitted to
the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research
in partial fulfilment of the requirements
for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

Department of Sociology and Anthropology

Carleton University
Ottawa, Ontario

1997

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submitted by Behnam Behnia, B.A., M.A.
in partial fulfilment of the requirements for
the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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April 28, 1997

ABSTRACT

The establishment of an Islamic regime in Iran, in 1979, despite decades of secularization and the quietism of the Shi'a establishment, came as a surprise to many scholars. In their attempt to explain this phenomenon, scholars have examined various factors such as Shi'a ideology, the anomie created by rapid modernization, Iran's uneven structural development, the charisma and political ability of Khomeini, and the political and theoretical mistakes of the secular forces.

In general, however, scholars have overlooked that the establishment of an Islamic regime in Iran was also a reproduction of dictatorship; that the forces opposing the dictatorial regime of the Shah did not perceive democratic rights as universal nor as their priority. After the revolution, the demands for women's rights, freedom of expression, or fair trial were refuted on the grounds of being either "secondary" issues or liberal and/or western concepts.

This thesis contends that the establishment of an Islamic regime in Iran cannot be fully understood without taking into consideration the vision that opposition forces had of democracy and how a society should be ruled, as well as the political circumstances under which revolution occurred. I argue that whereas confidence in the intellectual and moral competence of ordinary people is the underlying assumption of democracy, the forces opposing the Shah perceived the populace as politically and culturally infected by a decadent bourgeois/western/imperialist culture. Moreover, the political liberation and flourishing of civil society that resulted from the revolutionary situation soon came under attack by the Islamic government.

To shed light on this argument a comparative study of the 1906 and 1979 Iranian revolutions is undertaken in this thesis. The study of these two revolutions indicates that contrary to 1979, the opposition forces in 1906 had a positive perception of liberalism and struggled for popular sovereignty. Moreover, in 1906 nearly a decade of political opening created an opportunity for the general population to debate and reflect on competing ideas and opinions.

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I dedicate this thesis to my sister-in-law, Fariba, who died tragically last month after two years of terminal illness. I admired her love for life, patience, bravery and defiant personality.

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CHAPTER ONE

SETTING THE PROBLEM

In the Spring of 1977 the protest movement against the dictatorial regime of the Shah of Iran erupted and by February 1979 had succeeded in overthrowing the regime. Immediately after the fall of the Shah, in its attempt to seize power and to establish an Islamic regime in Iran, Khomeini's faction began to attack democratic rights and institutions. Paradoxically, secular forces which had struggled against the dictatorial regime of the Shah demanding freedom and democracy, did not actively defend democratic rights and instead tolerated and even supported their abrogation.

When I studied the 1979 Revolution within the historical perspective of modern Iranian history and compared it with the Iranian 1906 Constitutional Revolution I confronted what on the surface appeared to be a paradox. Like the 1979, the Constitutional Revolution was led by a coalition of religious and secular forces against a repressive regime, demanding social justice and democracy. In 1979, despite decades of secularization and the quietism of the Shi'a establishment, a theocratic regime was established. The 1906 Revolution founded a constitutional regime and unleashed a secularization process in a society strongly influenced by Islamic principles and religious leaders.

A comparative study of these two revolutions drew my attention to the impact that the political context of revolution and the opposition's frames of interpretation¹ or vision of

---

¹ This concept, drawn from Goffman (1974) and developed by Snow and Benford, will be discussed more fully below.

politics had on the resulting course of events. In these two revolutions, the opposition forces held different conceptions of politics and had different attitudes toward political pluralism and popular sovereignty. In 1906, the opposition forces had a positive perception of liberalism and struggled to establish popular sovereignty and civil and political rights. During the 1979 Revolution, however, the terms 'liberal' and 'liberalism' were used as derogatory labels and the opposition forces, both secular and Islamic, had little trust in the intellectual and moral ability of the Iranian people. They perceived the populace as politically ignorant and culturally corrupted by a bourgeois/Western/imperialist culture.

Further comparison between the two revolutions revealed that, at the turn of the century, Iranian society experienced nearly ten years of mild political relaxation and a flourishing of civil society, something that was absent in the 1979 Revolution. In 1906 the constitutionalists were able to introduce and discuss their ideas and the general population had opportunities to debate and reflect on them. In contrast, in the 1979 revolution, the Iranian people were at war with the Shah's regime which continued to suppress and persecute them until its final overthrow. Soon after the fall of the Shah's regime they were to encounter a new dictatorship of the Islamic government.

The contention of this thesis is that the establishment of the Islamic regime in Iran can not be fully understood without taking into consideration the vision that the opposition forces had of democracy and of how a society should be ruled as well as the political climate under which the 1979 Revolution occurred. I will argue that whereas confidence in the intellectual and moral competence of ordinary people is the underlying assumption of democracy, the forces opposing the Shah had little confidence in the ability of the populace. Moreover, the

political opening that resulted from the revolutionary situation did not last and after a few months democratic rights came under savage attacks by the Islamic government.

In this thesis the opposition's lack of confidence in the political ability of ordinary people is examined in relation to socialization under the dictatorial regime of the Shah. This thesis goes beyond the conventional perception of political repression as a destructive power concentrated in the repressive apparatus of the state and in the hands of dominant groups. This thesis proposes a socialization approach to political repression. According to this perspective, by shaping the social environments in which members of a society grow up and by permeating their relationships, political repression influences their frame of interpretation. Political repression is perceived as a pervasive power that affects the habits of thinking and action of members of society by becoming part of their everyday life.

As a product of the socialization process, frames of interpretation are not fixed but are dynamic and in dialectical relationship with their social context. During a revolution, for instance, the frame of interpretation affects the course and outcome of events, but at the same time is affected by the political climate under which the revolution occurs. To address these issues, this thesis will undertake a comparative study of the 1906 and 1979 revolutions. Before engaging in this endeavour, however, it is necessary to clarify and discuss some theoretical and conceptual issues employed in this study.

1.1 Frame of Interpretation & Frame Alignment

In any socio-political revolution, inspired by their vision of an ideal society people rise against the old order and engage in the building of a new one. In both processes of

destruction and construction, not only the composition of socio-political forces and their resources but also their 'frame of interpretation' are involved. The notion frame of interpretation refers to a set of values, beliefs, norms, assumptions, and expectations through which members of a society interpret past and present experiences as well as anticipate the future. A frame of interpretation furnishes resources and knowledge necessary for understanding and defining various situations that individuals face. It affects their interactions and their relationships with the surrounding world. Members of a society will perceive their surrounding environment in a particular way and act accordingly upon that. In this thesis, this particular perception of society is referred to as a 'frame of interpretation'.

By performing various functions, a frame of interpretation influences the course and outcome of a revolution. These functions include problem identification, diagnosis, and prognosis. A frame of interpretation will punctuate "some existing social condition or aspect of life and define it as unjust, intolerable, and deserving of corrective action"(Snow & Benford, 1992: 136). A frame of interpretation attributes blame by identifying culpable agents in problematic conditions. Finally, it suggests solutions to the problems diagnosed by specifying "both a general line of action for ameliorating the problem and the assignment of responsibility for carrying out that action"(Snow & Benford, 1992: 136-138).

A frame of interpretation is not static but dynamic. It is enriched by life experiences, including revolution. During a revolution, people confront many 'first times'. For the first time they are introduced to new ideas and are pressed to take a position on issues they have not thought about before; they confront differences of opinion on issues which previously to them could not be otherwise and were "obvious", and their level of tolerance of differences is tested

at a concrete rather than at an abstract and theoretical level. Moreover, in the newly emerged universe of practices and discourses of a revolutionary period, frames of interpretation compete with each other over meanings and definitions, they battle over their different versions of diagnosis and prognosis until one of them prevails and becomes hegemonic. During a revolution, as a result of intense interaction with different discourses and the experience of continually changing socio-political circumstances, members of society could go through a process of 're-socialization' (Berger & Luckmann, 1984: 182). The unfamiliar character of new life circumstances makes revolution a challenging experience for members of society, an experience which could lead them to re-interpret some of their values and beliefs, to reconsider certain elements of their frame of interpretation, and to create new elements

In countries ruled by repressive regimes, however, it is usually during a revolution that, for the first time, people have the opportunity to be exposed to various competing frames of interpretation presented by different social movements and dissident intellectuals. Considering that the general population will be unfamiliar with most of these frames which come to the surface during the revolution, it is important for them to have the opportunity to reflect on and participate in public debates on competing ideas and opinions. This requires a political climate free enough to allow an adequate environment for the emergence of public forums and independent activities of civil society's institutions

For the purpose of this study, two types of frames of interpretation are distinguished, political culture and a social movement's interpretive frame. In what follows, I will delineate some of their functions and characteristics. Political culture consists of those assumptions,

values, norms, and attitudes concerned with political issues which influence one's definition of the political situation, regulate the means used to achieve goals, and affect when and in what ways one becomes involved in politics (Verba, 1969:513). A political culture is acquired not only through the mediation of institutions such as school, family, mass media, workplace, and voluntary associations. It is also acquired through observation, experience with "the operation of the political process, contact with political or governmental figures, exposure to communications about politics- or reports of the experiences of others (political memory)"(Verba, 1969: 551; Fagen, 1969:3; Pammett & Whittington, 1969:22).

A social movement's interpretive frame refers to a more elaborated, consciously reflected, overt and purposive level of ideation (Tarrow, 1992: 177). A social movement's frame of interpretation influences both activists' perception of situations and their actions. Freeman's study of women's organizations, for example, illustrates how a movement's interpretive frame acts as a filter in selecting some resources and forms of organization and rejecting and ignoring others. Members of one women's organization who came largely from a radical movement and were influenced by its radical concepts of participatory democracy, stressed that "people should participate in the decisions affecting their lives and that all contributions were equally valid. These values led easily to the idea that all hierarchy is bad because it gives some people power over others and does not allow everyone's talents to develop"(Freeman, 1979: 177). However, members of another women's organization whose past political experience was formed in political parties and bureaucratic organizations considered structure in organizations a help, not a hindrance (Freeman, 1979: 178).

Through a number of strategies, called 'frame alignment', a social movement tries to

attract would-be-supporters to its frame and to engage them in movement. In other words, to mobilize a target group a movement must make its frame resonate for the individuals in that group. This is contingent upon the congruence of their interpretive frames. To illustrate this further, I will discuss two frame alignment strategies: 'frame amplification' and 'frame transformation'.

As a strategy for alignment of members of a target group to a social movement, 'frame amplification' does not require potential supporters to depart from their interpretive frame (Tarrow, 1992:189). In order to generate support for a movement, the movement's organization must identify values and beliefs presumed basic to prospective target groups and amplify and elevate those values and beliefs. For example, in order to generate neighbourhood opposition to the proposed relocation of a local Salvation Army shelter for the homeless in an American city, a neighbourhood movement appealed to the family values of prospective neighbours, portraying the shelter as a threat to women and children. As Snow and his collaborators note, movement activists "did not invent these negative typifications, though. Rather, they focused attention on and amplified selected beliefs and characterizations that have been associated historically with transient men so as to unify neighbourhood residents" (1986:469-470)

In contrast to amplification strategy, 'frame transformation' refers to cases in which a movement puts forward radically new ideas and values which may not resonate with, and may even appear in contrast to, conventional lifestyle and existent interpretive frames. In such cases "new values may have to be planted and nurtured, old meanings or understandings jettisoned, and erroneous beliefs or misframings reframed in order to garner support and

secure participants"(Snow et al., 1986:473, Tarrow, 1992:188) In this respect one can mention movements like feminist, anti-racist, and disabled movements which "seek dramatic changes in the status, treatment, or activity of a category of people" (Snow et al., 1986: 475)

Frames of interpretation are products of the life-long process of socialization in a determinant society and are enriched by individuals' life-experiences and reflections on their interactions with their social milieu. Political repression affects the frame of interpretation of members of a society by shaping their social relationships and social context. It is to these issues that I now turn.

1.2. Socialization & Political Repression

Socialization is a life-long process through which human beings become members of a society by acquiring the ability to understand and produce meanings and they become distinct individuals by acquiring the 'self'. The possession of a self allows for self-interaction and reflection. Thus, human beings can become the object of their own actions and can act toward themselves as they might act toward others. For instance, they may get angry with themselves, take pride in themselves, or argue with themselves (Blumer, 1969:79). This allows human beings to assess their values and assumptions in the light of daily experience and to check their activity. Human beings, in other words, are involved in the process of socialization. They are not socialized but in the process of socializing (Becker, 1990:6-11, Charon, 1995:27). With the development of the 'self', therefore, human beings are both enmeshed in society and freed from society (Meltzer, 1968:23). Due to their self-interaction capacity, the conduct of human beings is guided by their definition and interpretation of

situations. They do not react to each other's actions but to the meanings they attach to those actions. Socialization is influenced by various factors, including political conditions. In the following paragraphs, the effects of political repression on socialization are discussed

There are many countries in the world where generations have grown up and lived in a politically repressive environment in which people cannot trust each other enough to share their opinions and cannot organize and coordinate their actions. Despite that, scholars have rarely taken into account the impact of political repression on the socialization process. Political repression is usually conceived as a form of power exercised by the dominant groups in order to ensure the compliance of subordinate groups to the political order (Dallin & Breslauer, 1970: 2). Most scholars who have studied the effects of political repression have approached it chiefly from its preventive functions, that is, its impact on the decision of individuals as to whether or not to take part in a protest movement, and more broadly, on the rise and decline of social movements (Opp & Roehl, 1990: 521). Tilly, for instance, defines repression as

any action by another group which raises the contender's cost of collective action... For example, a government can raise a group's mobilization costs (and thereby raise its costs of collective action) by disrupting its organization, by making communications difficult or inaccessible, by freezing necessary resources such as guns and manpower... [or] by raising penalties (1978: 100)

Stohl argues that the aim of coercion and the threat of coercion against the opposition is both to prevent or weaken their capability to oppose the authorities as well as to carry "a message of intimidation and the creation of fear in an audience whose behaviour the perpetrator seeks to alter. The Chinese understood this well in the proverb, 'kill one, frighten ten thousand'" (1984: 7-9, See also Schmid, 1991: 31)

Concerned with whether communist regimes had succeeded in creating a new political culture, several social scientists studied the repressive and re-educative measures used by communist regimes to create citizens who voluntarily follow the dominant ideology. These scholars, however, only assessed the effectiveness of the mechanisms used by the communist regimes and did not investigate the effects of repressive measures on the political culture of these societies (Almond, 1983:127; Brown, 1985, 1979; Dallin & Breslauer, 1970; Fagen, 1969; White, 1985, 1979).

Paraphrasing Nordstrom one can say that political repression has generally been considered by social scientists as "external" to "social processes and cultural realities of the population at large"(1992:5). It is true that a dictatorial regime cannot produce a social order where its laws are "obeyed promptly, predictably", because its "bloody sword is utterly external to the wills and the consciousness of men (sic)"(Walzer, 1970: 125). But this does not mean that the presence of a 'bloody sword' over the heads of members of society can be ignored, for this threat influences the structure of their relationships and social settings, and molds their political perspectives and attitudes. "We must cease once and for all", Foucault writes, "to describe the effects of power in negative terms: it 'excludes', it 'represses', it 'censors', it 'abstracts', it 'masks', it 'conceals'. In fact, power produces, it produces reality; it produces domains of objects and rituals of truth"(1979: 194).

The contention of this thesis is that political repression is not a power "localized" in the sphere of politics. It is, rather, a power that shapes and produces reality, affects society at large and face-to-face social interactions. With its repressive measures and surveillance, political repression not only shapes the social environment in which people live, but also their

frame of interpretation. By dictating the presence and the absence of certain social spaces and certain information in a society, political repression creates a distorted picture of society and molds the frame of interpretation of members of that society. Any suppressive policy, such as censorship, a ban on independent organizations, and the imprisonment and execution of opposition members creates a void in the social context and produces black-outs in information about social and political forces. Political repression deprives people of certain political experiences like participation in democratic processes and institutions and leaves them living with fear and distrust.

To explore the impact of dictatorship it is therefore not enough to learn about the mechanisms and apparatuses of repression. One must also study their effects at both individual and social levels by asking: What impact does living under constant fear of being reported, arrested, and tortured have on one's frame of interpretation? What is the impact of living in a social environment where people cannot gather to discuss their concerns and to organize their resources? How does the absence of democratic rights affect the structure and size of social settings? As I will argue below, through the abrogation of democratic rights and the persecution of oppositional forces, repressive regimes on the one hand restrain and undermine the autonomy and existence of institutions of civil society. On the other, they spread fear and distrust among the population which affect social interactions. These effects, in turn, may lead members of society to meet in small secret and semi-secret groupings of trusted acquaintances where they are able to discuss politics and to voice their grievances. The internal structures of these social settings and the absence of civil society and public forum, however, prevent members of society from being exposed to different ideas. These

circumstances shape the frame of interpretation of members of society. It is to these issues that I now turn.

1.3. Political Repression: Civil Society & Passive Revolution

In this thesis civil society is defined as the realm where individuals and social groups, in their struggle over resources and identities, form or join voluntary organizations and networks such as unions, political parties, social movement organizations, and cultural associations. The emergence and activity of the institutions of civil society, however, go hand in hand with the development of citizenship rights or civil, political and social rights. The presence of these rights have, using Tilly's expression, 'an umbrella effect'(1978:167) in the emergence and protection of the institutions of civil society.

As a result of the struggles of social groups and classes, citizenship rights have gone through different phases and have become more complex (Giddens, 1981:222, Gentis, 1980:194-95). Marshall's distinction between the components of citizenship rights, i.e., civil, political and social rights, reveals the complexity of civil society. Civil rights include freedom of movement, profession, and faith; the right to own property and to conclude contracts; and equality before the law (Marshall, 1976:71; Black, 1984).

The political element of citizenship refers to one's right to participate in political life and "the exercise of political power, as a member of a body invested with political authority or as an elector of the members of such a body"(Marshall, 1976:72). Political rights include the right to vote and to be elected, and freedom of organization, opinion, and the press. The

process of developing political rights consists not only in the creation of new rights but in the granting of old rights to new sections of the population (Marshall, 1976:77, Habermas 1989:83).

With the expansion of citizenship rights, civil society finds the capacity to intervene in the political realm. The Gramscian concept of the 'extended state' or 'political society + civil society', in fact, aims to show not only the "extension of state activities into civil society, but also the penetration of civil society by the forms of mass organization such as mass political parties and pressure groups" into the polity (Buci-Glucksmann, 1982:123-4).

Metaphorically, one can say that for Gramsci, the liberal-democratic state has two feet, one in civil society and the other in political society. As soon as the dominant classes lose their hegemony over society, the state loses its equilibrium as a result of losing one of its pillars, i.e. civil society. In fact, Gramsci wrote that in dictatorial societies the detachment of civil society from political society creates the problem of hegemony (1975:875). The detachment of civil society from political society leads dominant groups to resort to force and to undermine civil and political rights in order to restrain and control civil society. Accordingly, a dictatorial state tries to abolish independent political parties, trade unions, cultural associations and strives to incorporate them within its activity (Gramsci, 1989:54).

Comparing the Russian autocratic regime with the European liberal-democratic regime, Gramsci wrote that in the former the state was "everything, civil society was primordial and gelatinous, in the latter, there was a proper relation between state and civil society, and when the state trembled a sturdy structure of civil society was at once revealed"(1989:238). In other words, both autocratic and liberal-democratic regimes have a

sphere of civil society, though with notable differences. The complexity of the latter's civil society is embodied in the presence of citizenship's rights that provides the legal protection necessary for its development. Civil society in autocratic regimes is "primordial" and "gelatinous" due to the lack of many elements of citizenship rights.

This brings us to Gramsci's concept of 'passive revolution' or 'revolution-restoration'. Passive revolution is a strategy used by the dominant groups whenever their hegemony is seriously threatened and a process of extensive reorganization is needed in order to re-establish their hegemony (Sassoon, 1982:129; Simon, 1991:25). There are three major characteristics of a passive revolution: major socio-economic and political transformations are introduced from above by state intervention; the people are excluded from active participation and involvement in these changes; and initially there is a period of expectation and hope for a better life among the population despite their exclusion (Gramsci, 1989:120). In a passive revolution, the people are transformed from sovereign to subject, from active to passive citizens. A passive revolution means that citizens, despite their rights, are barred from active participation in the country's social, economic, and political transformations and become 'passive' observers. One may call passive revolution, 'modernization minus democracy'.

1.4. Political Repression & Face-to-Face Interactions

Political repression not only affects the institutional configuration of a society but also the face-to-face interactions of its members. Political repression leads members of society to resort to dissimulation in certain zones of society and undermines conditions of

communicative action.

1.4.1. Dissimulation or Concealed Self: The world of social interactions, using Goffman's dramaturgical framework, consists of two regions -- the "front" and "back" stage -- where actors present their "public" and "inner" selves respectively. The "front-stage" refers to the region of expression control and impression management. In this region, interacting with others, the individual presents the "public-self" by discharging the expected roles, accentuating some aspects of his/her self and suppressing others which might discredit the fostered impression (Goffman, 1959:111). The "back-stage" is defined as a region relative to the given performance, where the individual presents a different self, the "inner-self", and the suppressed aspects make an appearance (Goffman, 1959:112). In other words, the self presented by an actor in the front- and back-stage regions of social interactions are different because they target a different audience. There are a number of actions that one does not (and often can not) perform on the front-stage that one can on the back-stage. Therefore, one can talk about a "public" and an "inner" self, or "on-stage" and "off-stage" self displayed by an individual in the front- and back-stage regions, respectively. For example, George Orwell, relating his memory of an assistant maitre d'hotel, writes that when angry with an apprentice who had broken a bottle of wine, he yelled

'Do you call yourself a waiter, you young bastard? You a waiter! You're not fit to scrub floors in the brothel your mother came from!' ... Then he entered the dining-room and sailed across it dish in hand, graceful as a swan. Ten second later he was bowing reverently to a customer. And you could not help thinking, as you saw him bow and smile, with that benign smile of the trained

waiter, that the customer was put to shame by having such an aristocrat to serve him (quoted in Goffman, 1959 122)

The presence of a truth shared by a number of trusted individuals is necessary but not enough for the formation of a back-stage region. Information about the true feelings and opinions of an individual is not enough for his/her inclusion in the back-stage. It may in fact undermine his/her inclusion if members of the back-stage find the individual's truth incompatible with their norms and values. The front- and back-stage are, therefore, distinguished along lines of truth, normative background, and trust.

As I shall argue, Iranians are highly conscious of back- and front-stage and the respective self presented in these two zones. In fact, this awareness is reflected at the semantic level. In Iranian culture the equivalents of on- and off-stage or "public" and "inner" self are *zاهر* and *باطن*. *Baten* or inner-self is the seat of the true feelings, values, and attitudes of an individual (Good et al., 1985:385). *Zاهر* or public-self is, by contrast, the "realm of controlled expression. It is the realm of politeness and of proper conversation and behavior, where one's true feelings must be held in check, where a proper public face must be put on one's words"(Beeman, 1986 11) In moral terms, the inner self (*باطن*), as the realm of sincere feelings, is valued positively whereas public self (*زاهر*) is not, although the latter is considered necessary for survival of the individual. The *zاهر* is the realm of

corruption and of worldly influences, but it is also a buffer for the delicate world of the *باطن*. Thus one may not value the *zاهر*, but one must know how to operate in it. The admonition, *zاهر-ra hefz kon!* (protect external appearances!) is widely given and widely heeded, since by maintaining the external aspects of one's behavior, one can remain out of danger and protect and control the *باطن* (Beeman, 1986 11)

Scott, using a perspective similar to that of Goffman, discusses the effects of power relations on the definition of front and back regions and the presentation of self. He uses the term "public transcript" to refer to the on-stage self or the self presented by members of a subordinate group to that of the dominant one, and "hidden transcript" to refer to the off-stage self or the self presented to other members of the subordinate group. The "hidden transcript" refers to

discourse that takes place 'offstage,' beyond direct observation by power holders. The hidden transcript is thus derivative in the sense that it consists of those offstage speeches, gestures, and practices that confirm, contradict, or inflect what appears in the public transcript (Scott, 1992:56-58).

Fear and the urge to protect oneself against danger makes the public mask used by subordinate groups thicker and the passage from front-stage to back-stage more difficult. Black slaves in the U.S. frequently used public transcripts. One of them, for example, says

I had endeavoured so to conduct myself as not to become obnoxious to the white inhabitants, knowing as I did their power, and their hostility to the coloured people. First, I had made no display of the little property or money I possessed, but in every way I wore as much as possible the aspect of slavery. Second, I had never appeared to be even so intelligent as I really was (in Scott, 1992:56)

In the context of Iran one can refer to the practice of dissimulation as an example of "public transcript" used in a power relation.² Dissimulation is a method of concealing a secret/truth from untrusted others when its disclosure would endanger the life and well-being of the truth-holder. In dissimulation, the possessor of the secret/truth presents him/herself under a false appearance in conformity with the dominant rules. By the use of words or actions he/she

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Dissimulation is part of **Taqiyeh** practice which includes three other methods of concealing secrets/truths, namely **ketman**, **modarat**, **ta'rid** (see Kohlberg, 1995)

intends to mislead the enemy. Gobineau writes that when concealment no longer suffices to save one's life then one not only must

deny one's true opinion, but one is commanded to resort to all ruses in order to deceive one's adversary. One makes all the protestations of faith that can please him, one performs all the rites one recognizes to be the most vain, one falsifies one's own books, one exhausts all possible means of deceit (in Milosz, 1981: 57-58).

Dissimulation could also be 'tactical' or defensive-offensive. That is, the mask of conformity is used in order to infiltrate the 'official world' and to destroy it from within. Keddie writes that in Iranian history it has been common for

philosophers and heterodox religious teachers to hide their true ideas in superficially orthodox writings and oral teachings. Groups like Sufis and Isma'ilis used various levels of teachings, in which the least initiated were taught something differing little from orthodoxy, while at the highest level the most unorthodox ideas might be taught... [They] would pull back from an extreme position if it shocked the listener, but would advance to more outrageous heresies with an apt pupil (1980: 26) ³

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³ Describing the itinerant preaching of Sadra, a famous Iranian philosopher and the disciple of Avicenna, Gobineau writes that being afraid of the mullahs when he arrived in a city he was careful to present himself humbly to all of them. He sat in a corner of their salons, remained "silent usually, spoke modestly, approved each word that escaped their venerable lips [Whenever] he was questioned about his knowledge, he expressed only ideas borrowed from the strictest Shiite theology and in no way indicated that he concerned himself with philosophy. After several days, seeing him so meek, the mojtaheds themselves engaged him to give public lessons. He set to work immediately, took as his text the doctrine of ablution or some similar point, and split hairs over the prescriptions and inner doubts of the subtlest theoreticians. This behavior delighted the mullahs. They lauded him to the skies, they forgot to keep an eye on him. They themselves wanted to see him lead their imagination through less placid questions. He did not refuse. From the doctrine of ablution he passed to that of prayer; from the doctrine of prayer, to that of revelation, from revelation, to divine unity and there, with marvels of ingenuity, reticence, confidences to the most advanced pupils, self-contradiction, ambiguous propositions, fallacious syllogisms out of which only the initiated could see their way. And when at last he believed he could reveal himself completely, he drew aside the veils, repudiated Islam, and showed himself the logician, the metaphysician that he really was" (in Milosz, 1981: 59-60)

Some scholars are of the opinion that following the persecution of members of the Shi'a minority by the majority Sunnis, the practice of dissimulation developed to protect the lives of persecuted Shi'a (Enayat, 1982:175). In fact, according to Shi'a, it is incumbent on believers to conceal their true faith and belief when their life or that of their relatives and acquaintances would be in danger should they disclose it (Arjumand, 1987:61-62). In times of danger, the believer is even allowed to renounce pillars of Islamic faith by pronouncing words of disbelief in God and His prophets. For instance, although a believer is not allowed to pray behind an unbeliever, one should do so when one would otherwise be in danger. In such a situation, the believer "should not consider the unbeliever as leader in the prayer and should pray as if he were alone. If possible, he should first perform his prayers at home and then pray behind the unbeliever and consider this as a supererogatory prayer"(Kohlberg, 1995: 365-366).

It is, however, important to note that since the 16th century, Shi'a has become the official religion and faith of the majority of Iranians. Therefore, the persistence of dissimulation in Iran can not be explained by the minority position of Shi'a. Actually, due to its majority position, Shi'a has persecuted Islamic and non-Islamic minorities and secular forces. Dissimulation has been part of Iranian life and ethos for centuries. It is widely used as a result of fear and distrust which does not have any class boundaries and crosses all social strata. Zonis writes that "the inability of Iranians to count on, to be assured of the meaning of the behaviour of others is taught early. So are Iranians taught early in life to mask their own thoughts"(1971:268). Around 1977, Kazemi conducting a research project in a poor neighbourhood in Tehran had a conversation with a group of high school students. Some of

them

thought that I was an agent of the Iranian government, and hence geared their responses to my questions according to what they considered to be the official and pleasing answers. One student in particular showed excessive zeal, giving the "party line" on almost every question and using long and flowery expressions in his responses (Kazemi, 1980:76).

1.4.2 Horizontal, Vertical, and Oblique Voice: Fear and distrust caused by the repressive measures of a dictatorial regime also undermine the conditions of communicative action in the public arena. Communication has an essential role in the formation of any social relationship, collective action or social movement. It is through the process of communication that individuals realize that they share common interests and grievances, reach an understanding and agreement on issues of concern, coordinate their resources, and intervene in order to modify a situation. With the suppression of democratic rights, and the restriction of the autonomy of the institutions of civil society, dictatorship undermines the conditions for communicative action identified by Habermas.

In any speech act, according to Habermas, there are four conditions which need to be fulfilled in order to achieve communicative action: comprehensibility, truth, trust, and normative background. In a process of reaching understanding, Habermas says, the speaker must

choose a comprehensive expression so that speaker and hearer can understand one another. The speaker must have the intention of communicating a true proposition... so that the hearer can share the knowledge of the speaker. The speaker must want to express his intentions trustfully so that the hearer can believe the utterance of the speaker (can trust). Finally, the speaker must choose an utterance that is right so that the hearer can accept the utterance and speaker and hearer can agree with one another in the utterance with

respect to a recognized normative background (1979:2-3)

As soon as one of these elements comes under question, the stream of communication halts and it becomes interrupted or distorted. In order to rectify the disturbed communication it is essential that no external constraints prevent participants from assessing evidence and argument. Each participant must have an equal and open chance of entering into discussion (Giddens, 1985:131). These conditions, however, are difficult to secure in a dictatorial regime when the subject of communication is politics. Consequently there likely will emerge situations which lead to the use of oblique language. This is discussed below

In his argument on the differences between democratic and non-democratic social environments, Hirschman has employed two terms, "voice" and "exit", as a means of communication between citizens and government, consumers and sellers, employers and employees. In a democratic social environment, an unsatisfied consumer or citizen can communicate his/her feelings by voice (writing, speech, marching in the street, and so on), or by exit (changing the store, voting for another political party). In a non-democratic situation, however, one or both of these mechanisms may be absent. If there exists only one store, one employer, or one political party, then exit is impossible, and voice becomes the only option. The worst scenario, however, is when a person can use neither of these mechanisms, as, for example, in "totalitarian one-party systems, terrorist groups, and criminal gangs" (Hirschman, 1970:121).

Expanding Hirschman's argument, O'Donnell introduced the distinctions between 'vertical', 'horizontal', and 'oblique' voices. The vertical voice consists of voice that is "addressed to the 'top', by customers or citizens, toward managers or governments", while

horizontal voice involves situations where "I am addressing others, or others are addressing me, claiming that we share some relevant characteristics"(O'Donnell, 1986:250) In a democratic environment we use horizontal voice to address others without fear of sanctions. Horizontal voice plays an important role in the formation of collective identity (O'Donnell 1986:250)

Under dictatorial rules 'oblique voice' or symbolic language replaces horizontal voice. It consists of certain unconventional "ways of dressing, clapping hands with excessive enthusiasm in front of the public authorities, going to the recital of singers or musicians who were known to disagree with the regime, some quick glances in the streets and other public spaces"(O'Donnell, 1986:261) For instance, Bill reporting his survey of 50 Iranian poems writes that there is

an extraordinary emphasis upon such themes as 'walls', 'loneliness,' 'darkness,' 'fatigue,' and 'nothingness' These poems deplore the situation of the Iranian intellectual and obliquely criticize and condemn the existing sociopolitical system in which the intellectual is chained (1972:76)

The person who uses oblique language acts like an interior designer who changes the order of things within the walls of a room. By pushing some furniture at an angle, hiding some furniture, and putting at centre one or two pieces in order to impress the visitors, the designer creates new spaces and meanings. It is a re-ordering of things within the boundaries of the official world. The regime, however, is not unaware of the use of oblique voice and persecutes its users. In Iran, such terms as "oppressiveness, darkness, burden, abyss, collapse, quagmire, putrefaction, cage, bars, chain, gag, truncheon, boot" were prohibited because they "could hide allusions to the Shah's regime"(Kapuscinski, 1982:44) Baraheni reports that in

prison, parts of his interrogation dealt with some of the images and symbols he used in his poetry. "My interrogator," Baraheni writes, "who could not understand a word of poetry, would dig out a line from one of my poems and write it down for me, saying, 'Give me the exact meaning of this line.' When I gave him the meaning he wasn't looking for, he would become enraged and shout, 'Don't philosophize! Give me the meaning you are hiding!'" (1977: 118).

With oblique voice one cannot be sure of understanding another's real message because of its symbolic character. Oblique voice may, for example, create the false belief of sharing the same opinion, based on the presence of some shared external symbols such as style of dress, clapping, or visiting particular places. Yet these symbols provide only a vague idea about others' political orientation.

In summary, the argument on voice suggests that dictatorship, while inhibiting the use of horizontal voice, encourages the use of vertical or patrimonial relationships, and promotes the use of oblique voice in public spaces. The oblique language and dissimulation used in public, however, are removed in back-stage in the presence of trusted acquaintants, usually small groups. It is to this form of grouping that I now turn.

1.4.3. Small Secret & Semi-Secret Groupings: The fear of using horizontal voice in public spaces due to the presence of fear and mistrust and the grip of the state over civil society could lead individuals to form small and isolated secret and semi-secret social settings with trusted friends and relatives. In these settings, the mutual trust of group members allows them to discuss issues of common interest, including politics.

The structure of social relationships within these small groups, however, is different from those in democratic societies and large groups (Simmel, 1964, Van den Hoonaard, 1991). These social settings have specific characteristics that bear upon the frame of interpretation of their members. They are mainly formed by individuals of similar background and status who usually share common opinions on political issues. Moreover, these groups are isolated from each other and lack encounters with different and opposing opinions. They are, in short, homogeneous groups that, due to the presence of political repression, are not able to interact with other groups with different and opposing opinions. It is more a reinforcement of political orientation among group members rather than a public place where people with different opinions on matters of general interests get together to discuss their ideas. These small groups produce a culture of their own which is 'corporate' and 'positivist' or 'historicist'. These two concepts are briefly discussed in the following paragraphs.

Borrowing the Gramscian distinction between the 'corporate', 'class', and 'hegemonic' or universal levels of consciousness, I suggest that in these social settings a corporate frame of interpretation could develop. A social group which is at a corporate level of consciousness is "conscious of its unity and homogeneity, and of the need to organise, but in the case of the wider social group this is not yet so" (Gramsci, 1989: 181).⁴ Trade unions, for example, at this stage of development tend to "articulate a 'corporate consciousness' which focuses on their shared interests, but this may co-exist with rivalry against some other group of

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⁴The class awareness level consists of a situation where the members of a social class become conscious of their common interests "but still in the purely economic field" (Gramsci, 1989: 181). The hegemonic or universal moment refers to a level of consciousness where a class transcends "the corporate limits of the purely economic class, and can and must become the interest of other subordinate groups too" (Gramsci, 1989: 181).

workers"(Hunt, 1990 312)

Historicism or positivism refers to a perspective that believes in the existence of laws of historical development that rule society which, once discovered, can be used to predict the course of history (Popper, 1971:13; Fay, 1986). Gramsci, in his critique of positivism, writes that its search for laws is connected to a need "to resolve in preemptory fashion the practical problem of the predictability of historical events"(1989:437). In this perspective, the role of the populace is insignificant in the development of history. The real actors are political leaders and organizations, religious leaders, and scientists who possess these laws.

With these conceptual and theoretical considerations in mind, I turn to an elaboration of my thesis and undertake a comparative study of the Iranian Revolutions of 1906 and 1979. These two revolutions took place in societies where, as a result of repressive measures, civil society remained primordial and gelatinous; horizontal communication between members of society was restrained while vertical communication was encouraged. The fear of persecution and suspicion led the population to use oblique language to express their political opinions in public, to hide their opinions behind the mask of dissimulation, and to form secret and semi-secret groupings.

I will argue that the frame of interpretation of the constitutionalists in 1906 was radically different from the society's political culture. Consequently, in the 1906 Revolution a process of frame transformation was involved in linking the ordinary Iranians with the new interpretive frame of constitutionalist movement. In contrast, in 1979, the frame of interpretation of the forces opposing the Shah was congruent with the prevalent authoritarian

political culture of society. The opposition not only did not introduce a radically new frame of interpretation but reinstated anti-democratic attitudes and values in a revolutionary guise. The strategy of alignment of the opposition in 1979 was that of frame amplification.

Methodologically this study aims to take issue with the deterministic view of culture and to emphasize human agency. It rejects the perception of culture as powerful, internalized beliefs and values held by members of a society that have an independent influence on their social action (Swidler, 1995:25). This deterministic perception of culture indeed reduces human agency to the internalization of values (Giddens, 1976:21). Human beings are prisoners of culture, ideology, or social structure. Social roles, values, norms, and beliefs do not by themselves determine how members of a society will act. What members of a society say and do are the results of how they interpret and define their situation.⁵

In this thesis, with the use of a socialization approach to the study of political repression and the concept of frame of interpretation I stress the reflexive character of human beings. The actors are reflexive human beings who are in interaction with themselves (self-interaction) and their surrounding social environment (social-interaction). Treating themselves as objects of their own action they may feel guilty, ashamed, or proud as a result of reflection on their own actions. As reflexive human beings who interpret situations, they may use symbolic language and resort to dissimulation in certain zones of social life depending on their

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⁵After the establishment of the Islamic regime in Iran, Shi'a Islam has acquired an extraordinary explanatory power. Shi'ism has been presented by many scholars as a revolutionary ideology making its followers an anti-establishment force. This thesis as well as the works of several scholars (Abrahamian, 1992, Bayat, 1991, and Momen, 1989) show that this is a distorted vision of Shi'a. Quietism rather than rebellion has been the dominant characteristic of Shi'a Islam.

assessment of the situation. In other words, human beings are in a "never-to-be-relaxed monitoring of behavior and its contexts" and constantly examining and reforming their social practices in the light of incoming information about those very practices (Giddens, 1990 36-38).

As a result of these interpretative processes, the frames of interpretation of members of a society transform or amplify. In the 1906 revolution, for instance, radically new ideas of popular sovereignty and democratic rights succeeded in a society where the people were considered subjects of the king and emulators of the religious leaders. It involved a transformation of the perception of authority. In 1979, instead, the issue of ruler-ruled relationships remained intact and dictatorial relationships were reproduced. Moreover, the unravelling of both the 1906 and 1979 revolutions illustrates that the support of the population for the establishment of constitutional and Islamic regimes was not inevitable. There were other alternatives.

In writing this thesis I have relied as much as possible on primary sources such as memoirs and accounts of eye-witnesses and activists, sermons, leaflets, excerpts from meetings of secret societies and parliamentary debates, and organizations' publications. In reading these texts, I sought to grasp the interplay between political repression and human agency, between restriction and reflexivity by asking questions like: How did fear and mistrust arising from repressive measures and persecution affect the social interactions and social settings of members of Iranian society? How did the opposition forces make sense of themselves and their surrounding world? How did that affect their frame of interpretation as well as their social actions? How did they, as creative and knowledgeable members of society,

create new meanings and spaces by manipulating, negotiating, and challenging the norms and values of the official world? This method discourages a deterministic view of culture and stresses the interpretative process used by actors in dealing with situations they encounter

1.5. Outline of the Thesis

In order to provide the context in which the Constitutional Revolution occurred, different aspects of 19th century Iran, such as the court, the bureaucracy, the army, the Shi'a establishment, and the society are studied in Chapter Two. That chapter will show how nineteenth century Iran was fragmented by communalism, ruled by patrimonial monarchs and powerful ulama, and suffered from interference by foreign powers, particularly Britain and Russia.

Chapter Three examines the failed attempts of Iranian reformists to introduce and implement modernization from above, through influencing the court and religious leaders. The nationwide tobacco protest (1891) against the court's concession of a tobacco monopoly to a British company opened a new era in Iranian history. It was the first attempt by reformists to form an alliance with the ulama. Although the reformers' plan for modernization failed and they were marginalized by the ulama, the tobacco uprising became a dress rehearsal for the 1906 Constitutional Revolution.

In Chapter Four, I will examine the frame of interpretation of the constitutionalists and its resonance among the general population during the 1906 Constitutional Revolution. I will argue that Iranians' positive perception of Western civilization in general, and its political system in particular, played an important role in the success of the revolution. The victory of

the constitutionalists will also be discussed in relation to the important role of dissident clerics and the flourishing of civil society that emerged as a result of a period of relatively free political climate at the turn of the century. Chapter Five focuses on the secularization process in Iranian society.

Through Chapters Six and Seven, the rise and fall of the Pahlavi dynasty (1925-1979) is examined. The emphasis will be on the establishment and consolidation of a modern state, the repressive policies of the Pahlavi monarchs, the passive revolutions which occurred during their rule, and the relationships between the state, civil society, and the ulama.

Chapter Eight discusses the impact of dictatorship on the process of socialization. This chapter will show how the repressive measures of the Shah's regime shaped frames of interpretation by affecting the institutional configuration of society as well as face to face relationships. In Chapter Nine, I will show how the opposition's interpretative frame, developed during the Shah's regime, paved the way for the success of the fundamentalists in suppressing democratic rights and in the establishment of a new dictatorship, the Islamic Republic. Finally, Chapter Ten discusses the main arguments of the thesis.

A note on transliteration and translation. Due to the lack of a standardized system of translation, the transliteration from Persian into Latin character is mainly done in agreement with Persian pronunciation. However, words well-known in the English-speaking world such as 'ulama', 'Islam', and 'Isfahan' have been kept in their familiar form. In Persian they are pronounced as 'olama', 'Eslam', and 'Esfahan'. Unless otherwise stated, translations from the Persian and Italian sources are by the author.

SECTION ONE

THE IRANIAN 1906 CONSTITUTIONAL REVOLUTION

The establishment of a constitutional government in Iran required a radical change in the outlook of its inhabitants. At the turn of the century, the ideas of popular sovereignty and constitutional government succeeded in a society where its members were considered *ra'aya* (subjects) of the king and *moqalledin* (emulators) of the Islamic leaders. According to the Iranian traditional concept of kingship (*saltanat*), the Shah was the shadow of God on earth. And in accordance with Shi'a Islam, the *ulama* (religious leaders) were the representatives of the Hidden Imam, who according to Shi'a doctrine is himself God's representative on earth. Since the authority of both the king and religious leaders was bestowed on them by God, they were responsible only to God and not to the people. This section of the thesis will examine the success of constitutionalists in creating support for ideas such as popular sovereignty and secularization among the ordinary Iranians.

CHAPTER TWO

THE QAJAR IRAN (1796-1925)

Founded in 1796, the Qajar dynasty ruled Iran for some thirteen decades. The Qajar monarchs failed to establish a modern state. They did not have a centralized administration, a unified standing military force necessary for exercising the authority of the central government over the provinces. Qajar Iran was also characterized by the existence of a strong Shi'a establishment. Despite its relative financial independence from the court and its strong influence among the population, the Shi'a establishment suffered from internal division and lack of a formal and centralized structure. It was fragmented as a result of competition between the high-ranking religious leaders. Like the temporal and spiritual authorities, Iranian society was also fragmented. It was divided by local, linguistic, ethnic, and religious factionalism. The society's fragmentation was further compounded by the repressive mode of ruling by the government and the Shi'a establishment. Another salient feature of Iran in the period under investigation was the strong influence of Western powers. To better understand the Constitutional Revolution, these issues are studied in this chapter.

2.1. Patrimonial Authority of Qajars

The structure of authority of the Qajar Shahs was patrimonial. Bendix defines patrimonial authority as "an extension of the ruler's household in which the relation between the ruler and his officials remains on the basis of paternal authority and filial dependence"(1962: 360). Judicial, executive and legislative powers were fused in the person

of the Qajar monarchs, who were titled the *Shah-an-Shah* (the King of Kings) and *Zil al-allah* (the Shadow of God on the Earth). Iranian territory and the lives and properties of its inhabitants were considered the personal patrimony of the Qajar monarchs. The Shah could confiscate the property of his subjects⁶ and put them to death, decree laws, appoint and dismiss government officials, and proclaim war or peace. Not even members of the royal family were immune from the Shah's capricious will. The Qajar rulers bestowed and withdrew privileges and government positions at will. Government officials were appointed and dismissed at the Shah's pleasure and were under his direct control. They were treated by the Shah as his retinue and usually taken along during his travels, hunting, expeditions and battles.

Since access to the Shah was the key to power and wealth, women and eunuchs of the Shah's harem, members of the court and royal family, and even members of his kitchen and stables could take advantage of opportunities to gain influence. Thus, the court was a place of intrigue among competing rivals. For example, *Sadr-e A'zam* (grand vizir), who was the closest person to the Shah and enjoyed his trust, was very powerful and exploited his position

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Lack of security regarding property was felt by merchants and wealthy families as well as court and government functionaries. In 1808, Gardane, a French army officer, reported that "all these merchants hide their goods and feign poverty, because of the court. They are very much afraid of being called to Tehran, where they would surely be made to pay" (in Issawi, 1971:26). The absence of security discouraged the British investors and merchants from risking their lives and capital in Iran. Under pressure from the British government Naser al-Din Shah finally issued a life and property decree in 1888. However, it was the British and not the Iranian bourgeoisie who benefited from this proclamation (Ashraf, 1970:323). Naser al-Din Shah continued to confiscate the estates of affluent deceased people and to force family members to submit part of their inheritance to him (E'timad al-Saltaneh, 1966:540-542). In 1905, the sons of Moshir al-Dawla, the Iranian foreign minister, became concerned when they realized that their father had paid a large amount of money as a bribe to the prime minister, because that could reveal the wealth of the family.

to amass wealth and power. Naturally he was envied by other courtiers and was at the centre of their intrigues. Intense rivalry meant that the length of premiership was often short. After few years the grand vizir would be accused of treason and deposed, killed, and his wealth confiscated by the order of the Shah. No wonder that grand vizirs tended to restrict the access of others to the Shah in order to maintain their positions and save their lives.

The historical accounts of the Qajar Shahs, however, illustrate that although they were considered the holders of absolute power, in practice they often did not have the necessary instruments to exercise their absolute authority. The Qajars failed to create a strong central government with a standing army to carry out the Shah's orders, a functioning bureaucracy that could control provinces, and an efficient system of tax collection that could support the state's expenses. As a result, the government tended to devolve some of its functions such as tax collection and conscription to provincial governors (Lambton, 1987: 73). The provincial governors, who each had their own court and army, had a free hand in exploiting the population and the resources of the area under their control as long as they honoured their obligations towards the central government and the Shah. Provincial governors could, therefore, exercise a great deal of power over the central government which depended on their contributions of taxes and the provision of military contingents.

Another factor debilitating the Qajars' power was the presence of numerous princes. Since members of the royal family were customarily appointed governors of some parts of Iran and the Qajar Shahs had many children from their numerous wives,⁷ competition for the

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⁷ For example, at the time of his death, Fath- Ali Shah officially had 158 wives (Parizi, 1988: 28) and 53 sons and 46 daughters (Fasa'i, 1972: 230).

limited number of offices created clashes between royal family members. Furthermore, it was not uncommon for top government positions to fall into the hands of very young members of the royal family. Naser al-Din Shah, for instance, appointed one of his sons "the governor of Tehran at the age of six, and made him viceroy at the age of eleven, commander-in-chief of the army at thirteen" (Yarshater, 1983:9). In 1890, E'timad ol-Saltaneh observing the rows of ministers, officers and officials at the new year official audience, wrote in his diary

our government has not only grown young; it has become a child and mere infant. Because...the minister of court and treasury is 27 years old, the minister of treasury is twelve, and the colonels and generals are seven and eight years old (in Bakhash, 1978:262).

The situation became worse in the second half of the 19th century, when financial difficulties forced the Qajar Shahs to sell government offices. Governorships and other important offices were sold to those who offered the best *pishkesh* (presents) to the Shah, his Grand Vizir and court members. The tenure of offices became very short as a result of the financial breakdown of the treasury. Offices usually lasted not more than three years. Sometimes positions which had already been sold to one person were given to another who forwarded a better offer (Ehtsham al-Saltaneh, 1988). Since the Shah could deprive a governor of his office and sell it to another candidate, fierce competition reigned among the numerous contenders for the Shah's and Grand Vizir's favour.

The failure of central government to establish its own strong standing army was a key factor in its vulnerability. During the Qajar dynasty, several attempts to create a modern centralized army were made but met with no success. In the early 19th century, Crown Prince, Abbas Mirza, aware of the need for the modernization of the Iranian army, strove to reform

military forces. However, he failed as a result of financial and administrative difficulties, and the resistance of religious leaders and other Qajar princes who sought to protect their own power. During their premiership in the second half of the 19th century, Amir Kabir and Sepah Salar tried to reform and reorganize the army, by then in a state of disarray, but they too did not succeed. The army was not paid regularly and soldiers had to seek other forms of income in order to survive. They were not trained and equipped with modern weapons.

During the Qajars period, the Iranian military forces consisted of a royal body-guard, Cossack Brigade, and tribal and provincial armies. The royal body-guard, which constituted a small portion of the army, was formed of Georgian slaves and the sons of Iranian nobles. Their number decreased from 3,000-4,000 at the beginning of the 19th century to 1,600-2,000 by mid-19th century (Lambton, 1987: 97). By 1906, the only disciplined military body under the control of the central government was the Russian-officered Cossack Brigade that numbered fewer than two thousand men. It was suitable only for guarding and policing the capital (Abrahamian, 1982: 40; Sohrabi, 1995: 1393).

The presence of ethnic and tribal animosities was another factor which debilitated the Iranian army. Tribal and provincial armies, which comprised the main part of the Iranian military forces, were under the command of local chiefs and provincial governors. Their support for the central government was therefore contingent upon the local leaders' decisions and interests. In 1872, for instance, it took the central government several months to gather sufficient forces to suppress a tribal uprising (Ghods, 1989: 14). Moreover, ethnic groups were reluctant to cooperate with each other in military campaigns and were hostile to other ethnic groups garrisoned in their provinces (Ghods, 1989: 14-15).

The failure of Qajars in creating a unified standing army and a centralized administration made it vulnerable to challenges of powerful Shi'a religious leaders. By the 19th century, the Shi'a establishment was fairly independent of the court and had strong influence among the general population. It is to the development of the Shi'a establishment now I turn.

2.2. Shi'a in Qajar Iran

In 1501, Twelver Shi'a was proclaimed the official religion of Iran by the Safavids.⁸ At that time the majority of Iranians were Sunni, although Shi'a was not unknown in Iran and there existed pockets of Shi'ites.⁹ To propagate the Twelver Shi'ite in Iran the Safavids had to import theologians and jurists from the Arabic-speaking countries such as Lebanon and Syria throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries (Arjumand, 1987: 107).

The Shi'a ulama supported the Safavid monarchs and many of the most prominent ulama were functionaries of the Safavids (Momen, 1989: 52). Since most of them were imported from Arabic countries they had to rely on the support of the Shahs in order to

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⁸ *Ithna Ashari* or Twelver Shi'a is one of several Shi'a sects. After the death of the prophet Muhammad, the Muslim community was divided between the majority Sunni and minority Shi'a on the issue of succession. The Shi'a group was for the principle of kinship. They claimed that Prophet Muhammad had appointed his cousin and son-in-law, Ali ibn Abi Talib, as his successor. Shi'a upholds the right of the family of the prophet to the leadership and sees the descendants of Ali as the viceregents of God. The Twelver Shi'a, a subset of the Shi'a branch of Islam, recognizes twelve Imams, the twelfth one being hidden. The Shi'a Imams are considered "infallible, impeccable, and immaculate and are believed to have ruled in the name of God Himself" (Bill, 1982: 22-23).

⁹ When Shi'a was proclaimed the official religion of Iran, after many searches, only one book on the Shi'a doctrine was found in the capital city, Tabriz (Keddie, 1972b: 219).

propagate Shi'a in a country that was Sunni and had a different language and culture. Moreover, the Safavids were too strong and too in control of religious affairs to be challenged. The Safavids, in fact, appointed the *sadr* (the official who supervised religious affairs and institutions on behalf of the state), as well as the *shaykh ul-Islam* (the chief dignitary of the religious classes). Islamic courts (*Shar'*) and their judges were subordinate to secular courts and jurisdiction (*urf*) (Algar, 1980:27)

The process of independence of Shi'a establishment from the court began with the weakening of the Safavids in the early 18th century and the following years of political turmoil. Under the Qajars, the Shi'a establishment was less controlled by the court. Comparing the power of the ulama in the 19th century Iran with other Muslim countries, Keddie notes "the growth in the independent power of the Shi'i ulama as contrasted with the nineteenth-century decline of independent ulama power in the Ottoman Empire, Egypt, and elsewhere"(1972b:212-213)

During the reign of Fath-Ali Shah (1797-1834), the intervention of religious leaders in public affairs increased and was encouraged by the Shah. The intercessions of the ulama were generally accepted and the most prestigious ulama were invited to settle in the capital and were frequently visited by the Shah. Their residence in the capital was considered a mark of their favour with the Shah. In fact, they left the capital every time they wanted to display their disagreement or disapproval with the policies of the Shah or government. Sometimes the dislike of the ulama could end the career of a governor (Algar, 1980: 59). Fath-Ali Shah built several mosques and repaired and embellished Shi'a shrines in both Iran and Iraq. Following the example of the Shah, the princes and government officials sought the favour

of the ulama, trying to attract them to their seats of government, or ensuring that the ulama knew of their piety (Algar, 1980 45)

In the 19th century the financial position of the Shi'a ulama was strong and more autonomous compared to previous periods. Since the reign of Fath-Ali Shah, the ulama not only had the right to collect religious tax¹⁰, but also money was allotted to be distributed among the ulama and many of them received allowances and pensions from the government. The endowment of lands and properties and fees charged for the fulfilment of certain functions such as marriage and property certification were other sources of income of the ulama. The ulama were also engaged in trade, moneylending, land speculation, and even the hoarding of grain and other essential staples¹¹

Each prominent religious leader had his own private group which usually consisted of his sons and close relatives, trusted aids, religious students (*tollabs*), *Sayyids* (the

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¹⁰ During the first Russo-Iranian War (1804-13), Fath Ali Shah asked the ulama to support him by issuing **fatva** or religious ordinance designating the war a *jihad* or holy war. In exchange for their support, the ulama obtained the state's acknowledgement of their right to collect the religious tax (Momen, 1985 191). The religious taxes include *zakat* and *Khums* which are paid by the believers to prominent ulama. *Zakat* consists of alms intended to assist the poor and people in debt and is "levied on crops, livestock, gold silver and cash". *Khums* is "the one-fifth Tax levied on net income after paying all expenses, net increase on land holdings, stored gold, silver and jewellery, mined products, items taken from the sea and war booty" (Momen, 1985 179-180).

The wealth and influence of Sayyid Muhammad Baqir Shaf'i Hujjat ul-Islam, the mojtahed of Isfahan, would be a case in point. His religious and economic power made him the real ruler of Isfahan and the governors of the Isfahan were obliged to treat him with respect and submissiveness. He was so wealthy that some thought that he had mastered the art of alchemy and often the governors of Isfahan were in debt to him. Part of his property consisted of "four hundred caravanserais, two thousand shops in Isfahan alone, and many villages, not only near Isfahan, but also in the regions of Burujird, Yazd, and Shiraz" (Algar, 1980 60-61).

descendants of the Prophet's family), and in some cases a private army consisting of local thugs. Seminary students benefited not only from the prominent ulama's knowledge but also from his financial support

It is important to note that during the Qajars the most prominent among the prominent ulama resided outside the borders of Iran, in the shrine cities of Iraq, whereas, during the Safavids, the most important Shi'a leaders were living in Isfahan, the capital city. Therefore, during the Qajars, they were immune from government harassment and pressure. The development of the means of communication, in particular the introduction of the telegraph, made communication easier between the followers and their religious leaders residing abroad (Keddie, 1972b: 226).

The Shi'a establishment, however, has never developed a formal and centralized organization and hierarchy. There was a plurality of mojtaheds¹² who were obeyed by their own followers but not the whole community of believers. This was a result of the doctrine of Imamatus. According to the doctrine of the Imamatus, the Hidden Imam is the only one in possession of divine knowledge and laws. In the absence of the Hidden Imam, every mojtahed has the right and duty to exercise independent judgement, but no mojtahed could claim to be the supreme authority and expect other mojtaheds to follow him. Consequently, a plurality of distinct powerful mojtaheds developed. Each was obeyed by their own followers but not the whole community of believers.

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¹² In the end of the 18th century, mojtaheds as a distinguished religious category formed among the ulama and their power to *ijtihad* were recognized by the Shi'a community. A mojtahed is a Shi'a jurist who issues *ijtihad* (legal pronouncements on religious and social matters) based on Islamic principles.

Another factor preventing the building up of organization in Shi'a was the subjective character of the principles upon which a mojtahed made his judgement. In order to arrive at a legal decision, a mojtahed used reasoning (*uql*) supported by the Qur'an, *sunna or hadith* (reported sayings and doings of the Prophet and the Shi'a Imams) and consensus (*ijma*) (Momen, 1985:185-186, Algar, 1980:6-7). However, since an *ijtihad* is issued not by an imam, who is infallible, but by a mojtahed, it is no more than a *zann* (an opinion) and therefore contestable by other religious scholars. Another mojtahed, using different reasoning and *hadith* could come to a different conclusion on the same issue. In effect, in Twelver Shi'a the presence of *ikhtilaf* (differences of opinion) among the prominent jurists was accepted (Arjumand, 1987:52).

Finally, in Shi'a the believer was free to choose between different mojtaheds as his/her guide. The increase in the number of mojtaheds during the 19th century provided Shi'a believers with more options. While at the beginning of the 19th century there were only five mojtaheds in Iran, towards the end of the Qajar period there were about 100 of them (Floor, 1983:113).

During the Qajar dynasty religious leaders became so powerful as to emerge as a new distinct centre of power. Compared to other social groups, the ulama were relatively independent of government control and pressure and therefore could voice their concerns, express the dissatisfaction of the population, and even interfere in the government's affairs without fear of persecution. It is, however, important to stress that despite their competition, the Shi'a establishment and court were mutually dependent and supported each other against any forces threatening the status quo. The Shah and the ulama viewed each other as two

separate yet mutually dependent centers of authority. The ulama repeatedly stated the necessity for the presence of a temporal government to protect the Shari'at and the Moslems (Bayat, 1991: 21).

2.3. Fragmented Society

Despite the lack of a standing army and an extended bureaucracy, the Qajars ruled Iran for almost 130 years and some of them were even able to leave the country without fear of being overthrown. Some scholars are of the opinion that the secret of the survival of the Qajars has to do with the weakness of Iranian society. These scholars argue that the Qajars survived through manipulating the existing communal antagonisms of Iranian society.

Abrahamian asserts that the secret of the survival of the Qajars' despotism must be explained in relation to the fragmentation of Iranian society. The Qajar Iran was fragmented into small and isolated communities and villages that were in antagonistic relationships with each other. Consequently, they were incapable of challenging the power of the central government (Abrahamian, 1974: 6). In support of his thesis, Abrahamian provides several examples of the fragmented character of Iranian society. For instance, he shows how the city of Isfahan was divided along religious and ethnic lines. Or that the bazaar merchants and manufacturers were divided into small locally bound communities. Within each city, sectarian, organizational, and linguistic rivalries separated one sector of the bazaar from another (Abrahamian, 1982: 23-24, 58). The Qajars resorted to retreating from or manipulating the communal conflicts every time they were challenged by a serious threat. In the 19th century, "politics became the art of manipulating all the possible variations in the complex network of

communal rivalries"(Abrahamian, 1974 27)

This argument on communalism and fragmentation sheds light on a very important characteristic of Iranian society. Nevertheless, I suggest that the secret to the survival of the Qajars must also be explained by the absence of civil and political rights, a factor that undermined the autonomy of civil society as well as the horizontal communication between small communities. The historical account of Qajar Iran illustrates the opposition of the court and Shi'a establishment to the emergence of autonomous institutions of civil society.

The Qajars did not tolerate the existence of independent institutions. When Naser al-Din Shah was informed of the establishment of a French language school in Tehran, he became concerned and ordered its closure. He was not afraid of western language and education; in fact, he was the first Iranian king to establish a western style school where western sciences and languages were taught by European teachers. What concerned him was not the French language, but the formation of an autonomous social setting. He was afraid that instead of teaching grammar, the French teacher would talk about the French Revolution and political system (Dawlat Abadi, 1992 48). In other words, what concerned him was his lack of control over a social setting that was forming outside the government control. Public places like *qahveh khaneh* (teahouses) also made him nervous. Fearing anti-government activities, and being suspicious that they might become points for the opposition to gather, Naser al-Din Shah tried to shut down the teahouses of Tehran after 1892 (Abrahamian, 1982 74).

Insecurity of life and property had important consequences on social relationships. Intrigue and corruption was rife and Iranians were deterred from collaboration and

cooperation. Iranian society was organized around the principle of force. Only force could protect individuals from the arbitrary whims of the power holders. Accordingly members of subordinate groups either submitted themselves to influential individuals or took refuge in symbols of power. These two solutions to arbitrariness, however, were detrimental to horizontal communication and relationships and favoured vertical, patrimonial relationships.

With respect to the first solution, attachment to a patron, one can refer to following example. Lambton reports that small landowners "would sometimes request a neighbouring landowner or powerful individual to ask for their land as a *tuyul* so that they might obtain his protection against the government"(1987:70).

The second solution, taking *bast* (sanctuary) in symbols of power, refers to religious and secular spaces which provided safe refuge from punishment and persecution. Religious *bast* included places such as the houses of religious leaders, shrines and mosques. Secular *bast* consisted of anything that belonged to the Shah, such as royal palaces, stables and even the tails of the Shah's horses. In addition, the house and property of members of the Shah's harem, royal family and government staff as well as government institutions such as telegraph stations were considered *basts*. In the last decade of the 19th century, foreign embassies became *bast* as well (E'timad al-Saltaneh, 1966:951, Dawlat Abadi, 1992, Khales, 1987:32). *Bast*, however, was not always respected, although it was formally recognized by the government. There were several cases where upon the order of the Shah or governor the *bast-i* (those taken refuge) were forcefully removed from sanctuary. It should also be stressed that cases where people sought *bast* from the abuse of power of religious leaders also were common (Adamiyat & Nateq, 1989).

Repressive measures, therefore, undermined the horizontal social relationships necessary for collective identity formation of social groups and, instead, encouraged vertical ones between the dominated and dominant groups. The practices of attachment to a patron and seeking sanctuary encouraged individuals to seek the protection of powerful persons or places rather than joining together with their peers in common complaint. This in turn fragmented society.

2.4. Impact of the Western Influence

Although Iran had had contact with European countries since the 16th century, it was not until the 19th century that it confronted the West as a threatening power. In the 19th century, Iran experienced humiliating military defeats at Russian hands (in 1813 and 1828) and at British hands (in 1857). In addition to the loss of control over vast territories, Iran was forced to grant immunity to the British and Russian citizens from the jurisdiction of local courts and laws and to grant them commercial privileges. These treaties enabled Russians and British to open consular and commercial offices anywhere they wished, and exempted them not only from the high import duties but also from the road tolls, internal tariffs, and local travel restrictions (Abrahamian, 1982: 51). A European merchant, for example, who imported goods had to deposit "at the border 5 percent duty, but an Iranian importer of the same goods lost another 7-8 percent in additional duties, bazaar taxes, local levies, and road tolls" (Abrahamian, 1982: 59).

These treaties opened the Iranian market to European capital and trade and gradually integrated it into the world market. For example, during the second half of the 19th century,

foreign investments increased from almost nothing to over £12,000,000 (Abrahamian, 1982:56). In the last three decades of the 19th century, the economic and political impact of Western imperial power weakened the Iranian domestic economy. Privileges granted to foreign merchants undermined local manufacturers and merchants. An economically weak and technologically backward local industry was unable to compete with cheap machine-made European goods. This led to an increase in the volume of foreign imports, a decline in manufactured exports, and a shift to primary cash-crop production (Katouzian, 1981:46). The influx of Western produced goods damaged and ruined local crafts and industries, in particular the textile industry. This created unemployment and bankruptcy among many merchants and guilds (Milani, 1988:45). In Shiraz, for example, the number of weavers' factories dropped from five hundred to about ten (Nashat, 1982:6). Not only the native industries and producers but also the towns that relied on those crafts suffered. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, Isfahan was the greatest city in Iran, with a population of approximately 200,000, by 1870 travellers were reporting empty bazaars and a population of 70,000 (Nashat, 1982:6).

Further, the geopolitical position of Iran put it at the centre of conflicts between the European powers, in particular Britain and Russia. England, which was concerned with the protection of its colonial interests in India, considered Iran as a buffer zone between India and Russia. Consequently, in the 19th century, Iran was practically divided into two zones of influence, the north was considered the domain of the Russians and the south was the British zone. Their control was such that Naser al-Din Shah once complained that "whenever I want to travel to the South, the Tsar's ambassador objects. Whenever I want to go to the North,

the English ambassador objects To perdition with a kingdom where a king cannot traverse his own country'"(in Ghods, 1989: 13) ¹³

In the second half of the nineteenth century, the population, especially in the cities, began to show hostility toward the West. In the first half of the century, European citizens had freely attended Muslim ceremonies and settings such as mosques and shrines. Christian missionaries had opened schools, printing houses, and churches without encountering major hostility from either the government or the Muslim population. The mood, however, changed gradually in the second half of the nineteenth century. Travelling in the 1890s, a Western traveller reported that he had to wear disguise to enter a mosque in Iran. Western missionaries lost their earlier freedom and were forbidden to proselytize among Muslims, their schools, churches, and printing presses were tightly restricted. In 1885, in Tabriz, missionaries had to close down temporarily because of the fear of massacres (Abrahamian, 1982: 71-72)

The economic and political encroachment by foreign powers in Iran and the fear of becoming a colony shook the social fabric of Iranian society. The imposition of commercial treaties diminished the authority of the Shah and his government by exposing their weakness in relation to the Western powers. Qajar's failure to protect Iranian merchants and manufacturers from foreigners antagonized the local population. Furthermore, the introduction of telegraph lines connecting most of the major cities and the inauguration of a

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The history of the construction of railroads in Iran, in this period, illustrates the negative role of the Anglo-Russian rivalry in the economic and political development of Iran. Both Britain and Russia opposed railway construction on the grounds that it might promote the political and trade interests of the other (Nashat, 1982: 133, Issawi, 1971: 16). Consequently, in the early 20th century, Iran was among the last major countries of the Middle East to have a railway and there were still only a few miles of track (Lambton, 1987: 27)

postal system in the 1870s, the publication of official gazettes and newspapers, and the construction of new roads all facilitated communication and dissemination of information within the country. As a result of these transformations, socio-economic and political issues became national in scope rather than communal. The presence of a common enemy and grievances brought together concerned groups, in particular merchants, the ulama, and intelligentsia.

CHAPTER THREE

REFORM MOVEMENT IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

3.1. Reforms From Above (1848-1890)

In the study of the reform movement in 19th century Iran, one must take into consideration a number of factors: the existence of two competing centers of power, the court and religion; the absence of autonomous institutions of civil society; the acquaintance of Iranian intellectuals with European civilization, and the fear that Iran would become a colony of Russia and/or Britain.

The advocates of reform were mainly members of government officials, diplomats stationed abroad, modern-educated graduates, and members of royal family. They were among the first Iranians to become acquainted with modern Western ideas and practices. Reformers attempted to introduce reforms from above by influencing the court. They looked to the Shah for support and to the government as the agency through which reforms could be carried out. For instance, they tried to influence Naser al-Din Shah by taking him to Europe and showing him its development and progress. They believed that seeing for himself the achievement of European countries, the Shah would be moved to undertake a programme of reform in Iran (Bakhash, 1978: 48).

The establishment of a modern state made the main objective of reformers. They tried to establish a strong central government by introducing administrative, military, and judicial reforms, to control the power of religious leaders and provincial governors, to limit the interference of the British and Russian governments, and to develop modern education.

technology, and factories in Iran. They tried to convince the Shah to support the laws which secured the life and property of the population, and provided equality in treatment and opportunity for all Iranians by reforming the judicial system and prohibiting bribery and office-selling. It is important to note that, at this stage, the establishment of the rule of law aimed to address some of the issues of civil rights but avoided political rights.

In the second half of the 19th century, two vizirs of Naser al-Din Shah tried to introduce and implement these reforms. Mirza Muhammad Taqi Khan Farahani, better known as the Amir Kabir, the first grand vizir of Naser al-Din Shah, impressed with Russian and Ottoman progress, sought to modernize Iran. In office between 1848 and 1851, he tried to build a strong central government by enforcing laws, strengthening the central government's control over provincial governors, curtailing the power of the religious leaders and foreign powers, reforming the army and the tax system. Amir Kabir guaranteed the security of life and property and prohibited the governors and military from extortion, punishing them severely for disobedience (Adamiyat, 1961: 51). He supported Iranian merchants and producers against foreign competitors, founded new factories, and established the country's first official newspaper.

Amir Kabir was of the opinion that without reducing the interference of the religious leaders in state affairs reforms could not take place. Accordingly, one of the aims of his judicial reforms was to limit the power of religious leaders. In this regard, he tried to extend the jurisdiction of the secular court by establishing government clearing committees, assigning cases involving religious minorities to the state court rather than to Islamic one, asking religious and non-religious courts to register cases referred to them, and assuring people of

the right to appeal to the King as the highest court. In 1850, Amir Kabir eliminated the *hust* (sanctuary) tradition, which delivered another blow to the power of religious leaders. Amir Kabir introduced modern education in 1851 by founding the Dar al-Fonun, Iran's first modern school. This was another important attack on the power of the religious leaders, who had under their control education. At Dar al-Fonun, European instructors were hired to teach military science, engineering, mathematics, physics, pharmacology, and medicine. A curriculum that was completely outside the control of the ulama (Nashat, 1982:19). The school's students were mostly sons of the royal family and government officials.

In order to support his reforms, Amir Kabir reduced the budget of the court, the royal family's and religious leaders' pensions, and reduced the interference of religious leaders and foreign powers in political affairs. Consequently, members of royal family, provincial governors, religious leaders, and Russian and British representatives formed a front against Amir Kabir. In 1851, they finally convinced Naser al-Din Shah of Amir Kabir's "conspiratorial" intentions and he was killed on the Shah's order.

The second attempt at modernizing Iran was pursued by Mirza Huseyn Khan Sepahsalar, Iran's ambassador to the Ottoman Empire (1858-1871). Sepahsalar, who admired Europe's economic and socio-political system and followed closely the process of modernization in the Ottoman Empire, started a new round of reforms from above during his three years' premiership. He, like Amir Kabir, aimed to strengthen the power of the central government by reforming the army, controlling tax collection and the provincial governors, enforcing the law, limiting the power of the religious leaders, and supporting modern schools and knowledge.

In order to control the provinces, Sepahsalar established *tanzimat* councils (councils of order) whose members were all to be appointed from the central government and transferred control over the judicial administration from the provincial governors to these councils. The councils were, in effect, to act as the central government's watchdog over the activities of provincial officials (Bakhash, 1978:168). Following his suggestion, the Shah agreed to appoint military officers not on the basis of their royal kinship but on the basis of merits (Adamiyat, 1961:84). In the government newspaper, Sepahsalar published numerous articles discussing issues such as equality, justice, compulsory education in European countries and Japan, the education of women in Egypt, and a variety of reforms of the Ottoman Empire. He made subscriptions to newspaper mandatory for all high-ranking officials and there are indications that it was sold in the Tehran bazaar (Nashat, 1982:142, Adamiyat, 1961:89).

In 1872, dissatisfied with Sepahsalar's reforms, a front against him was formed between religious leaders, the Shah's harem, court members and governors, and the Russian representative. In 1872, the Shah had to yield to the demand of the front and dismissed Sepahsalar. Although Sepahsalar was called back in the office by the Shah after a few months, he did not stay long in office. Sepahsalar was stripped of his power, marginalized from the political arena and died under mysterious circumstances (Adamiyat, 1961:93).

After the definitive exclusion of Sepahsalar from government, Naser al-Din Shah became indifferent towards the country's affairs and hostile towards Western political system. His negative attitude was further strengthened after an attempt at establishing a constitutional regime in Turkey in 1876. From that date till his death, Naser al-Din Shah did his best to

prevent Iranians from coming in contact with European culture. Indeed, he was quite frank on the subject and is reported as saying that he liked to be surrounded by courtiers who did not know whether 'Brussels' was the name of a city or a plant (Sykes, 1951: 395). The Shah's fear of the modern Western political system was such that travel to, and education in Europe were discouraged. Parents who sent their children to study in Europe without his permission were punished and the return of their children demanded (Parizi, 1976: 29; Taymuri, 1953: 6). Mokhber al-Saltaneh reports that the Shah upon appointing his father as the minister of education recommended that he prevent students from reading books about western politics (1984: 122).

The Shah increasingly took refuge in leisure and expanding number of his wives. His secretary reports that one day the Shah asked his servant to provide him with a weekly report on the country's affairs. The servant prepared an account

of the state of the people in Tehran, the behavior of some of the governors in the provinces, and the dealing of some government officials, and whatever seemed of significance. The shah took the report. After two days he saw the man, had him to come forth, and said to him, 'What was this nonsensical report you prepared?' 'What I meant by various news was not what would disturb my peace of mind, but what would make me happy. Like which woman they took to such as such a party, which homosexual they used in that party, and what they said when they were drunk' (in Nashat, 1978: 109-110).

By the mid-1880s, Iranian reformers had realized that their plan to modernize Iran by influencing the court had failed. The disillusioned reformers turned to religious leaders to protect Iran from falling into the hands of foreign powers, and to establish law and justice. Malkom Khan was one of the reformers who pursued the idea of collaboration with the ulama.

Between 1860 and 1890, Malkom Khan was of the opinion that Iran must follow Western civilization in order to achieve progress and he worked hard to convince Naser al-Din Shah to modernize Iran. He enjoyed the Shah's admiration as an intelligent person and occupied important offices in his government. Prior to 1890, while seeking the support of the Shah for the realization of his plans, Malkom Khan was careful not to raise the opposition of the religious leaders to his reforms. Malkom Khan did not approve of a frontal attack on Islam because, in his view, it would provoke hostility and the resistance of faithful Muslims to modernization. Thus, he promoted his reforms as being grounded in Islam (To'ha, 1978). Despite these strategies, Malkom Khan was denounced by the ulama as heretical in 1872 (Taymuri, 1953: 124-126).

In November 1889, following a quarrel with the Shah and Prime Minister, Malkom Khan ceased to be the Iranian representative in England. Soon after, he started to publish a Persian language newspaper entitled *Qanun* (Law) in London, of which the first number was issued in February 1890. In his newspaper, Malkom denounced the government's corruption, lack of security of life and property, and need for law and justice in Iran. Malkom Khan's journal was written in an Islamic tone and with high respect for Islam and the ulama who were addressed as the true leaders and saviours of Iranian people. The government was denounced as ungodly and its acts as un-Islamic. Malkom's adherence to and veneration of Islam, however, was nominal and more for tactical purposes. He not only was secular minded but also considered religion an obstacle to human progress. In 1872, for example, in his conversation with an Iranian intellectual, he stated that the human race would achieve complete happiness only with the triumph of reason over religion and he blamed the ills of this

world on religious prophets who had fettered reason and diminished its status (Algar, 1973 98)

The tactic used by Malkom Khan and other reformers at this stage was not to hide their enthusiasm for modern institutions and practices but to claim that they were Islamic in origin rather than Christian or European. Islam was presented as the repository of all principles, laws, and wisdom necessary to ensure the progress and welfare of humankind. It was argued that Iran had no need to turn to Europe, because all the progress of the world were the fruits of Islam. His speech to an English audience in London, in 1891, illustrates this tactic. He stated that Islam is like an ocean where you can find precepts and maxims to support any new laws or principles that you wish to introduce. Therefore, instead of saying these principles come from Europe. Malkom continues, it would be easier

to say that it comes from Islam, and that this can be soon proved. We found that ideas which were by no means accepted when coming from your agents in Europe, were accepted at once with the greatest delight when it was proved that they were latent in Islam. I can assure you that the little progress which we see in Persia and Turkey, especially Persia, is due to this fact, that some people have taken your European principles, and instead of saying that they came from Europe, from England, France or Germany, have said, 'We have nothing to do with Europeans, these are the true principles of our own religion (and, indeed that is quite true) which have been taken by Europeans' (in Keddie, 1980 56-57)

3.2. The Tobacco Protest Movement

In the 1880s, the country's economic situation deteriorated while the arbitrariness of the provincial governors and the selling of concessions to foreigners increased. A review of the petitions sent to Naser al-Din Shah in 1883-1886, reveals the presence of economic hardship caused by high taxes, land expropriation, and capriciousness of the governors.

landowners, and the ulama (Adamiyat & Nategh, 1989 375-413) Government corruption, economic hardship and food shortage led to riots and disorders in different parts of the country during the 1880s. In several cities the local population forced governors to flee (E'timad al-Saltaneh, 1966 453-454, 653, 681, 723). In 1885, when Naser al-Din Shah was returning to his palace, about one thousand women approached him and complained of the bread shortage. That angered the Shah and he ordered the arrest of the husbands of the protesting women and the expulsion of all beggars from Tehran (E'timad al-Saltaneh, 1966 437). In the mid-1880's, E'timad al-Saltaneh in his diary reports the circulation of two anti-government leaflets in Tehran and the arrest of individuals who posted a leaflet criticizing the Shah and court members (1966 325, 406). In 1890, the Tehran clergies openly criticized Naser al-Din Shah and court members (Keddie, 1966 39).

In the 1880s, there was also widespread discontent regarding the sexual harassment of women and young boys by members of the court and government in the capital and other parts of Iran (E'timad al-Saltaneh, 1966 823, Adamiyat, 1989 407-409, Tahir Zadeh, 1955 10). Furthermore, short of money to maintain his large court and growing harem of about 200 wives, Naser al-Din Shah had resorted to granting concessions to foreigners. In order to keep Russia and Britain quiet, the Iranian government followed the policy of "positive balance" in its concession granting. Meaning, any concession given to one was counterbalanced by a similar concession to the other. Naser al-Din Shah granted to a British citizen the concession to form a State Bank with exclusive rights to issue banknotes as well as to exploit the mineral resources of Iran. Another British company obtained contracts to extend the telegraph communications from Europe to India through Iran (Abrahamian,

1982:55, Browne, 1910:31) The extension and administration of the telegraph lines from the Russian border to Tehran was granted to Russia. A private Russian company obtained a monopoly over the fishing industry in the Caspian Sea (Abrahamian, 1982:55-56)

The granting of concessions by the Shah aroused concerns about the independence of Iran. Iranian merchants and producers were unhappy because these concessions damaged their interests. The ulama, unhappy with the increasing influence of western civilization, disliked the concessions as well. Thus, from the mid-1880s, there existed widespread discontent with the policies of the Shah and his government. It was against this background that the Tobacco protest movement (1891) gained strength

In March 8, 1890, Naser al-Din Shah granted a monopoly on the production, sale and export of all tobacco in Iran to G.F. Talbot, a British citizen, for a period of fifty years. But the Iranian government withheld this information and did not announce the concession for almost a year until February 1891, when Talbot came to Iran to set up the company. Soon after opposition within Iran began to surface. Tobacco was one of the main products of trade and its concession threatened both tobacco growers and merchants. At that time, more than 200,000 people were involved in the tobacco industry and about a quarter of the country's approximate population of 10 million consumed tobacco. It was smoked by adult men and women (Milani, 1988:48, Taymuri, 1979:42). In the tobacco-growing areas it was felt that the peasants would suffer heavy losses as a result of the tobacco monopoly. The tobacco concession was seen by Iranians as a further sign of the sale of the country to foreigners.

In addition, the influx of the agents of the British company and their arrogant and offensive treatment of Iranians increased fears of being colonized by foreigners (Taymuri,

1979-43), a concern shared by the ulama who considered the concessions as a threat to their power and to Islam. For example, a mojtabah in his conversation with the agent of the Tobacco Company said that "doubtless the corporation would flood the country with Europeans who would have constant intercourse with the people to undermine their religion"(in Lambton, 1987:234). The ulama's hostility to the concession partly resulted from their ties to merchants and their interest in tobacco grown on their private or endowed land (Keddie, 1972a:341)

Finally, the tobacco concession was disliked by both the Russian government and some members of the Iranian court and government. The Russian government openly expressed its disappointment with the concession and demanded its repeal because it increased the influence of Britain. Russia supported the opposition and incited riots. For example, the Russian consul-general, through his secret agents spread news in the bazaars that the British company "would effect forcible purchases at nominal prices and sell to the public at exorbitant rates"(Lambton, 1987:243-244). Some members of the court and government who did not receive bribes from the British company opposed the concession. Led by the prince governor of Tehran they incited the population by random arrests and by sabotaging any conciliatory efforts.

Iranian merchants played a leading part in the opposition movement to the tobacco concession. In February 1891, immediately after the public announcement of the concession, a representative body of Iranian merchants presented a petition to the Shah asking for the repeal of the concession, but without success (Browne, 1910:49). In March, sixty tobacco merchants met at the home of the leader of merchants in Tehran and sent a petition to the

Shah offering to pay a tobacco tax which would give him more income than the concession. Not even this offer succeeded in convincing the Shah to change his mind (Keddie, 1966: 52). When petitions did not work, merchants pursued the traditional way of asking for justice, that is they took sanctuary in a shrine near Tehran. From there merchants sent another petition to Naser al-Din Shah saying that they would not submit to the tobacco company. When all these efforts failed, the merchants approached the ulama.

In the spring of 1891, the protest transformed into mass demonstration which broke out in the major cities of Iran. The reactions of the religious leaders, however, differed from city to city. In Mashhad and Tabriz, the ulama did not initially support the opposition until placards against them appeared on the walls of the cities and bazaars, and some of them were physically and verbally attacked (Keddie, 1966: 91-93). In other cities, such as Tehran, Shiraz and Isfahan, however, the ulama supported people's protest.

It was in Isfahan that for the first time the use of tobacco was boycotted. The leading ulama in a mass demonstration issued a *fatwa* (religious order) declaring tobacco to be unclean. Those present at the demonstration took an oath to stop smoking. The boycott, however, was not observed across the country because the religious ordinance of Isfahan's religious leader was incumbent for his followers but not for the whole Shia community. The situation, however, was changed following the intervention of the chief leader of the Shi'i community, Hajji Mirza Hasan Shirazi (from now on Shirazi), who resided in Samara (in Iraq). In December 1891, following the exchange of several protest letters and telegraphs with the Shah, Shirazi issued the following religious order: "In the name of God the Merciful, the forgiving. To-day the use of tobacco, in whatever fashion, is reckoned as war against the

Imam of the Age (may God hasten his glad advent')"(in Browne, 1910:22)¹⁴ The boycott was observed universally by Iranians from all walks of life, even in the Shah's harem. Iranians stopped smoking or selling tobacco. Finally, following the general boycott and the appearance of placards threatening the lives of foreigners, Naser al-Din Shah repealed the concession.

The protest, however, did not die down after the repeal of the concession. For several months, despite the efforts of the ulama, protests and threats against foreigners continued. This was because the opposition movement had far broader aims and grievances than just the tobacco concession. Merchants, for example, requested the withdrawal of all concessions, in particular the British and Russian banks. During the agitation against the tobacco, the British agent from Shiraz reported that the Imperial Bank more than the tobacco company has caused dissatisfaction among the people. He also noted that merchants dissatisfied with the Imperial Bank, had started to form their own bank. Their plan was to neither sell nor buy bills from the Imperial Bank. The same protest against the English bank, and in particular to its exclusive

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Initially, however, Shirazi was reluctant to become involved with politics. In his first letter to the Shah, Shirazi points out his apolitical attitude until that time (in Nazem al-Islam, 1978:34). The role of reformers must be appreciated in this respect who with their letters and articles they urged him to rise against the court. Sayyide Jamal al-Din Afghani (from now on referred as Afghani), for example, wrote to Shirazi and after denouncing Naser al-Din Shah as the main person responsible for Iran's plight urged his intervention (Assadabadi, 1975:46-53). In his letter, Afghani wrote that Shi'a Iranians were rendered desperate because their country had been overrun by unbelievers and foreigners but their great mojtahed (i.e., Shirazi) was silent despite his responsibility for the protection of Islam and Muslims. Afghani claimed that Shi'a Iranians were wondering what prevented their great mojtahed from discharging his duty and some of the people had already begun to lose their faith in Islam. Afghani kept the pressure on Shirazi. In an Arabic leaflet published in Istanbul, for instance, Afghani wrote that considering that Iranians would obey the command of their religious leader then "why does the great leader, Mirza Shirazi, not order the people to bring down this atheist [i.e., Naser al-Din Shah] from his throne?"(in Hairi, 1977:80)

right to issue banknotes, was made in Tehran (Keddie, 1966 68, 69) In addition to the withdrawal of all concessions, the reformers demanded political changes. They asked not only for the establishment of a code of laws, but also that of a National Consultative Assembly where the "ulama, together with members of the Iranian intelligentsia, would determine the rights and limitations of the government and the nation in accordance with the holy law"(Bayat, 1991:55).

3.3. The Tobacco Movement & the Conception of Authority

The tobacco protest movement introduced cracks in the conception of authority by unleashing a process of questioning both secular and religious authorities among the population. The authority of the Shah and government was severely damaged during the Tobacco protest. The populace had dared to attack the royal palace and utter slogans against the Shah ¹⁵ In 1892, immediately after the success of the tobacco protest, the inhabitants of Tehran refused to celebrate the Shah's birthday and even slandered him (E'timad al-Saltaneh, 1966 950). The populace began to consider themselves as an entity with authority and interpreted the behavior of the Shah and government officials as reactions to them. Amin ad-

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¹⁵ After the repeal of the tobacco concession, Naser al-Din Shah sent a letter to the mojtahid of Tehran, Ashtiyani, who led the internal opposition, asking him either to smoke in public or to leave the country. Ashtiyani opted for the latter and prepared to leave Tehran. The news of his departure excited the Tehran population and they marched towards the palace shouting slogans against the Shah. The protesters surrounded the royal palace and started to throw stones. Soldiers refused to fire on protesters. The royal guard intervened and saved the Shah and court members by firing on the protestors. Soon after, the Shah sent a messenger to Ashtiyani and asked him to remain in the capital.

Dauleh in his diary wrote that after the success of the tobacco protest, the actions of the Shah and the government were interpreted by the people as reflection of their fear of people (1962:164).

Moreover, Iranian people began to recognize their worldly needs and interests as measures by which to evaluate and judge their religious leaders. During the tobacco protest, the people had harassed those religious leaders who did not support the movement or who were bribed by the tobacco company. Finally, the tobacco protest provided the opportunity for reformers to spread ideas such as 'nation' and 'nationality' among a large circle of the population. The list of subscribers to Malkom Khan's journal shows a heavy preponderance of members of the educated classes, merchants, and bureaucrats among its recipients. Reformers initially believed that the people would not grasp the message of the journal and that they would not easily be moved to action. But they soon noted the influence of the paper on the attitudes and consciousness of the population (Bakhsh, 1978 313-315)

The study of the reform movement in 19th century Iran illustrates that reformers tried to modernize society from above. Initially they tried to introduce reforms by influencing the Shah. In the last decades of the 19th century, they approached the other power centre of Iranian society, the Shi'a establishment, hoping to obtain the ulama's support for the realization of their modernizing projects. Although the tobacco protest movement shook temporal and religious authorities, the people were not yet perceived as sovereign. It was at the turn of the century that, for the first time, the notion of popular sovereignty was introduced and popularized by the constitutionalists. This will be examined in the next chapter.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE 1906 CONSTITUTIONAL REVOLUTION

The ideas of constitutional regime, popular sovereignty, and citizenship rights were new in Iran and their success was not inevitable. A few months before the promulgation of a constitution, when constitutionalists suggested the inclusion of the establishment of constitution and parliament in the list of demands prepared by dissatisfied Iranians for submission to the king, they encountered the opposition of others. Although the meaning of constitution and its benefits were explained, the majority opposed the proposal and constitutionalists had to give up (Malekzadeh, 1992:II:300).

The establishment of a constitutional regime in Iran, in 1906, therefore required a radical change in the outlook of the population. This change is studied here in relation to the following factors: the flourishing of civil society, the activities of dissident clerics, the resonance of a constitutionalist interpretive frame among the population, and the strategies used by constitutionalists to generate support for constitutional movement.

4.1. The Flourishing of Civil Society

The political and economic situation of Iran did not change significantly after the success of the tobacco protest. Iranians continued to suffer from food shortages, high prices caused by the devaluation of the currency, the arbitrariness and the corruption of the court and government members, and the intrusion and control of foreign powers. In 1894 the drop in the value of Iranian currency brought business in the bazaar to a standstill and affected

workers and craftsmen. Moreover, the instability of the currency discouraged the expansion of trade, and encouraged the hoarding of gold (Bakhash, 1978: 270-272). Food riots and disorders broke out in several parts of Iran in this period (E'timad al-Saltaneh, 1966: 1073, 1091).

The ulama were the only social group who benefited from the success of the tobacco movement. They were recognized as the leaders of the movement and succeeded in marginalizing the reformers. For example, despite his central role in the tobacco movement, Afghani was denounced as heretical by the ulama and Shirazi did not grant him an audience (Assadabadi, 1975: 7). The ulama's power increased, while that of the court and government declined. Fearful of the ulama's influence, Naser al-Din Shah started to visit the mosques. He was imitated by members of both the court and government who preferred to avoid any conflict with the ulama (E'timad al-Saltaneh, 1966: 1205-1206, 956).

After the tobacco protest, despite all the hardships that Iranians faced and the wave of government concessions, the ulama remained silent. In response to those who complained or called for action, the ulama counselled prayer (Kasravi, 1975: 134). Discontent among the merchants and ordinary people became so widespread that it was feared there would be another popular uprising. The Shah's repressive measures and the lack of leadership among the opposition, however, prevented the passage from grievance to collective action. The assassination of Naser al-Din Shah by a member of opposition in 1896 and coronation of his son, Mozaffar al-Din Shah, removed one of the main obstacles to the emergence of a protest movement.

Mozaffar al-Din Shah's reign was marked by a contradiction which led to the 1906

Revolution. While the economic situation deteriorated and the policy of borrowing from the foreign powers increased during his reign, political controls became lighter and people found the opportunity to voice their dissatisfaction and form groups and associations. Between 1880 and 1900, it is estimated that as a result of high inflation the price of a basket of basic commodities cost five times as much as it had ten years before. After 1900, Iranians faced the slow-down in economic activity and growing unemployment (Martin, 1989:43). The situation was aggravated further by the failure of the central government to collect taxes (Lambton, 1987:73). Among various expedients, the new Shah continued the policies of office selling and taking loans from foreign powers. In order to obtain foreign loans the Shah sold monopolies on Iranian resources. For example, he granted a monopoly to exploit oil in the central and southern provinces to a British citizen. New road tolls were granted to the Imperial Bank of Britain, and the control of the custom houses in the north was granted to Russians (Abrahamian, 1982: 74). Russian and British control over customs as well as trade contracts favourable to their interests fuelled discontent among Iranian merchants and producers. Unable to compete with foreign goods, merchants and producers staged protests against these contracts (Pavlovitch, 1977: 31).

On the political front, Mozaffar al-Din Shah lifted the ban on liberal Persian language newspapers printed abroad. Books that had been censored during his father's reign became available and travel to and study in Europe was permitted. The new Shah did not oppose the formation of commercial and cultural associations, although he forbade the establishment of political ones. He supported the establishment of modern schools, and allowed publications of non-government journals and establishment of a-political associations. The loosening of

restrictions contributed to the circulation of information about western societies among a larger population.

These policies helped civil society to flourish. It is in this period that, for the first time, organizations distinct from the Islamic ones appeared. In Tehran, the Society of Learning (Anjuman-i Mu'aref) and the country's first National Library were established. In 1898, the Tarbiyat Library was established in Tabriz and later, in 1902, it published the influential Persian-language journal *Ganjineh-i Fomun* (The Treasury of Arts). With royal protection from the conservative ulama, the Society of Learning was able to establish numerous modern schools in Tehran.

The introduction of relative political freedom as well as institutions of civil society such as National Library, Society of Learning, modern schools, and journals provided an opportunity for radical intellectuals to meet each other and to establish trust and friendship among themselves. It is from these friendships that the secret societies emerged. In 1904 about 60 intellectuals who attended the National Library and the Knowledge Association came together and formed the secret society called "Revolutionary Committee". Among them were the two famous preachers, Malek and Va'ez. In 1905, following the encouragement of the leading mojtahed of Tehran, Tabataba'i, Nazem al-Islam formed *Anjuman-e Makhfi* (Secret Society). Around 1906, the *Markaz-e Ghaib* (Secret Center) was formed in Tabriz by a group of radical intellectuals headed by a merchant, Ali Karbala-yi. And around 1904, *Jamea-ye Adamiyyat* (The Society for Humanity) was established in Tehran and several other cities. These secret societies played a decisive role in the coming revolution.

It is important to note that, as a result of expansion of trade and means of

communication, by the turn of the century a large range of Iranian social groups became acquainted with the Western civilization. More and more Iranian merchants travelled to, and established trading communities in the Ottoman Empire, India, Egypt, Russia, and to a lesser extent, Europe. The translation of books on modern science, philosophy and politics acquainted an increasing number of Iranians with the political institutions, judicial systems and industrial achievements of Europe (Bakhash, 1978). Moreover, there was a large number of Iranian migrant workers in Transcaucasia. In 1904, for example, the Tsarist government issued 59,121 visas to Iranian immigrants. These workers were exposed to political ideologies of organizations such as those articulated by the Socialist Revolutionaries, the Armenian Dashnaks, and the Social Democratic Party (Ghods, 1989:20-21). In other words, in contrast to previous decades, knowledge of modern political systems and society was not limited to ruling elite and modern educated Iranians. In fact, at the turn of the century, the constitutionalists consisted not only of these two groups but also merchants, dissident clergy, and some members of the high-ranking ulama.

4.2. Western Civilization As A Positive Model

During the 19th century, the West increasingly became the significant other with which Iranian intelligentsia compared themselves. Concerned with identifying the sources of power in the modern world, the Iranian intelligentsia singled out modern Western military organization and armament, science and technology, industry, administration, and finally its political system as the sources of its power. Following military defeats at the hands of Russia and Britain and the loss of substantial territory in the North, they realized the military

supremacy of the West and therefore pressed for military reforms. With the extension of relationships with Western powers such as Russia, Britain, and France, a general belief in the supremacy of Western civilization started to form among the population.

The esteem for Western civilization was shared by some clerics. The popular constitutionalist preacher, Sayyid Jamalal-Din Va'ez (from now on referred as Va'ez), extensively used Western civilization as a positive model to show the backwardness of Iran by comparing it with the West. In his sermons, he encouraged his audience to read romances written by European writers and to acquire modern knowledge and science (Va'ez, nd:101). Addressing the most immediate and tangible issue for the populace, the rising price of bread, Va'ez told his audience that in the last ten years the price of bread in London, with a population of about 8 million, had not been increased whereas in Tehran with about half a million inhabitants the price of bread did not remain stable even for six months. The reason for this, Va'ez explained, was that the Westerners used science. It was the duty of Muslim parents, Va'ez told his audience, to send their children to learn modern sciences. He then assured his audience that "Iranians are more talented than westerners. Westerners are very dull (*bi-hoosh*), but with the power of science they have reached the point that we Muslims must be their subordinates and be in need of their technology" (Va'ez, nd 148-149). The prominent mojtahed of Tehran, Tabataba'i in his sermons not only advocated learning modern science but went further by encouraging the ulama to learn a foreign language (Hairi, 1977a:86).

It was, however, after the coronation of Mozaffar al-Din Shah (1896) that the modern political system was identified by Iranian people as the source of power and progress in the

West. In this period a shift in the paradigm of Iranians took place, from a focus on modern sciences, technologies, and administration to modern political systems. At the turn of the century, the Iranian Constitutionalists believed that the source of power, progress, and well-being of Western civilization was its political system.¹⁶ Excerpts from minutes of the secret society *Anjoman Makhfi* illustrate that they believed that modern technology and industry could not be introduced in Iran unless the rule of law was established. They believed that the absence of the rule of law was the reason for the failure of Iranians to establish modern industries (in Nazem al-Islam, 1978). This positive perception of a Western political system was also shared by religious leaders. Tabataba'i, for instance, once said

We ourselves had not seen a constitutional regime. But we had heard about it, and those who had seen the constitutional countries had told us that a constitutional regime will bring security and prosperity to the country (in Tabari, 1983: 57).

The mojtahed of Isfahan in his letter to his counterpart in Shiraz, encouraging him to support the constitutional government, listed ten benefits. Among other things, he wrote that the establishment of a constitutional government would improve Iranian commerce, agriculture, and industry, would prevent the escape of capital from Iran and even attract capital from abroad, and would create jobs for the large number of beggars. Furthermore, parliament

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¹⁶ The French Revolution enjoyed high esteem among the constitutionalists. In Tabriz, one of the leaders of the constitutional revolution was nicknamed "monsieur" because of his knowledge of, and high esteem for the French Revolution. Iraj Eskandari writes that his father, a leader of the Constitutional revolution, wished at his deathbed that his son be sent to France to study. Like many other constitutionalists, his father considered France as the soil of social revolution, freedom, and progress and desired his son be raised in that 'revolutionary school' (Eskandari, 1989: 73). On the eve of the 1906 revolution two books on the French Revolution were translated into Persian (Adamiyyat, 1984: 3).

would prevent the selling of the country's resources to foreigners and would denounce the misdeeds and arbitrariness of governors (in Nazem al-Islam, 1978 IV 10-13)

It is important to note that some of the high-ranking religious leaders not only did not consider the establishment of constitutional government contrary to Islam, but even believed that it would protect Islam and Muslims. In their telegraph from Najaf (in the Ottoman Empire), the three most prominent Shi'a authorities listed the following benefits of the establishment of a Constitutional regime in Iran:

the protection of religion, the strengthening of the state; the progress and well-being of the people; and the protection of the life and honour of the Muslims (in Algar, 1991:734, emphasis added).

Finally the reaction of Iranians to the 1905 Russo-Japanese war is significant. The Russo-Japanese war was followed by Iranians with so much enthusiasm that the Russian government, concerned with its influence in Iran, started publishing a propagandist journal, in the Persian language, about the war (Kuhan, 1984:I:202). The victory of Japan in 1905 was interpreted by the population as the victory of a constitutional regime over autocracy. To them, the reason for the victory of a small, poor, and backward oriental country like Japan over a powerful country like Russia was the former's adoption of a Western liberal political system (Kuhan, 1984 I:209). The victory of Japan even captured the attention of the Shah. Mokhber al-Dawleh, who had travelled to several European countries as well as Japan, wrote that one day Mozaffar al-Din Shah summoned him to the palace and while pacing up and down asked "Does Japan have a parliament? I answered that it is eight years that Japan had a parliament"(Mokhber al-Dawleh, 1984:162)

It is important to emphasize that constitutionalists could not generate support among

the population unless their ideas had resonance among the general population. On the eve of the revolution, a positive image of the Western political system existed among the population.

4.3. Dissident Clergy

Although the constitutionalists enjoyed some degrees of freedom under the rule of Mozaffar al-Din Shah, they faced strong opposition from the powerful ulama who were against modernization. They opposed the establishment of modern school and the study of physics, chemistry, and foreign languages (Malekzadeh, 1992:63-64). In the provinces, there were frequent attacks on the modern schools. In 1904, for example, when the people of Tabriz revolted against the Belgian customs officer and closed the bazaars, seminary students plundered and destroyed modern schools along with liquor-stores and hotels (Aryan Poor, 1975:248).

The accounts by members of secret societies show their fear of being persecuted by the ulama. Although they believed in freedom of faith and some of their members even belonged to other faiths, members were asked to avoid participation in non-Islamic meetings and activities that might raise the suspicions of the ulama. They were asked to ensure that their publications conformed to Islamic principles (Malekzadeh, 1992: 241-43). Moreover, the members of the Secret Society agreed to have Islamic prayers at the end of every meeting (Nazem al-Islam, 1978:273).

In this period, the main challenge for the constitutionalists was how to establish relationships with ordinary people and to obtain their trust. The institutions where ordinary people could be reached were the Islamic settings such as mosques, religious schools, and

religious ceremonies. These were, however, controlled by the ulama who fiercely opposed modern ideas and institutions such as popular sovereignty, equality, and parliament. The emergence of dissident clerics helped the constitutionalists to circumvent this barrier

Dissident clergy were mostly associated with lower and middle-ranking religious leaders (preachers and mullahs). Most of them belonged to groups persecuted by the ulama. Bayat writes that many of dissident clergy were "freethinkers; others were merely disenchanted with prevailing teachings of the religious traditions and were open to sociocultural change, even willing to adopt the new learning from Europe. Many were philosophically or mystically inclined and therefore belonged to groups that periodically suffered persecution at the hands of the traditional guardians of the holy law"(Bayat, 1991:10). They, therefore, concealed their real beliefs and identity and gathered in clandestine organizations (Bayat, 1991:21). They used mosques and religious ceremonies to preach against the corrupt ulama and governors and to advocate law and justice. Their religious studies and their use of Islamic language and Qur'anic verses made their ideas more accessible for the general population who were familiar with that language

Dissident clergy supported modern knowledge and education and the establishment of modern schools. The presence of such ideas among the ranks of clerics is not surprising. In the 19th century, the clerics made the bulk of educated Iranians. Moreover, their knowledge of Arabic language and residence in Ottoman Empire for theological study, allowed them access to Arabic language newspapers and books published throughout the Islamic world as well as to witness the processes of modernization and secularization in the Ottoman Empire

In the battle between the dissident clergy and the corrupt ulama, however, it was the former who were losing. A case in point was Shaykh Hadi Najmabadi (1834-1902), one of the most prominent mojtahid of Tehran. He openly attacked the corrupt ulama and called them "human devils" who "appear as guides to the truth, but they do not have any relation with truth"(in Hairi, 1977:75). Najmabadi was declared a heretic by the ulama of Tehran and was prevented from fulfilling his clerical functions in public.

After years of moving from one city to another and denouncing reactionary governors and mojtaheds, or establishing modern schools, dissident clergy realized that these were not the most effective tactics. It was them who were forced to leave the towns and not the corrupt ulama and governors. The dissidents also realized that the modern school system did not increase political awareness among the population. They concluded that the solution was to change the political system rather than bad governors and mojtaheds (Nazem al-Islam, 1978 and Malekzadeh, 1992).

4.4. Strategies of Frame Transformation: 'Responsibilization' & 'Delegitimization' of Authority

The idea of constitutional regime was a radically new concept in Iranian political culture and its success required a frame transformation process among the population. To generate support for their frame of interpretation, the constitutionalist forces had to transform the dominant conception of authority. It was by pursuing such strategies as the 'responsibilization' and 'delegitimization' of authority that constitutionalists introduced and diffused the idea of popular sovereignty among the population. I have developed these two

notions in relation to two components of authority, that is its claims and bases of legitimacy. Authority maintains itself through claims such as the protection of sacred principles or the welfare of its subordinates, and is legitimized by maintaining to possess competence and qualities necessary to fulfil those claims.

'Responsibilization' of authority is understood here as a process whereby the authority is made accountable for its claims. In other words, in this process, one feature of authority, meaning its claims, is stressed and demonstrations of its actualization are sought. If the Shah or the ulama claim that they protect the well-being of Muslims, that claim could be taken seriously and its realization demanded.

In the process of 'delegitimization', the bases of legitimacy and the scope of the authority are questioned, negotiated, challenged, and redefined by illustration of its lack of competence and inadequacy to fulfil those claims. The secularization process, for example, is an example of the delegitimization of the institution of religion. It aims to limit the authority of religion to spiritual matters. Responsibilization is a pre-condition to the process of delegitimization because it is necessary that people first recognize an authority as accountable for their well-being. When their expectations are not fulfilled and the authority has failed to discharge its claimed functions, then it is susceptible to questioning and delegitimization.

As noted earlier, in 19th century Iran there were two centres of power, the court and the Shi'a establishment. Although the religious and secular authorities claimed that they protected Islam and Muslims, they were accountable only to God and not to people. The authority of the Shah and the ulama were bestowed on them by God and their authority could not be questioned by the people, only obeyed. The image presented of the Shah, for instance,

was that of a benevolent and non-accountable patron. Gobineau's description of the Iranian New Year ceremony illustrates this point. In 1857, Gobineau in a letter to de Tocqueville, describes the conversation between the Shah and his Grand Vizir in front of the soldiers, the grandees, and the people. The Grand Vizir replying to the Shah's question about how things are, says that nothing could be better. Then the Shah says, 'We heard that the cholera killed a lot of people during the past year, is this not true?' 'People have exaggerated', the Grand Vizir responds, 'Thanks to the reigning fortunes of Your Majesty, the ravages were few'. Still, the Shah persists, 'if they want to remain fortunate, public officials should have enough integrity in order to merit Divine protection'. Gobineau makes an acute observation. He notes that during the ceremony, the Shah "adopts the air of being a stranger to all of these things: he pretends to ignore them and feigns to be uninformed about what everybody knows. He assumes the personality of a foreign and essentially benevolent chieftain"(in Lukacs, 1959:316-317).

It was with the help of the two processes of responsabilization and delegitimization of traditional authority that constitutionalists introduced the modern concept of popular sovereignty. They addressed both temporal and religious authorities as those in charge of the welfare of Iranian people and asked them to discharge their obligations. Prior to the promulgation of the Constitution, the constitutionalists delegitimized only the court. They denounced it as incompetent in providing for the welfare of Iranians and protection of their territorial integrity and demanded the establishment of a constitutional regime. The court was blamed for being responsible for the existence of poverty, lawlessness, and foreign encroachment in Iran.

Until the promulgation of the Constitution in 1906, the constitutionalists did not question the authority of the ulama and its legitimacy. The ulama were approached as responsible for the welfare of the people as well as the guides and saviours of the people. The constitutionalists called on the ulama to fulfil their responsibility towards the Iranian people who were depicted as poor and desperate victims. In 1904, for example, Malek al-Motakallemin (from now on referred as Malek), the famous constitutionalist preacher, said that if the religious leaders decide to work for the welfare of the people, the country would become prosperous in a brief period of time. But if they turn to corruption, then within a brief time the country will be ruined. Without the help and support of the ulama, even a Shah interested in the welfare and progress of country would fail because Iranians follow the ulama. He then urged the ulama to establish modern schools, to publish books, to use journals and newspapers to enlighten the people, to denounce and punish government officials who were plundering poor people, and to oppose the foreign powers' interference (Malekzadeh, 1992: 199-202).

At this stage, however, the people were reproached for not taking responsibility for the country's and their own well-being. They were addressed as cowards who deserved to be treated as subhuman because they wanted the ulama to prepare things for them. The message the constitutionalists sent to the people was that they themselves were responsible for their own miserable lives. With these critiques, they were asking population to take their lives into their own hands.

It is important to note that at this stage, the constitutionalists presented the worldly needs and concerns of the people, such as unemployment, lawlessness, and poverty rather

than theological qualities as principles by which to judge the ulama's behavior and authority. Va'ez, the popular dissident preacher, for instance, in one of his sermons before the out-break of the revolution criticized the ulama by saying: "In Iran, our religious leaders use European textiles and fabrics for their turban and dress and do not think that one day we also will have to take the road of progress and knowledge". Since 1897, there had existed a strong movement against foreign goods, in particular textiles and Va'ez's comment provided a concrete example by which the ulama could be judged. He also raised the issue of unemployment and emigration of unemployed Iranians to foreign countries and blamed both on the "despotic governors and corrupted ulama who collaborated in destroying country" (in Malekzadeh, 1992:166-7)

After the establishment of Parliament, the process of 'delegitimization' of religious authority began. At this stage, the religious leaders started to be attacked and blamed by the constitutionalists for the ills of the country, and the end of their interference in public affairs and politics was demanded. By responsabilization or making the authority accountable to people rather than to God, the constitutionalists moved people from the periphery of politics to its centre. Up to the success of the 1906 Revolution, the people were mainly addressed as poor victims who needed the patronage and guidance of the ulama. Soon after the granting of the Constitution, however, the Iranian people were addressed by constitutionalist forces as the sovereign and supreme authority, the protectors of the Constitution and freedom, and their actions were even presented as the manifestation of God's will. The Shah and the ulama, however, were attacked as the cause of, and responsible for the poverty and backwardness of Iran

To sum up, two stages can be identified in the Constitutional Revolution. In the first stage, the strategies of delegitimization of the court and the responsabilization of the Islamic establishment took place. The people were addressed as victim in this phase. In the second stage, after the proclamation of the constitutional regime, the constitutionalists undertook the process of delegitimization of the Shi'a establishment and addressed the people as sovereign authority. The first stage is studied here and the second stage will be dealt with in the next chapter.

4.5. The First Stage of the Constitutional Revolution

In early 1905, Iran was hit by an economic crisis caused by a bad harvest throughout the country as well as disruption of the northern trade as a result of the Russo-Japanese War and the subsequent revolution in Russia. These factors led to a rapid inflation of food prices within Iran. At the same time, the government, short of money, raised tariffs on Iranian merchants and postponed loan repayments to local creditors (Abrahamian, 1982: 81). Discontent and dissatisfaction with government were rife among the population.

Two prominent mojtaheds of Tehran, Behbahani and Tabataba'i, rose against the government in 1905 and denounced the Belgian director of Customs, Naus.¹⁷ The freethinker mojtahed of Tehran, Tabataba'i, preached against the government complaining that the appalling state of the country was due to oppression and demanding the rule of proper laws. Three days later, members of a secret society, *Anjoman-e Makhfi*, met and decided to bring

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¹⁷Behbahani's opposition to Naus was caused by his personal rivalry with the Prime Minister. In effect, Naus had been in office since 1898 and Behbahani did not criticize Naus during those years because of his friendship with the previous Prime Minister (Martin, 1989: 59).

about an alliance between the two mojtaheds

Around mid-April 1905, a group of merchants and moneylenders took sanctuary in a shrine protesting Naus' custom administration and denouncing him for favouring foreign merchants, in particular the Russians. Mozaffar al-Din Shah, who despite the country's economic crisis was about to leave for his third trip to Europe, promised Naus's removal on his return. Merchants accepted his promises and returned to Tehran. Soon after their return, a leaflet was distributed by constitutionalists in bazaars and streets of Tehran in which the Shah was addressed as an imbecile and threatened with death by a people's revolt. The mojtahed of Tehran, Behbahani, was praised for his support of the merchants' cause (in Kashani, 1983: 21-22).

The constitutionalists were still cautious about using the word "constitution". In April 1905, for example, when one of the members of a secret society in a draft of his article for a journal referred to a constitutional regime as the remedy to Iran's problems, other members of the society asked him to cross it out. They said it was still better to ask for the execution of the Islamic law (Nazem al-Islam, 1978: 288).

After five months, Mozaffar al-Din Shah returned from his trip to Europe and another leaflet was distributed in Tehran. It attacked the king and his ministers for misgovernment and arbitrary decision-making, addressed the people as cowards, numbed, and disunited. The leaflet then claimed that the only remedy was the initiative of the ulama who would be followed by the people. The ulama were then criticized for not discharging their responsibility. "Alas! also the ulama are concerned with their personal interests and do not step forward. The ulama are not concerned with God's satisfaction, service to humanity, or saving the country."

The writer(s) of the leaflet then demanded the establishment of a House of Justice and declared "Coward people! It is about one and half years that the ulama have protested against Naus but their request was rejected. This is the result of the cowardness of people. otherwise these ministers could not behave in this way"(in Kashani, 1983 26-28)

In December 1905, a second protest erupted when the governor of Tehran tried to lower sugar prices by publicly punishing two of the leading sugar importers. Soon after, the bazaars were closed and the two leading mojtaheds, Behbahani and Tabataba'i, with more than 2,000 bazaaris and theology students, took sanctuary at a shrine outside the capital. The secret societies asked their members to encourage the people to join the *bastis* and to financially help those who could not afford to. Concerned about a secret deal between the ulama and government, they also kept an eye on the comings and goings of the clerics. Following secret meetings between members of government and some relatives of religious leaders, the constitutionalists incited the people to write protesting letters to religious leaders in *bast* (Kashani, 1983 34-35). At the same time a leaflet was distributed by constitutionalists announcing that some of the sons and relatives of the prominent ulama have secretly met the Prime Minister and have been bribed to bring to a halt the movement (Malekzadeh, 1992 290-91)

On January 12, 1906, after long negotiations, the Shah finally yielded and among other things promised the establishment of a House of Justice (*Edalatkhaneh-e Dawlati*) to execute the laws of the shari'a and ensure the security of all subjects across the country regardless of their status. It is important to stress that in his royal decree, the Shah still used the term *ra'aya* (subjects) instead of *mellat* (nation). The royal order was publicly read and for the first time

the cry "Long Live the Iranian Nation!" was uttered (Nazem al-Islam, 1978 358)

The *bast*, which had lasted for almost one month, had given the constitutionalists a great opportunity to spread their ideas and to establish close relationships with different groups, such as merchants, shopkeepers, and theological students. Consequently, when the *bast* ended the number of supporters for a constitutional regime and modernization had increased enormously (Malekzadeh, 1992:312).

Upon their return to Tehran, the ulama were received by the Shah who bestowed his grace upon them. After the return of the bastis to Tehran, however, the court not only did not fulfil its promises but even harassed members of the opposition. A number of constitutionalists were arrested and exiled. The journal *Adab* was banned by the government because it published articles that included words such as constitution, republic, freedom, and equality (Nazem al-Islam, 1978 371). Discontent was becoming widespread among the people and the distribution of leaflets continued. The leading ulama were under increasing pressure from below for the establishment of a House of Justice. Kashani recorded in his diary that in meetings and ceremonies sarcastic remarks were made about the ulama (1983 53). The ulama were accused of having been bribed by the Prime Minister.

In this period not only the ulama of Tehran but also the prominent mojtaheds residing in Atabat (in Iraq) were criticized for ignoring the cause of the people. One leaflet posed the question of why non-Muslim countries enjoy prosperity and order and Iran did not. It then criticized not only the ulama of Tehran but also the grand mojtaheds residing abroad for limiting their activities to writing comments on theological issues and ignoring the fact that tyranny was destroying the country of Islam. The writers of the leaflet also criticized the

Iranian people by addressing them as ignorant cowards, not prepared to suffer for the establishment of justice. It encouraged them to take matters into their own hands. Suppose that the ulama did not exist, the leaflet continued, should not people then take care of themselves? (in Nazem al-Islam, 1978: 383-4).

Following a secret meeting between mojtahed Behbahani and Prime Minister many leaflets were distributed. One of them entitled "People be careful, the mullahs are betraying you!", accused the ulama of being bribed by the Prime Minister and therefore not being interested in the establishment of a House of Justice. The pressure from below was such that the prominent mojtaheds of Tehran were forced to defend themselves publicly. Tabataba'i took the pulpit and swore on the Qur'an that he had not taken any money from the Prime Minister and that his only purpose was to serve the people, to establish justice and the assembly of representatives of the people. Then Behbahani climbed into the pulpit and swore that he would sacrifice his life for the people and the establishment of the House of Justice (Malekzadeh, 1992: 336-7). It is important to stress that in the period prior to Constitutional Revolution the ulama enjoyed such a power that, as Kasravi says, one could not even offend their shoes (1975: 33). People venerated them and no one dared to question their integrity and authority. But the course of revolution modified that attitude. The ulama were forced to justify themselves in the eyes of the public.

One pamphlet encouraged people to take matters into their own hands. It argued that the responsibility for failing to establish a House of Justice lay with Iranians themselves who were all ignorant and selfish. The Shah and Prime Minister, the leaflet asserted, were against the House of Justice because it limited their wealth and arbitrary rule. The ulama were not in

favour of the House of Justice, the leaflet continued, because then they would not be able to issue unjust verdicts, accept bribes, embezzle the inheritance of the people, protect tyrants, or denounce muslims as heretics. The only concern of the ulama during the *bast*, the leaflet went on, had been their personal interests. The writer then introduced the idea of limiting the power of the monarchy and the ulama by asking these questions of readers: In the case of the establishment of a House of Justice, who will write the laws? What is the limit of the influence of the ulama in the justice system? (in Kashani, 1983:55-58).

In June 1906, following a clash between the government forces and the population, the protesters led by the ulama left Tehran for the holy city of Qom. The increasing pressure from the government led another group of Iranians to take refuge in the British embassy in Tehran. Within one week their number rose to more than 13,000. They were predominantly from the *bazaar*. A committee of guild elders allocated space to the various guilds, enforced discipline, and controlled the entry of new arrivals into the British grounds. After the first week only students and faculty members from modern schools such as Dar al-Fonun and Political Science were allowed to enter the Embassy. The inclusion of these modern intellectuals into the Embassy shows their positive image among the population (something that would not exist in the 1979 Revolution).

Soon the embassy grounds were converted into a school of political science. Initially, the constitutionalists were cautious not to talk about a constitution and they only asked for the return of the ulama to Tehran. But then they gradually introduced the idea of a constitutional regime and publicly lectured on European constitutional systems among those who took refuge in the embassy (Nazem al-Islam, 1978:512-514, 560-562). The

constitutionalists went even further and convinced the *bastis* to demand not just a House of Justice but also a National Assembly and a constitution. They argued that the establishment of Parliament was the solution to the arbitrary rule of government (Nazem al-Islam, 1978:534). The constitutionalists had the opportunity to talk openly about a constitutional regime and parliament during the 25 day *bast*.

The court offered an Islamic Assembly (*Majlis-e Mashru'a*) instead of a National Assembly (*Majles-e Melli*) but this was rejected. On August 5, 1906, Muzaffar al-Din Shah finally granted a Constitution and appointed a new Prime Minister. Copies of the first edict, however, were torn from the walls by people because the Shah used the term subjects (*ra'ia*) instead of nation (*mellat*) and did not recognize the people's sovereignty in the text. The Shah then issued a second edict recognizing the people's sovereignty and the establishment of a National Assembly (Malekzadeh, 1992:379). It is important to note that only few months before, in his royal decree for the establishment of House of Justice, Shah had addressed Iranians as subjects and it had not angered the population.

In August 1906, when the constitution was granted by Mozaffar al-Din Shah, the ulama returned to Tehran believing that the weakness of the court would mean their own absolute power. After the return of the ulama, however, pressure on them mounted. This time they were accused of not pursuing seriously the establishment of a parliament. A leaflet stating that people were angry with the ulama, argued that "we did not suffer to increase the wealth and power of the religious leaders. We suffered for the establishment of the parliament, which prevents tyranny, protects people's life and property, and prevents unjustified taxes"(in Kashani, 1983:91-93).

Upon the invitation of Mozafar al-Din Shah, mojtahed Behbahani had a private meeting with the Shah and he came back from the Court with the Electoral Law prepared by the government. The fact that the meeting was private disappointed people, particularly the bazaar community, and made them suspicious of a secret deal between Behbahani and the government. The day after, a group of merchants met mojtahed Tabataba'i and shared their concern with him. The following day, 100 shopkeepers and craftsmen visited Tabataba'i and complained about Behbahani's meeting with the Shah. The next day, about 500 merchants and shopkeepers met Tabataba'i and some even threatened to kill Behbahani. On the same day, a meeting was organized where Behbahani swore that he was not bribed by the government and that he had not changed his mind. But it did not satisfy people and five days later another group of merchants and shopkeepers visited Tabataba'i saying that they would kill Behbahani (Nazem al-Islam, 1978:590-97). Finally, Behbahani was forced to write a letter to Prime Minister saying that people disliked the government's proposed Electoral Law (Malekzadeh, 1992:390).

The preparation of the Electoral Law, the election of representatives of the first *Majles* (parliament) and the inauguration of Parliament, and the writing of a Fundamental Law of Constitution, were all done within six months. This haste was caused by the deterioration of the Shah's health and the fear that the anti-constitutionalist crown prince would undermine the process when he succeeded his father. In December 30, 1906, the Fundamental Law was ratified by Mozaffar al-Din Shah. He died a week later.

With the establishment of Parliament and the ratification of the Fundamental Law, the process of delegitimization of the traditional concept of kingship was terminated by the

recognition of the sovereignty of the people. In effect, according to Fundamental Law, God's grace was not directly bestowed on the Shah, but it was the nation who, on behalf of God, bestowed the grace upon the king.

The establishment of the Constitutional regime in Iran was not an inevitable outcome of the protest movement. In effect, the initial demand of dissatisfied Iranians was for the establishment of a House of Justice and the constitutionalists had a hard time selling their ideas. Ideas such as a constitution, popular sovereignty, and freedom and equality were new to Iranian political culture and their popularization required a process of frame transformation. Through responsabilization and delegitimization of the authority, the constitutionalists succeeded in undermining the traditional concept of authority and in introducing the concept of the people as a sovereign authority. For instance, an Iranian correspondent writing about changes in Population attitudes towards traditional authority reports the following anecdote:

A certain builder came to the house of a Minister to repair an iron fire-place. On entering, he saluted the Minister. The Minister's servant bade him do obeisance. He replied, "Knave, do you know that we now have a Constitution and that under a Constitution obeisance no longer exist?" (in Foran, 1993: 192)

CHAPTER FIVE

THE 1906 REVOLUTION & THE SECULARIZATION PROCESS

5.1. The Post-Revolution's Political Climate

After the establishment of Parliament and promulgation of the Constitution, the constitutionalists embarked on a secularization project. They tried to limit the ulama's interference in social and political affairs and to make religion a private matter. Before undertaking the study of this process, it is necessary to provide a background on the period under investigation by discussing forces and conditions promoting and preventing this process.

At the turn of century, Iranian society was deeply influenced by Islamic principles. Not only its educational and judicial systems but also its social settings, ceremonies, and public manners were ruled and permeated by Islamic tenets. Moreover, secularization was a new topic. During the revolution, constitutionalists had not attacked the bases of legitimacy of the religious authority. Islam and its laws were presented as the repository of justice, progress, and prosperity, and the ulama were addressed as the guides and saviours of Iranians.

Furthermore, after the revolution, the Shi'a establishment realized that the constitutional regime not only limited the power of the court, but also restricted their power and influence. They were consequently divided into at least three broadly defined factions. First, the conservative clerics, led by the prominent mojtahed of Tehran, Shaykh Fazl-allah Nuri (from now on Nuri), openly sided with the court and actively opposed the newly established constitutional government. Nuri argued that the spiritual and secular authorities

were complementary to each other and without them Islamic laws would be inactive. Kingship is the executive power of Islamic provisions, and doing justice depended on executing them. Therefore, it is necessary to strengthen these two authorities (in Hairi, 1977b: 335-336, Vakili-Zad, 1996: 141). Since the Constitution and Parliament had been popular, conservative clerics had not dared to attack these institutions and instead argued that the revolution had been hijacked by heretical forces (Momeni, 1993: 198).

Second, the moderate clerics - led by the two prominent *mojtaheds* of Tehran, *Tabataba'i* and *Behbahani* - supported the constitutional government but resisted secularization. *Tabataba'i*, for instance, disappointed with Parliament's support for a secular judiciary, is quoted as having said "with the establishment of these judicial courts, what else is there left for the clergy to do?" (in Tabari, 1983: 57) ¹⁸

In contrast to these two groups, the radical clerics, like *Va'ez* and *Malek*, supported secularization. In their sermons, they tried to shift people's loyalty from *saltanat* (kingship) and *Imamat* (ulamaship) to modern institutions like Parliament and Constitution. *Va'ez*, for example, encouraged his audience to consider the Constitution as they did the Qor'an. He told them that if they followed the Constitution and its laws they would have the same benefits that God promised them in following Qor'an (nd: 192).

Several factors facilitated the secularization process. At the turn of the century, the

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¹⁸ Despite their support for the constitutional regime, the prominent constitutionalist *ulama* residing in *Najaf* (Iraq), found it did not meet their expectations. In 1910, for example, in a telegram sent to the Regent, they expressed their dissatisfaction with the constitutionalists and the functioning of the Parliament. Referring to freedom of the press, they "complained about the absence of clerical censorship of the publications dealing with religion. They also complained about the irreligiosity of the political authorities" (Hairi, 1977a: 116).

corruption and rapacity of the ulama were not concealed from public view and it contributed to the growth of anticlerical feelings in the immediate pre-revolutionary period (Algar, 1980: 174). The bribery and corruption of the ulama became known to Iranians such that during the revolution, those who took refuge in the British Embassy sent a telegram to Behbahani and other ulamas in refuge in the shrine of Shah Abd al-Azim. In it, they openly asked the religious leaders not to accept bribes from the court. What is interesting is that instead of being offended, the ulama telegraphed back assuring that they would not accept bribes (in Mafi, 1984: 114).

Moreover, the interference of the ulama in society had increased during the reign of Mozaffar al-Din Shah and after the revolution. The powerful ulama became more and more involved in public affairs out of personal interests and ambition. After the establishment of the constitutional regime, taking advantage of his position as one of the main leaders of revolution, mojtahed Behbahani behaved as a king, receiving bribes and practising nepotism, favouritism, and influence-wielding. Consequently, he was nicknamed "Shah Abdollah" (Behbahani's first name was Abdollah) and "Shah Siah" ("black king", because of Behbahani's dark skin) (Safa'i, 1984: 185).

In their arguments against the ulama's authority, therefore, the secularists could point to the ulama's corruption and uphold the benefits of Parliament and Constitution in their stead. In one of his sermons, Va'ez told his audience that until last year they had suffered at the hands of two oppressive and corrupt groups of people: the government personnel and the ulama. Of the two, Va'ez went on, the ulama were worse (nd: 165-166).

Furthermore, a comparison between the 1852 and 1902 censuses of Tehran reveals

the decline of Islamic institutions and practices. There was a drop in the number of religious institutions while non-religious institutions increased in the same period. The number of mosques and *madarəs* (seminary schools) decreased from 116 in 1852 to 79 by 1902, and the number of *takaya* (places where religious ceremonies were held) decreased from 54 to 43 in the same period (Ettehadieh, 1983:203). The accounts of E'timad al-Saltaneh also confirm this trend. In 1893, he observed that the number of religious ceremonies diminished and many of *takaya* were closed during the religious month of Moharram. He believed that this was caused by the spread of *farangibazi* (the influence of European way of life) in Iran (1966:1108).

The enthusiasm shown by Iranians for modern schools and knowledge was another sign of secularization. Despite the prohibition of the religious leaders and the physical harassment of teachers and students, parents preferred to send their children to modern schools rather than to the religious ones. One of the founders of the modern schools wrote that the number of the students registered at these school reached more than 3,000 within six months (Ehtisham al-Saltaneh, 1988:327). Among these students there were also members of the lower classes. In his memoir, Mokhber al-Saltaneh wrote that in contrast to noble families, shopkeepers paid the school's fees regularly (1965:110).

In their secularization project, constitutionalists had the support of two newly formed institutions: *anjoman* (associations) and free newspapers. After the granting of the Constitution, hundreds of newspapers and anjomans mushroomed in Iran. With the escalation of conflict between constitutionalists and counter-revolutionary forces, the role of anjomans and newspapers increased. In the post-revolution period, these institutions, which were not

tied to the Islamic establishment, became the main forces supporting secularization

The existence of the balance of power between the court and Parliament allowed ordinary Iranians to live in a socio-political environment where they had an opportunity to participate in, and be exposed to debates on modern and traditional values and practices. In these debates, many privileges of Islamic leaders and institutions were publicly questioned, challenged, and debated.

5.2. Debates on Popular Sovereignty & Democracy

The Iranian Constitution consists of the Fundamental Laws and Supplementary Fundamental Laws each written at different times. As it was noted before, due to the precarious health of Mozaffar al-Din Shah, constitutionalists had hastily prepared and tabled the Fundamental Laws in the National Assembly in order to obtain the Shah's ratification before his death. The Fundamental laws, however, had serious shortcomings. Some of the elements absent in it were the principle of equality of all Iranians irrespective of religion and status, civil and political rights like security of life and property and freedom of organization and press, the separation of the executive, judiciary, and legislative powers, and the accountability of government to Parliament rather than to the Shah (Rahimi, nd:76, Lahidji, 1988: 140)

In view of these deficiencies in the Constitution, a number of deputies were assigned to write the Supplementary Fundamental Laws. After months of work and consultation with the constitutions of Belgium, France, and countries of the Balkans, the committee tabled the Supplementary Fundamental Law. This document was essentially a bill of rights. Immediately,

the court and the conservative clergy, headed by Nuri, opposed it. The Shah refused to ratify it claiming that he was for *mashru'eh* (a government based on Shari'ah) instead of *mashruteh* (constitutional government). The conservative ulama opposed the Supplementary Fundamental Laws mainly because of its recognition of popular sovereignty and parliament as the legislative power; equality of all Iranians before the law regardless of their religious affiliation; and freedom of the press. The secularists and conservative clerics clashed over the approval of the Supplement.

It is important to note the public character of these debates and their impact on the secularization process in Iran. The public character of debates in Parliament, mosques, anjomans, squares, journal articles, and leaflets opened the 'world of debating' social and political issues to the populace. That is to say, along with public debate on issues such as equality, freedom, and popular sovereignty, it was the monopoly the clerics had on debating and analyzing society which was also undermined. The metaphysical and spiritual halo existing around social and political issues evaporated and they became tangible issues accessible to lay people. Furthermore, since the battle between the constitutionalists and the conservative ulama centred on winning the heart and mind of the populace, the involvement of ordinary people was encouraged. For the first time, the people discovered themselves as an authority whose opinions mattered. Naturally, due to the predominance of an Islamic outlook among Iranians, the debate was mainly expressed and pursued in Islamic language and terms. However, each contending group provided a different interpretation of Islam in supporting its point of view. It is to the debate on these issues that I now turn.

5.2.1. Parliament as the Legislative Power: When the draft of the Supplement was brought before Parliament it caused much debate. One member of Parliament said that the Qor'an was Fundamental Law. Another member of Parliament objected and replied that Qor'an was the foundation of religion, whereas the Fundamental Law determined the principles of the state and the limits of government and the rights of the nation (Lahidji, 1988: 140). The British representative in Iran reported that "some of the deputies observed that they were not discussing religious, but political matters"(in Hairi, 1977a: 115).

The notion of parliament as a legislative power and representative of people's sovereignty was rejected by the conservative Nuri who stated that both the writing of a constitutional law and the following of the opinion of the majority were against Islam (in Hairi, 1977b: 333). Refuting the notion of parliament as a legislative power, he stated that it was an innovation and a downright aberration, because in Islam, no one was allowed to legislate (in Hairi, 1977b: 338). In Parliament when it was argued that deputies should be elected and the majority of votes was the basis for decision, Nuri challenged these ideas. He argued that according to Shi'a Islam the rulership is not within the capacity of "a certain grocer or draper" and relying on "the opinions of the majority is wrong"(in Hairi, 1977b: 331).

5.2.2. Principle of Equality: The debates on Article 8 on equality created conflict between secularist forces and conservative ulama and provided an opportunity for the public to be exposed to different points of view. Nuri argued that equality was not Islamic

It is impossible to have equality in Islam. [There are differences between] minors and those who are mature, the rational and the irrational, the sane and the insane, the slave and the free, the father and the son, the wife and

husband, the rich and the poor, the learned and the ignorant – the Muslim and infidel (in Hairi, 1977b 333-334)

In contrast to Nuri, in a series of sermons, using Qor'anic verses and Islamic traditions, Va'ez argued that the principle of equality was highly praised by Islam. He assured his audience that equality was not an innovation and actually it had been stressed by Islam more than any other religion in the world. He even claimed that the laws of equality and justice followed by Westerners already existed in the Qor'an (nd: 103-106). Va'ez defined equality as equality in front of the laws and equal treatment of all individuals regardless of their religious belief and status. When a person breaks the law, Va'ez said, it does not matter if that person is the son of the governor or a poor person, they must face the same punishment. If the law says that proprietors have to pay tax then all property owners must pay tax. We are all equal in front of the laws of God and we are judged by our deeds. Therefore, a Muslim and a non-Muslim must face the same punishment for the same misdeed (nd: 105-109)

Defending equality as a human right, Va'ez said that the Shah, governors, clerics, rich, poor, non-Muslim, and infidel are all entitled to human rights (*Hoquq-e ensaniyat*). Therefore, one can not steal or confiscate the property of another person even if that person is a Jew. He told his audience that before the establishment of constitution our governors did not recognize any rights for you, whereas the same God who created them has created you and with the same rights. Kings, ministers, and mojtaheds can not suppress your rights and have to respect your rights (nd: 163)

In a society deeply influenced by religion, the debate on equality could not be conducted without reference to the issue of religious equality. This debate challenged the

privileges recognized for Muslims vis-a-vis non-Muslims. Is a Muslim equal to a Christian, Jew, or Zoroastrian? The answer of Nuri was no. He explained that according to Islam a Muslim was not allowed to marry an infidel, although Muslim men were allowed to "have non-Muslim women as concubines on a temporary basis". Or with respect to the issue of inheritance "an infidel may not inherit from a Muslim, but the reverse is permissible". Nuri then said

Oh! [my] religious brother! How can Islam, which distinguishes among provisions of different matters, tolerate [the idea of] equality?.. See how the master of the shari'ah has granted you honours because you have been embellished with Islam. He has granted you privileges, but you deny them by saying that you must be equal brothers with Zoroastrians, Armenians and Jews (in Hairi, 1977b:334).

Va'ez, however, using examples from the life of Prophet Mohammad and Shi'a Imams, showed how they respected religious minorities (nd:109). He preached to his audience that

if you had read the history of the beginning of Islam, you would understand that the only reason for the extraordinary progress of Muslims was the presence of the law of equality and justice in Islam. Jews, Christians and Zoroastrians were considered equal to Muslims in human rights. That means, Muslims could not harass or confiscate the property of Jews, Armenians, or Zoroastrians (nd:215).

In another speech, Va'ez told his audience: "Oh Muslims! You will be free when Jews are not afraid of anyone except God and the laws of Qor'an. Iran will not be a free country if a poor Jew is harassed by you in street"(nd:142). In this debate on equality, members of religious minorities participated too. Zoroastrians, for instance, wrote letters to Parliament and journals defending the principle of equality (in Kasravi, 1975:316).

The arrest of some Muslims for the murder of a Zoroastrian by the constitutional government created an uproar among conservative clerics and Muslims. They opposed the

trial of the murderers of a Zoroastrian arguing that Muslims could not be tried for the murder of a non-Muslim (Malekzadeh, 1992:515). Condemning the murder, Vaez said that Zoroastrians are Iranians and it is the duty of the Iranian government and National Assembly to protect them (nd:193-194). The murderers were eventually tried and jailed and banished. What is interesting is that many Muslims participated in the funeral ceremony of the murdered Zoroastrian merchant (Malekzadeh, 1992:516; Kasravi, 1975:561).

It is worth noting that the principle of equality before the law was also a challenge to the immunity enjoyed by the religious leaders. In Parliament, for example, this privilege was publicly debated when a deputy requested Parliament to call a religious leader to Tehran for his wrong doings, another deputy opposed the request on the ground that he was "one of our ulama". The moderate mojtahed Tabataba'i, however, intervened and said that this individual is a criminal and it is the duty of government to try and punish him (in Mafi, 1984:256).

5.2.3. The Principle of Freedom: The issue of freedom also created heated debates inside and outside Parliament. The ulama strongly opposed the freedom of expression. Nuri, for instance, referred to the law of freedom of the press as one of the "erroneous articles of the Constitution"(in Hairi, 1977b:335). The complaint against the press and journalists was one of the issues that dominated parliamentary debates. A member of Parliament, Taqizadeh, stated that "according to my calculation in the 200 days since the establishment of Majles, we did nothing except talk about bread and the press"(in Kuhan, 1984:286). Conservative religious leaders attacked freedom as a principle that goes against Islam and leads to anarchy and moral degradation. In their journals, they claimed that with

the introduction of the principle of freedom the level of debauchery, immorality, and religious weakness had increased. Have you ever heard before, their journal asked its readers, that a Muslim child had been sodomized by a Jew or a Muslim girl approached by a Jew (in Turkman, 1983:263).

In contrast, Va'ez defended freedom of expression, the press, and associations. Freedom of expression, Va'ez said, is what the ulama and preachers are doing. That is, denouncing the oppressor, even if he is the governor, minister, or prince (nd 138-139). Freedom of the press, Vaez said, means that one has the freedom to write whatever one thinks if it contributes to the welfare of the country. In the case of abuse, a journalist must be punished according to the law. However, he can not be barred from writing and the journal cannot be sequestered (nd 143).

5.3. The Role of Modern Institutions in Secularization

A study of modern institutions like the National Assembly, anjomans, and public meetings, which emerged soon after the revolution, indicates the absence of a tradition of representation and participation in modern public forum in Iran. Iranians, in particular those living in the provinces, had difficulty in making sense of a constitutional regime and its mechanisms and concepts. Taqizadeh writes that in 1906, in Rasht (a city in north Iran), he participated in a meeting of merchants who wanted to elect their representatives to the National Assembly. Although these merchants had met several times, their Persian form of good manners and courtesy prevented them from electing representatives. Taqizadeh reports that he told them how in other countries people elect their representatives. Merchants liked

it and followed that process (1989: 54). In a telegram from Mashhad to Parliament, after reporting the participation of 1300 members of guilds in the election of their representatives, the following questions were asked: "What should be done if the person who obtained the majority of votes declines to be a representative? And what is the meaning of absolute and relative majority?" (in Nazem al-Islam, 1978: IV: 58)

The initial reactions of ordinary people to modern institutions reveals the depth of influence of an Islamic outlook and authority in Iran. Initially, they approached modern institutions from a traditional perspective and they were confused as to how to behave and interact with each other in the new socio-political settings. The initial confusion also reveals the conflict between traditional and modern perceptions of authority. The old order was challenged by new emerging forms of social interaction and its defenders.

From eyewitness accounts, one learns that initially public meetings and political gatherings were charged with excitement similar to those shown during religious ceremonies, that is by crying, self-beating, and fainting. The journal of Tabriz's Anjoman reported that in a meeting, Nateq, the famous preacher and one of the leaders of the revolution, read letters from Tehran reporting the activities of the Shah and ministers against Parliament and the Constitution. The audience burst into tears and all *sadats* (descendants of Prophets) threw down their turbans as a sign of losing their control and started to cry (in Fat'hi, nd: 198). In Isfahan, when the telegraph about the massacres in Azarbaijan was read in the anjoman, people cried loudly and some fainted. In the following days they covered bazaars with black fabrics, and organized street processions and self-flagellation as a sign of solidarity (Kasravi, 1975: 387-389).

Modern institutions such as Parliament, anjomans, and newspapers introduced Iranians to modern political concepts as well as modern public manners. These emerged as spaces outside of Islamic settings and potentially beyond the control of religious leaders, they introduced new modes of public interactions and new avenues of communication which challenged the authority of Islamic institutions and leaders. The novelty of modern institutions and practices introduced by the constitutional regime are discussed below through reference to three newly emergent public spaces: parliament, anjoman, and newspaper.

5.3.1. Parliament: It was only in August 1906, following the promulgation of the Constitution that the need for a parliament building emerged. After a number of meetings in a school, the deputies wrote to the Shah requesting the designation of a site for parliament (Kasravi, 1975:170). Like a mosque, people removed their shoes in front of the main entrance when entering the parliament building (Taqizadeh, 1989:56). The internal organization of the National Assembly also reflected Islamic public etiquette and manners. In the National Assembly, the seats of the three high-ranking ulama of Tehran were placed in a distinct location, separate from the seats of the deputies.

Ehtesham al-Saltaneh, the speaker of the parliament in 1906, reported that every time the ulama entered the Assembly the deputies and spectators rose as a sign of respect and some even uttered the *Salavat* (a formula of praise and greeting to God, Prophet Mohammad and his descendants). Parliamentary discussions were interrupted because the deputies stopped their debates and waited until the ulama were seated. Since the ulama sought respect, they usually entered the Assembly when it was in session. According to Ehtesham al-Saltaneh as

soon as he became the speaker of Parliament he prohibited the members of Parliament and the public from rising or uttering *salavat* for the ulamas (1988 604) The minutes of the first Majles show that the ulamas asserted a supervisory role in the parliament sessions and participated in decision-making. Without their presence the sessions did not start and without their approval laws could not be passed. From Dowlat-Abadi's memoir we learn that the speaker of parliament asked permission of the ulamas to introduce the government cabinet (1992:II:178) ¹⁹

Once the first majles opened in October 1906 and parliamentary sessions started, the deputies confronted new difficulties. The lack of experience of participating in public forum and debate disrupted parliamentary work. Initially, there was no agenda and parliamentary representatives did not follow a topic during their debates. According to the parliamentary speaker, the deputies instead of arguing for or against the argument of the previous deputy would introduce a new topic. Consequently the discussion and attention of Parliament wavered and shifted from one subject to another and the deputies could not come to any conclusion on the issues at hand (Ehtesham al-Saltaneh, 1988 634-35)

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¹⁹The power of the prominent mojtaheds in Parliament was denounced by secularists through leafleting. In a pamphlet distributed in Tehran, it was argued that formerly it was the Shah, princes and governors who oppressed the people, but now it was the ulama and their relatives, preachers and seminary students. The pamphlet described the presence of the two mojtaheds, Tabataba'i and Behbahani, in Parliament as unconstitutional and an obstacle to the work of members of Parliament. The leaflet asked them to leave the Parliament. These two ulama, the leaflet asserted, must set an example to the Shah, ministers, and ordinary people, by obeying the Constitution. But they were ruling like a king (in Kashani, 1983 134-136). Another leaflet, after condemning the interferences of the two mojtaheds in Parliament, argued that they should confine themselves to taking care of issues such marriage and divorce, clarification of principles of the faith to Muslims, and leading the prayer (in Kashani, 1983 141-144)

From the speech of a member of Parliament, Taqizadeh, we learn of the lack of basic rules such as a time schedule, agenda, and the order of making speeches which are necessary for a public forum to function and public debate to proceed. Taqizadeh lectured the deputies on the internal organization of Parliament and how they should perform in Parliament. For instance, he explained that it was important to specify when Parliament opened and that after announcing the opening of the session, the speaker of Parliament must read the agenda which had been prepared in the previous session. Each deputy who wanted to speak should ask permission from the speaker and other deputies should not interrupt him. The debate should continue until the deputies reached some conclusions, then the speaker of Parliament should collect the deputies' votes and announce a resolution (Nazem al-Islam, 1978 IV 29-30).

Although the deputies and audience remained impressed with Taqizadeh's suggestions, excerpts of parliamentary debates indicate that these difficulties persisted for several months. For example, months later, mojtabeh Tabataba'i, complained that the deputies discussed an issue for one or two days, but before coming to a conclusion they moved to another one. What is interesting is that Tabataba'i himself ended his speech asking the deputies to withhold their decision on an issue they had been discussing for several sessions and were ready to resolve. His request, however, was rejected by the deputies (in Nazem al-Islam, 1978 IV 118). Months later, another deputy complained about the lack of agenda (Kuhan, 1984 II 354).

It is important to stress the levelling function of the parliament. Outside the National Assembly, a mojtabeh was considered the supreme authority in relation to his followers and there was no one equal to him. Contrary to the mosque and the seminary school, in

Parliament, representing the will of the people, the Islamic and lay deputies were entitled to equal authority and to be treated equally. The religious leader's opinion had the same weight as those of a lay deputy. In parliament, his ideas were treated just like the ideas of other deputies, that is they were debated, questioned, and rejected. Moreover, like other deputies a cleric had to ask permission to speak in parliament and wait until his turn came.

5.3.2. Anjomans (associations): After the revolution and the recognition of the freedom of organization, hundreds of anjomans were formed across the country in defense of constitutional government. Two types of anjomans can be identified, the provincial/town and the voluntary anjomans. During the elections for the first parliament, the provincial and town anjomans were formed to supervise the elections as representatives of the central constitutional government. Later, however, their responsibility and power extended and in some places like Tabriz they functioned as a court of justice, fixed the price of bread and meat, corrected the weight system, prosecuted grain hoarders and distributed the hoarded staples. In Tabriz, the anjoman even expelled the *mojtahed* and the *Imam Jom'eh* (Friday prayer-leader) from town for their wrongdoing.

The second type of anjoman was established on a voluntary basis to defend and support the Constitution and Parliament against counter-revolutionary forces. After the revolution, such anjomans mushroomed across the country. In Tehran alone there were an estimated 140 anjomans, some of them with many members (Taqizadeh, 1959:44). To coordinate the activities of numerous anjomans in Tehran, an *Anjoman-e Markazi* (Central Society) was formed where each anjoman had its representatives. The most radical and

powerful among the anjomans was the Anjoman-e Azarbaijan, with almost 3,000 members (Etehadieh, 1982:155). Some of the anjomans had the ability to mobilize their members rapidly at the request of their representatives in Parliament. The *Anjoman-e Asnaf* (Association of Guilds), for instance, could quickly mobilize its numerous members, close the bazaar, or mount a public protest in the defense of Parliament (Mafi, 1984:210).

Anjomans acted as an intermediary between people and Parliament and sometimes put pressure on deputies by coming to Parliament and staging noisy demonstrations (Ehtesham al-Saltaneh, 1988:614-15). Anjomans intervened by organizing demonstrations and mobilizing the public in defence of Parliament and its decisions. For instance, when the Shah and conservative clerics held back the ratification of the Supplementary to the Constitutional Law for two weeks, members of the *Anjoman-e Markazi* took up quarters in the Parliament building and declared that they would stay there until it was passed.

The anjomans introduced Iranians to rules of public interactions and relationships different from those in the Islamic settings. The internal regulation of the anjomans was an avenue through which members were introduced to new rules of interactions, procedures, and cooperation. The following report on the Anjoman of Tabriz, for instance, illustrates both the lack of experience of its participants in functioning in a modern public meeting as well as the role of these meetings in disseminating these rules among the participants. Nateq, the constitutionalist preacher, for instance, while reading and explaining the articles of a document to those present at the anjoman had to remind his audience to discuss the article he was reading to them rather than asking about other sections of the document (in Fat'hi, nd:187).

5.3.3. Journals: In 1906-08, according to Ivanof, about 350 newspapers were published in Iran (1978:54). The press was one of the main avenues by which the constitutionalists attacked the old order, disseminating new ideas and mobilizing the population around the constitutionalist forces and causes. The increasing influence of journals among the population scared religious leaders and conservative forces, leading them to fiercely oppose the freedom of the press. From the pulpit, the conservative preachers condemned the newspaper as heretical and argued that they would eliminate religion unless they were banished (in Malekzadeh, 1992:III:506). A conservative cleric, in a letter to his son-in-law, cursing the radical preacher, Va'ez, notes

From the pulpit this wickedness has so encouraged people to read journals instead of the Qor'an and prayers that they consider the reading of journals as their religious duty and have stopped reading prayers and the Qor'an (in Kasravi, 1975:290).

The ulama were ridiculed by free newspapers. *Molla Nasr al-Din*, a satiric journal, for example, denounced not only the corruption and arbitrariness of court, government, and foreign powers, but also those of religious leaders. In its first issue, for instance, a cartoon of a mullah praying to the Russian Tsar was published. This journal was very popular and its satiric poems were learnt by heart. Despite the condemnation of the religious leaders, it remained popular. In December 1906, the Crown Prince banned the journal. This caused an uproar in Tabriz and the Anjoman of Tabriz telegraphed the Parliament asking for the withdrawal of the ban, which was done (in Aryan-Poor, 1975:42-45).

It is important to stress that in addition to its content, the press as a modern means of communication undermined the authority of religious leaders and settings. By liberating

words from time and space, newspapers eliminated the need for the use of Islamic settings and leaders as means of access to community's news and information.²⁰ By decontextualizing information, the press undermined the monopoly of clergy over people's minds

5.4. The 1908 Coup and the Closure of Parliament

In 1907 the Russian and British governments signed a treaty which divided Iran into two spheres of influence. Until the signing of the treaty, in order to stop Russia's growing power in Iran the British supported the Constitutional movement while Russia opposed it. Soon after the 1907 Agreement, British support for the constitution vanished while Russian opposition to the constitutionalists became virulent (Ghods, 1989 39)

The constitutionalists' reforms, especially those for a balanced budget increased the number of discontents. To balance the budget, the constitutionalists "cut court expenses, reduced royal pensions and salaries, eliminated many *tuyuls* (tax farms), and abolished *tasris* (conversions) that permitted landlords to pay their assessments in cash rather than in kind - but at conversion rates predating the sharp rise in price"(Abrahamian, 1982 93-94) With these cuts, the constitutionalists alienated a large number of ordinary people as well. These measures, for example, threatened the livelihood of thousands employed in the royal palace with its extensive gardens, stables, kitchens, storehouses, armories, and workshops. What was worse, these cuts occurred at a time of continuing bad harvest and increasing food prices (Abrahamian, 1982 94)

Supported by conservative clerics and Russian and British governments, in June, 1908

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²⁰ See Giddens (1990) on modernity, time, and space

the Shah staged a coup d'etat. With the order of the Shah the Cossack Brigade bombarded and stormed the National Assembly. Several constitutionalists were arrested, murdered (including famous preachers Malek and Val'ez), or exiled (including mojtaheds Tabataba'i and Behbahani). Journals and anjomans were outlawed and their offices were looted and journalists and leaders of anjomans were among the first victims of the coup. The conservative ulama openly supported the 1908 coup and collaborated with the court in the suppression of the Constitution. Nuri, for instance, defended the 1908 bloody coup and considered it to be the command of God. He wrote that despite the constitutionalists' attack on 'the king of Islam', he was so patient and considerate that the

wise men of the state and the majority of the people were astonished by his patience and tolerance. This crisis reached its extreme point, and [the people] openly turned away from the path of guidance. At this point the command of God, the exalted, was issued for their extinction (in Hairi, 1977b: 332).

Soon after the coup, however, the people of Tabriz demanded the deposition of the Shah and civil war broke out. Tabriz was besieged by government troops for 11 months. In April 1909, the Russian army supporting the Shah entered Tabriz under the excuse of protecting Russian citizens and massacred the defenders of Tabriz. However, by July 1909, the constitutionalists succeeded in defeating the Shah and occupied the capital, despite the opposition of the British and Russian governments. The Shah was deposed and his eleven year old son was installed as Shah. Mojtahed Nuri was publicly executed for his opposition to the Constitution and support for the Shah. Other conservative religious leaders were hanged or banished and imprisoned. The moderate mojtahed Behbahani was told to stay out of politics, which he did not do and was later assassinated.

The second parliament was opened in 1909. The constitutional government and Parliament, however, was paralysed by disagreements and fights between political factions, financial hardship, tribal rebellions, military attacks by the deposed Shah and his brother, and interference by the British and Russian governments. By the middle of 1910, Parliament was sharply divided into two rival parties whose armed supporters threatened to turn the streets of Tehran into a bloody battleground (Abrahamian, 1982:102). These difficulties put an enormous burden on the constitutional government which was in no position to implement its laws due to its empty treasury and military weakness.

The final blow against the Iranian constitutional regime was delivered by the Russian government. In November 1911, the Russians demanded the dismissal of the American financial advisor, Morgan Shuster, and agreement that Iran would not in future hire foreign advisors without British and Russian consent. Following the rejection of this ultimatum by the Iranian Parliament, Russian troops advanced toward the capital. In December 1911, the Iranian government, complying with the Russian ultimatum, forcibly dissolved the majles and dismissed Shuster. From 1911 to 1914, the Iranian Parliament remained closed and Russian and British governments were, in practice, the ruling power. Soon after the out-break of the First World War in 1914, Iranians reestablished the third majles, but it came to an end shortly after and remained in recession until 1918.

Although the Constitutional Revolution failed to establish a modern state, to resolve economic crisis, or to free the country from the interference of foreign powers, it paved the way for processes of secularization and modernization in the years to come. In the second Majles, for example, Democratic Party program openly demanded the separation of religion

and politics and for state control of religious foundations for public use. One can also refer to the laws made by Parliament on the Iranian educational system which, until the establishment of the Constitution, was mainly controlled by the clergy. At the turn of the century, there were few modern elementary schools in Iran and they received little support from the government. The Iranian Constitution encouraging public and modern education entrusted the establishment of schools to the Ministry of Arts and Sciences (Arasteh, 1969 72-74). Despite the opposition of the ulama, the number of modern schools increased and in 1910 about one third of 113 elementary schools were girls' schools (Arasteh, 1969 73).

In the following chapters the rise and fall of Pahlavi dynasty between 1906 and 1979 revolutions are studied. The characteristic of this period is that while many projects of the constitutionalists were realized the constitutional rights of Iranian citizens were trampled. The study of state-civil society relationships during the reign of the Pahlavis will enhance understanding of the establishment of an Islamic regime in Iran after decades of modernization and secularization.

SECTION TWO

THE 1979 REVOLUTION

This section will examine state-civil society relationship in the period that goes from the establishment of the Pahlavi dynasty in 1925 to its fall in 1979 and establishment of Islamic regime. The rise of the ulama to power marked a dramatic shift in Iranian history. In a country where in the 1940s and 1950s, the Communist Party (Tudeh) and the secularist National Front were the main political forces, and where, in the 1960s and early 1970s, there had been a strong anti-clerical feeling among the youth and intelligentsia, the establishment of theocracy came as a shock. Even Khomeini did not believe in the realization of the Islamic government, and in early 1970s he had predicted that it would not come until much later

No reasonable person expects our activities of propaganda and instruction to lead quickly to the formation of an Islamic government. Ours is a goal that will take time to achieve. Sensible people in this world lay one stone in position on the ground in the hope that someone two hundred years later will come to finish a building mounted upon it so that the goal will finally be reached... We must persevere in our efforts even though they may not yield their result until the next generation (Khomeini, 1981, 132-133)

In the 1960s and 1970s, the clergy were symbolized as backward and ignorant and were subject of ridicule. In 1967, a mojtabeh confided that "whenever he spoke and worked with university students, he left his *ammamah* (turban) at home and wore only a plain suit. The students of today, he pointed out, had little respect for the cleric" (Bill, 1972: 61). Bill then writes that "within the intelligentsia in general, there is a deep sense that Islam represents an alien intrusion forced upon Iranians by foreign invaders. It is often stated that the social problems of Iran stem from the Islamic intrusion" (1972: 61).

The gap between the old and young Muslim generations was wide. Thaiss in his study in Iran found that younger generation bazaaris, even the religiously oriented, rarely participated in weekly religious gathering (*hey'at-e mazhabī*). They told him that the religious speakers repeated the same themes over and over again and there was rarely anything new (1971:203). In this period, most modern Iranian literature was anticlerical.

A review of the analyses of the 1979 revolution reveals that scholars are divided on whether there were one or two revolutions. Those who believe in one revolution (i.e. the "Islamic Revolution"), following the breakdown approach (Tilly, 1975:4-6), argue that rapid modernization and westernization generated anomie and moral disintegration, and fostered the desire to return to authentic culture amongst Iranians. Accordingly, these scholars consider Islam and the clergy as forces of revolution (Arjomand, 1986, 1984, Kimmel, 1989, Skocpol, 1982, and Swenson, 1985:124).

Scholars favouring the two revolutions interpretation (i.e. the "Iranian revolution" followed by the "Islamic Revolution") argue that at the time of the revolution the left and other progressive forces were far behind the religious groups in terms of independent resources. The Shah is seen as having directed repressive policies against the Left and other progressive opposition and pursued comparatively soft policies towards the Islamic groups. This unevenness put the Islamic elements far ahead in resources such as independent organizations and financial means. According to these scholars Islamic regime was one alternative among others, rather than an inevitable outcome.

The scholars favouring the two revolution interpretation do not believe that the revolution was made by Islamic ideology and leaders. First, the clergy were late in joining the

revolution. In effect, in late August 1977, when Khomeini realized the lack of initiative on the part of the clerics, he issued a statement inviting them to take advantage of political reform

Khomeini said

today we are faced with an opportunity in Iran and you should take advantage of it... Today members of various parties find fault and voice their criticism in signed letters to the Shah and the government. You should write too and a few of the learned members of the clergy should sign also... others have done so and we have witnessed that they have said a lot but nothing has happened to them (in Nomani, 1990:8-9)

In addition, as Moghadam points out, it was not until late 1978 that Khomeini became the undisputed leader of the revolution. Even then, he ruled alongside the National Front and other secular and liberal forces for the first year of revolution (1989:152). Thus, the revolution was not started by Islamic leaders

Those favouring the one revolution interpretation stress the presence of Islamic demands. For instance, Kimmel in arguing that Islam was the motive force behind the revolution, quotes Khomeini's remark, "We did not want oil. We did not want independence. We wanted Islam"(1989:507). Arjomand mentions Khomeini's famous statement, "we did not make the Islamic revolution so the Persian melon would be cheap"(1986:405), in order to show that the revolution was driven by Islamic motives rather than economic ones (See also Snow and Marshall, 1984:139). However, these are Khomeini's remarks after seizing power, not before. Khomeini's positions during the revolution were completely different from those after. During the revolution Khomeini accused the Shah of

widening the gap between rich and poor, favouring cronies, relatives, senior officials. Wasting oil resources on the ever-expanding army and bureaucracy. Starving the countryside of essential services, including clinics, schools, electricity and public baths, failing to give land to the landless

peasantry, condemning the working class to a life of poverty, misery and drudgery, creating shantytowns and neglecting low-income housing, bankrupting the bazaars by refusing to protect them from foreign competition and the super-rich entrepreneur (Abrahamian, 1991:113).

Therefore the reaction of a factory worker to Khomeini's statement about the Islamic character of revolution is understandable. He said

They say we have not made revolution for economic betterment! What have we made it for, then? They say, for Islam! What does Islam mean then? We made it for the betterment of the conditions of our lives (quoted in Bayat, 1987:48).

Khomeini's interviews and speeches as well as the demands of Iranians during the revolution show that the establishment of theocracy was not on the original agenda of revolution. Further, even if we accept the thesis of anomie and desire to return to Islamic culture, why did Khomeini conceal his real agenda during the revolution? Why did Shi'a Iranians, given several interpretations of Islam, opt for the one presented by Khomeini? Why did the Iranian left and secular forces support Khomeini?

While supporting the argument of the two-revolutions thesis, I argue that scholars proposing this thesis have overlooked the support and tolerance of the political forces for Khomeini's repressive policies after the Revolution. Moghadam, for example, states that "as much as the Iranian people's revolt was against autocracy and for 'freedom, independence, republic', it is possible to regard the Iranian revolution as a project for emancipation" (1989:149). Why then did Iranians set aside their 'project for emancipation' and support Khomeini's anti-emancipatory project? How can we explain the support and tolerance by left and liberal forces of Khomeini's anti-democratic policies?

In this thesis the establishment of Islamic regime in Iran is studied in relation to

interpretative frames of opposition forces and the circumstances under which the revolution occurred. The contention of this thesis is that opposition, both Islamic and secular, had no confidence that Iranian people had the intellectual and moral qualities necessary for the establishment of democracy. This frame of interpretation had been developed as a result of socialization under the dictatorship of the Shah. Moreover, the quick transition from the dictatorship of the Shah regime to that of the Islamic regime prevented the flourishing of civil society. The confluence of such political circumstance and the authoritarian frames of interpretation of opposition facilitated the success of fundamentalists in seizing power.

CHAPTER SIX

REZA SHAH PAHLAVI (1921-1941)

6.1. Looking for a 'Savior' (1911-1921)

Soon after the revolution, the constitutionalists realized that the establishment of a National Assembly and Constitution was not in itself enough to cure the country's economic, social and political problems. What was needed was a strong and centralized government that could enforce the laws passed by parliament, ensure internal security and order, and preserve the country's integrity and sovereignty. The constitutionalists inherited the weak Qajar state. Ironically, what had helped them to succeed in the 1906 Revolution and to rescue the Constitution from the 1908 coup, had become an obstacle to the realization of their goals. Various constitutional governments were formed only to last for a few months. Between 1909 and 1921 some fifty cabinets were formed (Foran, 1993: 195). The constitutional monarch, Ahmad Shah (1909-1925), was not interested in the country's affairs but was mainly concerned with the accumulation of wealth and taking trips to Europe (Dawlatabadi, 1992: IV 177; Malekzadeh, 1992: VII 1622).

Lacking a strong standing army, the constitutional government was unable to implement its laws or to provide order and security beyond the capital and few big cities. Military forces were not centralized, unified, and well drilled. They were divided into separate divisions each commanded by advisors from countries such as Russia, Sweden, Austria, and Britain. The relations between the separate armies were strained. For instance, the relationships between the Gendarmerie (organized by Swedish officers and considered the

backbone of the Iranian Constitutionalist regime) and the Cossacks (organized by Russian officers and considered as tools of Tsarist Russia and the anti-constitutionalists) were very tense and volatile (Arfa, 1964 51). The army's discipline and combat capacity was poor. General Arfa reports that the arms of infantry regiments were kept in arsenals and soldiers were summoned for drill not more than half a dozen times in a month. Shooting instruction was seldom given, and there were soldiers who had never fired a shot. Even the officers had little military training. They sometimes worked in town as shop-keepers (Arfa, 1964 50).

The First World War had had a devastating effect on the lives of Iranians. It exacerbated the country's economic hardship, political instability, internal insecurity and disorder. Despite the proclamation of neutrality, Iran became the scene of conflicts between British, Russian, German, and Ottoman armies. By 1915, Ottoman troops had invaded the western regions, whereas British and Russian armies were in the south and north, and German agents were arming Iranian southern tribes. The foreign armies appropriated livestock and crops and took Iranian peasants away from their land and forced them into military projects like road-building. Consequently, irrigation works fell into disarray and villages were deserted. More than 100,000 died as the result of starvation and epidemics during the war (Foran, 1993 195, Wilber, 1975 17). In Tehran, 50,000 out of a total of 300,000 people died from famine and epidemics (Savory, 1978 88). An eye witness reported that Tehran was depopulated and there was unprecedented poverty (Dowlatabadi, 1992 IV 90). In addition to poverty and disease, there was highway robbery and political and tribal revolts in the provinces. Autonomous governments installed themselves in Azerbaijan and Gilan regions.

By 1921, Iran seemed to be on the verge of collapse and disintegration, and the

perspective for a better future was bleak. The political climate was favourable to the rise of a dictator in Iran. The population was tired of internal disorder and insecurity. Years later, Kasravi, constitutionalist and famous historian, reflecting about the post-war period said

the existence of many autonomous power centres in Iran, which had led to a complete lack of security and the virtual disintegration of the country, was the chief reason that the people of Iran supported the establishment of a dictatorship (quoted in Ghods, 1989: 193-194)

Bahar, constitutionalist and renowned poet and writer, reports that like many other intellectuals of the time he was tired and frustrated with weak governments and was in favour of a strong one (1984: 18). He believed that to solve its crisis, Iran needed to follow the examples of Atatürk and Mussolini (1984: 18). In those years, he felt the need for a dictator and in his journal he expressed the wish for the appearance of a man who could save the country by establishing a "government of fist and justice" (*mosht va adalat*) (Bahar, 1984: 100-101). The desire for order was so strong that Bahar, a progressive journalist, favoured a restriction on "the anarchy of opinion and press" (1984: 101).

In a survey of the Iranian press of 1910-21, Cottam discovered that in contrast to the first decade of the 20th century, the Iranian press devoted less space "to the virtues of liberal democracy and more space was given to the necessity of establishing law and order and building a modern Iran" (1979: 253). In the post-war period, there was an upsurge in novels written about Persian pre-Islamic civilization and empire. In those novels, Iranian heroes who saved the country from chaos and restored security were glorified. These post-war novels regretted the drift of Iran's glorious civilization and anticipated the appearance of a saviour (Abedini, 1990: 26-30).

In the post-war period, there was a vigorous demand for the establishment of a strong and centralized government among the population. Therefore, in 1921, when Reza Khan's coup d'etat took place, to many it "appeared to have ended the period of disintegration and revived the earlier hopes for national salvation" (Abrahamian, 1982:118). He was considered as a nationalist modernizer who came to save the country from chaos and disorder and to establish a modern, strong, and prosperous country. Frustrated and tired with weak constitutional government, internal insecurity and disorder, economic difficulties, and the interference of foreign powers, the constitutionalists were prepared to accept modernization without democracy. The 1921 coup was greeted with enthusiasm and was also well received by the constitutionalists. Bahar, for instance, writes that he felt "a strong trust toward this courageous man" and wrote a poem eulogizing Reza Khan and sent it to his office (1984:100-101; Tabari, 1977:50-51).

Once in power, Reza Shah realized most of the promises of the Constitutional Revolution but through a passive revolution (see chapter one). Between 1921 and 1941, he established a modern state, modernized the army, educational, and judicial systems, restored internal security and order, constructed roads and railroads, and abolished Europeans' immunity from the jurisdiction of Iranian courts and laws. Initially the constitutionalists supported him because they saw in him the embodiment of constitutional ideals. His modernizing reforms were reforms that they had fought for, but had failed to realize. Hassan Taqizadeh, a leader of the Constitutional Revolution, writing about Reza Shah states

A great leader appeared and took the destiny of the country in his hands, to work toward a great many of the ideals of which the now dead nationalists of the first [Constitutional Revolution] period once dreamed (in Ghods, 1989)

193-194)

These reforms, however, were introduced and implemented from above by the state while suppressing the independent organizations and social movements who had been the initiators and protagonists of those reforms. Reza Shah eliminated all political rights obtained by the 1906 Constitutional Revolution, established a brutal repressive regime, and made himself the sole ruler. One can say that, whereas the 1906 Revolution introduced Iranians to modern concepts of popular sovereignty and citizenship, Reza Shah stripped them of those rights. Consequently, initial popular enthusiasm faded as soon as they realized the price that they had to pay for the realization of their dreams.

6.2. State-Civil Society Relationships (1921-1941)

Under Reza Shah's direction, the state as the sovereign authority was established. Rival centres of power like tribal and provincial powers, and Islamic institution were controlled or eliminated. The state monopolized the use of violence by forming a national army, crushing the military power of tribes and provincial governments, and suppressing autonomous ethnic and political movements. Moreover, the state established its networks of control and surveillance throughout the country by the extension of its administrative, military, and police networks and secured the individuation of the population (e.g., by the issuance of identity cards, forced adoption of family names, and the introduction of state document registration). To ensure his absolute power, Reza Shah banned political parties and trade unions, censored the press, and severely suppressed strikes and protests. The state tried to create a national identity by eliminating ethnic and communal distinctiveness by the

imposition of one official language, a dress code, and standard school curriculum

6.2.1. From Reza Khan to Reza Shah Pahlavi (1921-1925): In February 1921, Sayyid Ziya al-Din Tabataba'i, a journalist, with the assistance of Reza Khan, then a military commandant of the Persian Cossack Brigade, staged a bloodless coup and was nominated Prime Minister. He, however, remained in office for only 90 days before Reza Khan arrested and exiled him. Since the time was not ripe for a complete assumption of power, Reza Khan accepted the post of Minister of War in the new cabinet. Between the 1921 coup and the appointment of Reza Khan as Prime Minister in 1923, Iran seemed to slip back into its old routine. Five different cabinets under three different Prime Ministers held office for between three to eight months between 1921 and 1923 (Katouzian, 1979:539).

Reza Khan's primary task was to put down the tribal and political revolts, and to restore law and order in the country by the establishment of modern army. In his declaration shortly after the coup d'état, he states that his aim was to establish a

strong government, which will create a powerful and respected army, because a strong army is the only means of saving the country from the miserable state of its affairs (in Ghods, 1989:193-194)

Reza Khan restructured the army, increased its numbers, and equipped it with new weapons. He dissolved all independent military units (i.e., provincial and tribal levies, the palace guards, the Persian Cossack Brigade, the Gendarmerie, and the South Persia Rifles) and created the first unified Iranian national army with a single uniform and a single administrative code. He paid the troops on a regular basis and fed and clothed them properly. For the first time, uniformed soldiers paraded in disciplined array in Iranian streets. Moreover, the army was

involved in the construction and renovation of roads, theatres, movie theatres, telegraph facilities, firms, coffee shops, and hotels (Dowlatabadi, 1992 IV 255)

In 1920s and 1930s, with his modernized army, Reza Khan organized a series of successful campaigns against ethnic groups. The constitutionalists rallied behind him and approved the suppression of the tribes as a major contribution to the nation's internal security (Ghods, 1989:98). Kasravi, for instance, reports that when the army of Reza Khan succeeded in suppressing the revolt in Mazanderan region, he also wanted the army to be moved to Azarbaijan to eliminate the revolt of the Kurds (1944:138). Reza Khan's success in organizing a strong army, consolidating internal pacification, restoring internal security and the authority of the central government throughout Iran brought him the prestige of a saviour. He was widely perceived as a nationalist modernizer, a military leader who would restore Iran's pride, unity and independence. In 1922, for instance, in an open letter, 256 merchants and guildsmen of the Tehran bazaar wrote

When Iran's disintegration and governmental collapse had reached such a level that the administration and army existed in name only, and we had become a laughing-stock to the foreigners, the strong leadership of our Lord general, the commander of our armed forces, Reza Khan, created a strong, unified national army, which restored the independence of Iran, reasserted the authority of the government by suppressing provincial and tribal revolts, and formed the government apparatus. Under Reza Khan's leadership, our country will enjoy internal security, progress, and prosperity (in Ghods, 1989:93)

The Iranian Socialist Party supported Reza Khan and praised him as "a bourgeois national leader" who was creating a "bourgeois-democratic dictatorship"(Ghods, 1989:95-96). In 1923, when Reza Khan was nominated Prime Minister, the leader and some members of the Socialist Party participated in his cabinet (Tabari, 1977:58)

It is important to note that the infringement of the constitution by Reza Khan and the army was tolerated and ignored by members of parliament. Apparently, law and order were top priorities in those days. For instance, although in early 1920s there was relative freedom of speech and association in Iran, from the beginning Reza Khan showed that he would not tolerate any criticism. Journalists who dared to criticize his activities were harassed and their offices looted and vandalized by the army. At the end of March 1922, two editors had to take refuge in the Soviet Embassy and the Shrine of Shah Abd al-Azim to escape Reza Khan's persecution. Their fault was that in their journals they had opposed the continuation of martial law and thereby had indirectly attacked Reza Khan (Wilber, 1975: 66). In September of the same year, a journalist who dared to demand that Reza Khan present his budget before the Majlis was arrested and brought to Reza Khan's office, beaten and jailed (Wilber, 1975: 67).

Despite his anti-constitutional behaviour, Reza Khan maintained the support of parliament. On October 6, 1922, when a member of parliament criticized the military authorities for suppressing newspapers and arresting and torturing journalists, the powerful parliamentary deputy and religious leader, Sayyid Hasan Mudarris, replied that

We can dismiss Reza Khan if we so desire, and nothing is easier. However, the good qualities of the Minister of War outweighs his bad ones. He is a mere fly on the face of our nation. In my opinion the Minister of War has major merits and minor defects (Wilber, 1975: 67).

In October 1923, Reza Khan was appointed Prime Minister. He also maintained the position of War Minister for himself. With the help of the army, he paved his way to the throne. The military networks allowed him to organize "spontaneous" demonstrations in his support and to besiege parliament by sending threatening telegraphs when it was necessary. The army was

used to manipulate elections and ensure the predominance of Reza Khan's supporters in the Fifth Majles, which opened in 1924. It was in this Majles that a proposal to abolish the Qajar dynasty and to establish of Reza Khan as the Shah of Iran was presented and approved. In December 1925, Reza Khan crowned himself, became Reza Shah, and founded the Pahlavi dynasty.

In his rise to power, Reza Khan did not face any significant opposition from the prominent ulama. He even enjoyed the support of high-ranking ulama like Ayatollahs Na'ini and Isfahani. When Reza Khan deposed the Qajar dynasty and established himself as the king, he received a telegram of congratulations from Ayatollah Na'ini (Hairi, 1977a: 146; Algar, 1991: 740).

6.2.2. The Reign of an Autocrat (1925-1941): After the coronation, Reza Shah increasingly identified the state with himself and ruled autocratically. The manner in which he exercised his power was significantly different from the way power had been exercised before. Until his coronation in 1925, power was relatively diffuse. The monarch's power was informally checked by forces such as big landlords, tribal leaders, provincial governments, wealthy bazaaris, and the Shi'a leaders. With the accession of Reza Shah to the throne, relationships between the various components of the power structure underwent significant changes. The most salient feature of these changes was the centralization of power in the hands of the Shah at the expense of all other power centres. Once an Iranian landlord, bemoaning his loss of power, said that "before Reza Shah, everybody was a king. But after Reza Shah came to power, he controlled all of us" (Foran, 1993: 230).

Once on the throne, Reza Shah established himself as the absolute authority and created a reign of terror. His centralized, strong army and extensive administrative networks enabled Reza Shah to control society and suppress democratic rights gained by Iranians during the Constitutional Revolution. The army became the most privileged and prestigious institution. In all public occasions, Reza Shah wore military uniforms and took pleasure in referring to himself as 'a simple soldier'(Wilber, 1975 249-250). He believed in the superiority of the military over the civilians and urged the latter to learn virtues like "discipline, obedience, dedication, preserverance, and cooperation" from the military (Wilber, 1975 249-250).²¹

The army expanded from nearly 23,000 men in 1920 to some 125,000 men by 1941 (Cottrell, 1978 391), a huge number considering that there were less than five million economically active males in Iran. From 1926 to 1941, according to official budgetary figures, on average one-third of annual revenues was spent for military purposes. This did not include a large proportion of the oil revenues that were devoted to the purchase of expensive weaponry and establishing armaments industries (Foran, 1993 221). Reza Shah obtained the support and loyalty of the army by the use of patronage. He gave the army a social status it had never before enjoyed. He offered governorships to loyal officers and sent them as inspectors to governmental departments and public works projects (Foran, 1993 202). High-ranking officers were given a standard of living above that of other salaried employees. State

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On his return from a visit to Turkey, Reza Shah attributed that country's rapid progress to the obedient character of its inhabitants. He told his retinue that "there is a great sense of discipline inborn in the Turks, whether soldiers or civilians. The Turk is more submissive and easier to lead"(Wilber, 1975 158-159).

lands were sold to them at discount prices and consequently many became wealthy and powerful landlords and thus members of the ruling class (Foran, 1993 221, Abrahamian, 1982 136)

Reza Shah built an efficient chain of command from his military office within the royal palace through the chiefs of staff to the field commanders. He dealt harshly with any disloyalty and he was quick to remove from office any high-ranking officials who enjoyed popularity. All military orders concerned with promotions and leaves were shown to him by the Minister of War before being issued (Wilber, 1975:236). As an army officer who fought in different regions of Iran, Reza Shah was fully aware of the importance of efficient communication and transportation systems in the execution of the authority of central government. Therefore, once in power, he put his energy behind road and railway construction. This enabled his army to patrol formerly inaccessible areas of country and to become a highly mobile force that could be dispatched rapidly to troubled spots. Transportation was so important to him that when a newly named Prime Minister submitted a list of proposed members of his cabinet, Reza Shah remarked, "I will select the Ministers of War and of Roads, the other posts are of less importance"(Wilber, 1975:234)

The bureaucracy was greatly expanded and reorganized during Reza Shah's reign. Civil servants were increasingly hired from the educated middle classes. With some 90,000 employees, for the first time, the central government was able to exercise its authority in the provinces (Foran, 1993:221). All provincial officials were now appointed by the Interior Ministry. All matters requiring decisions or the expenditure of funds were referred to and decided by the Interior Ministry. Nearly every appointment of provincial officials was

reviewed by Reza Shah, who "kept careful track of provincial affairs through the private reports that streamed to his secretaries"(Wilber, 1975 258)

Once he consolidated his power, Reza Shah began his attacks against civil society. In 1925, he took action against the trade unions and the Communist Party and arrested 800 union activists and communists. Many others fled the country (Tabari, 1977 87). In 1927, he dissolved the Socialist Party (Abrahamian, 1982 138-139). In 1931, anti-communist legislation was passed making it a crime to organize a party or association. Not only were the opposition parties banned but those which had faithfully supported Reza Shah were also soon outlawed. In 1932, for instance, he banished the subservient Progressive Party (*Hezb-e Taraqqi*) on the pretext that it promoted 'republican sentiment' (Ghods, 1989 100).

To ensure his absolute power, Reza Shah closed down independent newspapers. The police supervised newspapers and publications and permission was required for the publication of everything from foreign and domestic news to advertisements (Arasteh, 1969 144). The number of newspapers in circulation in the country dropped from 100-150 in the early 1920s to some 50 publications by 1940. Most of these papers, however, were published by the government (Arasteh, 1969 144-145). Guilds were closely supervised by the police and had to report their meetings to the local police, who would send someone to observe (Foran, 1993 238). He even closed down the traditional Iranian sport organization, *zurkhaneh*, although during his reign sports became a special branch of instruction in all schools. Reza Shah's dislike stemmed from the fact that the *zurkhaneh* were not only athletic clubs. They were also social centers attracting respectable bazaar people, tradesmen, and workmen of religious and moral qualities (Eilers, 1978 316).

The establishment of a modern and centralized army and bureaucracy enabled Reza Shah not only to detect potential disturbances, squash opposition and revolts, but also to determine the outcome of the elections. With the assistance of the police chief he drew up a

list of parliamentary candidates for the Interior Minister. The Interior Minister then passed the same names onto the provincial governors-general. Finally, the governors-general handed down the list to the supervisory electoral councils that were backed by the Interior Ministry to oversee the ballots (Abrahamian, 1982:138)

With the suppression of tribal and political revolts and internal pacification, the responsibility of police forces for internal order increased. Police forces became increasingly specialized and tailored to the needs of specific bureaucracies. These included a national police, a rural gendarmerie, a railroad police, and a customs police (Rejali, 1994: 57). To travel from one city to another permission was required from the police and officials were placed beside post boxes to control and read letters before allowing them to be mailed (Jami, 1985: 63, Eftekhari, 1991: 28).

Reza Shah controlled not only the general population, but also government officials through his secret police and private sources of information. He deliberately indicated to government officials that their activities were checked by his secret informants (Wilber, 1975: 183, 231). Reza Shah even tried to extend his control to Iranian opposition living abroad. German and French police restrained the activities of Iranian opposition under pressure from the Iranian government (Eskandari, 1989).

6.2.3. National Uniformity and Conformity: In the post-World War period, the idea of Iran as a nation with one identity became dominant among Iranian intellectuals. Ethnic

and religious diversity, one of the characteristic traits of Iranian society, was no longer tolerated. Instead, the ideas of one nation and national identity were in vogue. As Abrahamian succinctly puts it

The old tolerant attitude toward cultural heterogeneity was gradually supplanted by an intolerant crusade for national homogeneity: tribal nomadism became associated with rural gangsterism, regional autonomy with administrative anarchy, communal variety with political incompatibility, and linguistic diversity with oriental inefficiency (1980:99)

To achieve national uniformity, Reza Shah tried to eliminate ethnic, religious, regional, and traditional status distinctiveness by changes in provincial boundaries, and the prohibition of ethnic languages and dress. He imposed a uniform code of dress, one official language, one school curriculum, and a registration system throughout the country.

To weaken ethnic and regional bonds, old provincial boundaries were revised and new provinces were created which "differed enough from the old provinces in their boundary to give the impression of being new units"(Cottam, 1979:98-99). In 1928, in order to eliminate ethnic distinctiveness the regime passed a law prohibiting the use of traditional dress in favor of Western garb. All adult males were ordered to wear the so-called Pahlavi hat instead of their ethnic, religious, and status headgear. The Shah is reported to have remarked that "I am determined to have all Iranians wearing the same clothes, since when Shirazis, Tabrizis, and all others no longer wear different costumes there will be no reason for differences among them"(in Wilber, 1975:232-233). In 1935, a decree prohibited the use of "honorific titles, such as *mirza*, *khan*, *beg*, *amir*, *shaykh*, and *sardar*" which indicated regional and status distinctiveness (Wilber, 1975:167).

Persian became the official language used in schools, mass communications, and

offices throughout the country. Education, publication, and public speeches in non-Persian languages like Azeri, Kurdish, Arabic, and Armenian were forbidden. In the 1930s, Reza Shah closed down Armenian, Jewish, and other minority schools and printing presses. In 1935, an Iranian Academy was established with the mission of purging the Persian language of words of Arabic, Turkish and others of foreign origin (Wilber, 1975: 163). The military ranks and Iranian places with non-Persian names were given new and "pure" Persian names. To instill national identity, Reza Shah set up a Society of Public Guidance. The nationalist campaign was pursued through textbooks, lectures, newspapers, and radio broadcasts. Text books were rewritten to stress nationalism. Boy and girl scouts were organized and their leaders were instructed to inculcate nationalism (Cottam, 1979: 257). The architecture of many government buildings was designed in the style of the pre-Islamic architecture and the emblem of Iranian pre-Islamic religion, Zoroastrian, appeared on government buildings. For instance, the police Headquarters and the National Bank, constructed during the Reza Shah's reign, reflected the architecture of Perspolis, while the Archaeological Museum was modelled on the Sassanid palace (Elwell-Sutton, 1978: 37, Al-e Ahmad, nd: 324-325). It is reported that in all his public speeches, Reza Shah avoided talking of the Iranian Islamic period. He never tired, however, of referring to the peaks of Persian national history, the Achaemenian and the Sassanian periods. In effect, he chose for his dynasty the name Pahlavi, the name given to the Persian spoken during the Sassanian period (Haas, 1946: 170).

6.2.4. Secularization and Anti-Clerical Policies: Until 1927, Reza Shah was cautious and avoided direct confrontation with the ulama. Before his position was

consolidated, he took care to attend religious ceremonies. In June 1922, for instance, on the anniversary of the martyrdom of Imam Hussain, Reza Khan organized a street procession and marched at the head of the military band. As further proof of his piety, he made a pilgrimage to the Shi'a shrines in Najaf and Karbala (Banani, 1961:42).

However, once established, Reza Shah did not hesitate to use his power against the ulama and to curtail their influence. In 1935, for example, he ordered the army to shoot at a large crowd gathered at the shrine of Imam Reza in Mashhad. To curtail the power of Islamic authorities, Reza Shah ordered the government to administer all endowment properties. This reduced one of the main sources of the ulama's incomes. The custom of sanctuary (*hast*) within Islamic spaces such as mosques, shrines, and the houses of the ulama was abolished. Public religious ceremonies, passion plays (*Ta'ziyeh*), and pilgrimages to Mecca and the Shi'a shrines in Iraq were prohibited. The Muslim lunar calendar was replaced by a solar calendar (Abrahamian, 1982:140-141, Wilber, 1986:128). Reza Shah also eliminated the presence of religious leaders in parliament. Their number in the National Assembly declined from 40 percent in the sixth majles to 30 percent in the seventh majles to zero in the eleventh majles, which met in 1937 (Parsa, 1989:36).

It is important to stress that contrary to common belief, modernization was not a novel project introduced by Reza Shah. In many ways, he carried on the work of earlier reformers whose efforts had failed due to a number of factors, among them the opposition of the ulama. Reza Shah undermined the monopoly of the clergy over Iranian educational system and replaced the Islamic educational institutions (*maktah* and *madresseh*) with the modern state schools. In this way, one of the main financial sources of income of the clerical

community was eliminated. He abolished compulsory religious education in schools (Foran, 1993:239). In 1929, the government decreed examinations for teachers and theology students at the religious seminaries and in 1934 the Ministry of Education announced a curriculum for these seminaries. In this way, the government gave itself the right to determine who was a member of the clergy (Momen, 1985:250). In 1934, the establishment of a Faculty of Theology in the University of Tehran provided an alternative means of acquiring a religious education.

To secularize the judiciary, the Minister of Justice replaced Islamic trained judges with modern educated lawyers. Judges were required to hold a degree from the Tehran Faculty of Law or a foreign university (Banani, 1961:73). The required qualifications eliminated many members of the clergy from the new judicial system (Kasravi, 1944). In 1931, the jurisdiction of the Islamic courts was narrowed and they could only deal with matters like marriage, divorce, and inheritance. The law forbade the shari'a courts from pronouncing sentences. Their verdicts were to be sent to the state court that had referred the case to them, to be pronounced by that court (Banani, 1961:78-79).

The lucrative prerogative of registering documents and property titles, and the power of attorney was removed from the Shari'a courts and transferred to secular courts. This was another major blow to one of the remaining sources of clerical income. As a result of the loss of their influence and sources of income, many clerics abandoned their robe and sought employment in government. Reza Shah curbed the influence of the clergy not only by legislation but also by conducting a successful campaign in presenting them as backward and ignorant. The silence of the ulama toward the anti-clerical policies of Reza Shah, therefore,

stemmed not only from the government's harsh treatment, but also from their awareness of the widespread support for these reforms. It is reported that buses refused to carry the clergy. Even the high-ranking ulama faced hostility and humiliation (Faghfoory, 1987: 427, 431).

6.3. Passive Revolution & 'Women's Emancipation'

In this chapter the reactions of Iranian women's organizations and activists are discussed as an example of ambiguous and confusing character of a passive revolution. Their ambivalent attitude stemmed from the fact that Reza Shah introduced reforms and legislations favouring women's position from above by the state intervention but at the same time repressed and eliminated organizations and movements which were advocates and supporters of those reforms.

Since the mid-19th century, Iranian intelligentsia had debated and struggled for women's rights and emancipation and against illiteracy, polygamy, the veil, and the seclusion of women (Tohidi, 1994: 128)²². Nevertheless, the 1906 Constitution did not recognize any

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In the following poem, Jelveh of Ardestan (d. 1896) condemns polygamy and its patriarchal nature:

One night a girl sweet and fair-shaped,
Asking a question of her mother said,
"O Mother, I have a problem
From which my heart is in flame
Why has our Prophet wise allowed
A man several wives to have
But that most sage and learned one
Of men for women did not grant but one?"
A deep sigh had the mother
Which made the daughter even sadder
And said, "Since the Prophet was a man,
So he allowed several wives for a man
For sure, if the Prophet was a woman,

rights for women. Along with the insane and the criminal, their right to vote was denied. In 1911, when for the first time a parliamentary deputy raised the issue of equal rights for women, the National Assembly was shocked. A London Times correspondent reporting the reaction of the parliament wrote that a deputy, who was a cleric, declared that

he had never in a life of misfortune had his ears assailed by such an impious utterance...He denied to women either souls or rights, and declared that such doctrine would mean the downfall of Islam. To hear it uttered in the parliament had made his hair stand on end. The President [of parliament]...asked the official reporters to make no record in the journals of the National [Assembly] of this unfortunate incident (in Sanasarian, 1982:23-24).

After the establishment of a Constitutional regime, women's activities became increasingly independent. Between 1910 and 1930 more than 20 women's periodicals were published, each criticising the status of women in the family and society and making specific demands for change (Moghissi, 1994:35). In addition, there were several women's secret societies. Murgan Shuster, the American financial adviser hired by the Constitutional government in 1910, reports the presence of "dozens of more or less secret societies among Persian women, with a central organization by which they were controlled"(1968:193). Shuster even benefited from the recommendations and support of some of these secret societies (1968:193-194).

The use of the veil was debated and challenged by women. In 1932, for instance, at the initiative of the journal 'Women's World' a passionate debate on the veil took place in one of its issues (Sanasarian, 1982:62). To show their discontent with the veil, some women changed the colour of the *chador* (long veil) from black to dark brown or even stopped

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Several husbands would be part of the plan.
O my darling, good women suffer most
As from womenfolk has never a prophet come forth'
(in Javadi, 1985:51)

wearing a veil in public, but they were attacked by a mob in the streets (Moghissi, 1994: 39)

Initially Reza Shah did not impede women's organizations from activity and indirectly supported them. The number of unveiled women, especially in the capital, increased after his accession. The police, on secret orders of the Shah, had to safeguard unveiled women from the mobs (Bamdad, 1977). In 1926, the chief of police, acting on official orders, took his wife to one of Tehran's most fashionable restaurants (Arasteh, 1969: 183). In 1928, the police issued "instructions that prohibited interference with women when they were attending the cinema, talking to men in the streets, riding in a carriage with the top down, and mingling with other groups in restaurants and theatres, with the face veil thrown back" (Wilber, 1975: 129). In 1934, educational institutions, especially Tehran University were ordered to open their doors to women. Public places, such as cinemas, theatres, cafes, and hotels, were threatened with heavy fines if they discriminated against women (Abrahamian, 1982: 144). In 1935, the Prime Minister gave a tea party for cabinet ministers and their under-secretaries and they were instructed to bring their wives along (Wilber, 1975: 166). Soon the ministers started to give mixed-sex receptions to which the men were to bring their wives.

In 1936, the government banned the use of the veil. The Queen and princesses appeared unveiled in public. Officials whose wives were found to be wearing the veil or did not bring their unveiled wives to office parties risked dismissal. During the first month of the anti-veil law, the ministries distributed the monthly paychecks only to the employees' wives who showed up at the ministry offices wearing hats (Arasteh, 1969: 184). Low-ranking government employees, such as road sweepers, were subject to fines unless they paraded their unveiled wives through the main streets (Abrahamian, 1982: 144). At schools, girls had to

appear unveiled and in European dress. The ministry of Education required them to enrol in physical education classes and on special occasions they marched en masse in public parades. Female teachers were compelled to wear blue uniforms and small hats, and those who disobeyed were subject to dismissal (Arasteh, 1969: 185).

The police arrested and harassed women who wore the chador. One eye witness reports that: "I was in time to see police tearing silken scarves from the women's heads and handing them back in ribbons to their owners" (in Arasteh, 1969: 184). Women wearing the *chador* were not allowed in theatres and public baths, and the bus drivers were liable to fines if they accepted veiled women as passengers (Wilber, 1975: 174). It is reported that there were women who did not leave their homes until the fall of Reza Shah in 1941. When he outlawed the veil, Jalal Al-e Ahamad's father, a religious leader, installed a bath in his home so that his wife and daughters would not have to leave the house without a chador to go to a public bath. Those who financially could not afford the installation of a bath at home had to come up with other solutions. Baraheni writes

I remember from my childhood, when my father would carry his mother in the sack, empty his load in the bath and then came back for his wife, my mother (1977: 52; Hoodfar, 1993: 10-11)

Initially, most women's organizations and journals supported Reza Shah and found a saviour in him. Many of them did not hesitate to join the new administration in 1937 (Sanasarian, 1982: 70-71). Parvin-i tisami, the renowned female poet, for instance, celebrated women's unveiling with the following poem, entitled *Zan dar Iran* (Woman in Iran)

It is as if the woman in Iran was not an Iranian before
She had no pursuit other than misfortune and distraction
She lived and died in a solitary corner

What else was a woman in those days if not a prisoner?
 No one like a woman dwelt in darkness for centuries
 No one like a woman was sacrificed in the temple of hypocrisy
 (in Bayat-philip, 1978:306)

With the increase of Reza Shah's power, however, the independent women's movement came under attack. Several women's journals and organizations ceased by mid-1930s and some of their leaders were arrested. It is important to note that in 1935, on the order of Reza Shah, a women's organization called *Kanoon Banovan* (Ladies Centre) was formed. The organization's meetings often took place in the presence of his daughters. In other words, despite his interest in changing the conditions of Iranian women, he was unwilling to allow independent women organizations to participate in their own emancipation. While suppressing the women's organizations and press, Reza Shah intervened on behalf of women and realized some of their demands from above by legislation, the mobilization of the army and the bureaucracy. Women's emancipation became government policy and government apparatuses were mobilized for its realization.

6.4. The Fall of Reza Shah

In August 1941, following Reza Shah's opposition to the Allied plan to send supplies and ammunition to the Soviet Union through Iran, Allied troops invaded Iran. Reza Shah abdicated in favour of his son Mohammad Reza Pahlavi who was to rule for the next thirty-eight years. When the Iranian radio announced the departure of Reza Shah, jubilant Iranians poured into the streets congratulating each other. His cruelty and rapacity were publicly denounced in newspapers and parliament. Many Iranians approached the judicial system and

parliament in order to recover their lands and expropriated property. Among his many legacies, Reza Shah left the foundations of a modern state and society, ulama's quietism, and the idea that progress can be obtained without democracy²³

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²³ It is believed that at the time of his abdication in 1941, Reza Shah was the wealthiest man and the biggest landlord in Iran. His account "at the National Bank rose from one million rials in 1930 to 680 million by 1941 (worth seven million pounds sterling). He had in addition acquired enormous estates covering three million acres and owned shares in numerous local factories, companies and monopolies that yielded excellent returns. His land-grabbing habits were notorious. Landlords offered him gifts of their land, either out of terror or under duress. In this way he came to possess an estimated two thousand villages with over 235,000 inhabitants" (Foran, 1993: 224)

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE RISE & FALL OF MOHAMMAD REZA SHAH (1941-1979)

This chapter examines state-civil society relationships in the period that goes from the coronation of Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi in 1941 to his overthrow and the establishment of Islamic regime in 1979. In this period, the Shah succeeded in establishing one of the most powerful and pervasive dictatorial regimes of the region. With the help of his army, secret police, and bureaucracy almost all spheres of society were under the Shah's control and he ruled as an autocrat. Along with expansion and centralization of power, civil society was squeezed, opposition organizations and activists were persecuted, and society was fragmented by widespread fear and suspicion. By the early 1970s, Iran was called the "island of stability" by the Shah and his Western allies. The Shah's repressive and arbitrary policies, however, antagonized the majority of the population. In 1979 after nearly two years of popular uprising, mass demonstrations and strikes, the Shah's regime was toppled.

It is important to note that in contrast to Constitutional Revolution, the 1979 revolution did not unfold in a context of relative political freedom and flourishing civil society. Until his departure from Iran, the Shah persecuted the opposition and the prospect of a US-backed coup haunted Iranians after the revolution. Consequently, Iranians, who poured into politics with values, attitudes, ideas and ideals developed under dictatorship, did not have the opportunity to reflect on and debate their own frames of interpretation and those of the organized forces. In other words, the 1979 revolution did not create the political climate necessary for a 'frame transformation'.

7.1. State and Civil Society (1941-1963)

In 1941-1953 period, the new monarch, Mohammad Reza Shah was not the main figure of Iranian politics. He inherited an unpopular throne and a country ravaged by economic and political crises. The economic hardship, inflation, food-shortages, and internal migration caused by the Second World War and the presence of foreign troops created social unrest. In the first half of 1942, for example, the price of bread in Tehran jumped from six cents to one dollar and the bread shortage prompted a riot in which many were killed and wounded by the army (Foran, 1993:267; Jazani, 1980:20). The allied military occupation had discredited the regime's main power-base, the army. Despite all the rhetoric about its patriotism and millions of dollars that were spent, the military machine collapsed within a few days of the Allied invasion. High ranking army officers hastily abandoned their troops and command posts. The soldiers, who remained without food and command, wandered in the streets in search of food (Tafreshian, 1988). Moreover, due to the presence of pro-German sentiment among the Iranian army, the Allies did not trust it and consequently restricted its activities.

After the fall of Reza Shah in 1941, the Iranian state lost much of its control over civil society, which then found the opportunity to flourish. The presence of a relatively free political climate allowed the opposition forces the opportunity to organize themselves against the court. Independent newspapers and social and political organizations sprang up in an atmosphere of relative political freedom. During the 1941-53 period, several political parties appeared. The political scene in Iran was, however, mainly dominated by the secular National

Front and Iranian Communist Party, known as the *Tudeh* (masses) Party. Formed by Mossadeq in 1949, the National Front was a loose conglomeration of nationalist parties and groups from both traditional, religious and modern, secular political spectrum. Its objectives, declared in its statute, were: "The establishment of a strong, centralized nationalist government, free elections, and basic freedom of thought and action"(in Ghods, 1989:182).

The Tudeh party, grew rapidly from its founding in 1941 immediately after the abdication of Reza Shah. After one year it had over 25,800 members (Abrahamian, 1982:293). In 1946, it had a total of 100,000 active members and its trade union had 355,000 members (Abrahamian, 1982:303). On May Day of 1946, with its Trade Union, the Tudeh organized several street parades in Iran. In Tehran alone over 60,000 participated (Abrahamian, 1982: 300). In the same year, three cabinet ministers were from the Tudeh party. The Tudeh party established women's and youth organizations and published magazines for each of them. Tudeh's branches in industrial cities were strong enough to control labour disputes and to influence political situation. Some parts of the Caspian provinces were practically controlled by the Tudeh (Anvarkhamei, nd 293-294). Abrahamian quotes a British attache's report of the supervision of Tudeh over the government officials in the Caspian provinces.

No government official is allowed to send telegraphic messages in code. No movement of gendarmerie can take place without prior permission of the Tudeh. The railway administration is completely under Tudeh control. In fact, the Tudeh can take over whenever it wishes to do so (1982: 304)

In the 1940s and 1950s, when political forces were fighting to limit the Shah's power, to reestablish constitutional rights and government, and to nationalize oil, the majority of

religious leaders, including Khomeini, remained quiet. In contrast to the previous two decades, the relationship between the court and the ulama was cordial. The Qom Seminary establishment led by Ayatollah Hossein Boroujerdi, the sole *Marja-e Taghlid* (the source of emulation) until his death in 1961,²⁴ supported the Shah and prohibited the clergy from political activities. In 1949, for example, Ayatollah Boroujerdi convened a large conference in Qom and invited some 2,000 religious leaders to debate the ulama's participation in political activity. The participants voted unanimously against the clergy's participation in politics and political organizations (Akhavi, 1980:63). Adamant in his opposition to political activity by clergymen, Ayatollah Boroujerdi kept his distance from religious leaders who were involved in politics and made "it impossible for political forces to organize and take root in the theological center" of Qom (Borghei, 1992: 59). In 1947, Ayatollah Boroujerdi even rejected the idea of politicizing the Palestinian issue (Borghei, 1992: 59).

The Shah, facing the challenge of a flourishing and threatening civil society, appreciated the ulama's support and did his best to please them. In the post-1941 turbulent political climate, the Shah welcomed the ulama's cooperation and treated them with respect and deference. To please the ulama, he favoured them and their relatives with

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²⁴ The Qom Seminary Centre flourished under Ayatollah Boroujerdi's leadership not only theologically but also administratively and financially. It is estimated that "by 1961 five million rials a month were being channelled to Qom. This revenue permitted considerable building activity...and also helped to increase the number of the students at the *hauza* [i.e., Centre] to some six thousand by the time of Boroujerdi's death...He patronized schools of modern type, where natural sciences were taught together with Islamic knowledge, sent emissaries to various countries in Africa, Asia and Europe, and instituted friendly contacts with the Azhar with a view to a Sunni-Shi'i rapprochement" (Algar, 1991:747).

jobs, pensions, and seats in the legislature, visited the shrines and distributed largesse through religious hands, rebuilt and refurnished the mosques, invited the ulama to visit him on Now-Ruz [Iranian new year's day], and responded gracefully to requests for jobs and favours from religious quarters (Binder, 1962:76).

In 1943, Soheili, the Prime Minister, strengthened the position of the religious establishment and ordered the police not to enforce the ban on the veil, relaxed government supervision of Islamic schools, promised to end co-educational classes in state schools, and introduced divinity classes into the state school curriculum (Abrahamian, 1982: 184). The demands made by the ulama in this period were mainly moral and religious requests and did not address the economic and political concerns of the general population. The clergy, for example, demanded and obtained the repeal of several anti-religious measures like the ban on Islamic dress, religious celebrations and ceremonies, and the observance of the holy month of Ramadan in government offices.

Immediately after Reza Shah's fall in 1941, the clergy waged strong attacks on women's status. In some provincial cities, the clergy "managed quite easily to drive the women back into the prison of the veil, and even to get girls' schools closed on various pretexts"(Bamdad, 1977:106). Early in 1948, fifteen high-ranking ulama issued a *fatwa* (religious decree) forbidding women to shop in the bazaars and markets without wearing the veil (Akhavi, 1980:63). Despite the ulama's pressure and lack of government support for women, however, the ulama did not succeed in bringing back the veil. Some women reverted to their earlier patterns of dress but not all women did so (Arasteh, 1969:185-186).

Dissatisfied with the quietism of their religious leaders, bazaaris and radical Muslim intellectuals joined and supported secular organizations, mainly the National Front, or formed

their own associations. In the early 1940s, for example, a number of Muslim students and professionals (engineers, teachers, and physicians) concerned with the rise of Marxism among youth and unhappy with the clergy's quietism formed Islamic associations. It is important to note that these Islamic organizations were independent from direction or even significant participation by the ulama (Algar, 1991:748). During the 1941-1953 period, these Muslim Associations had negligible influence due to the dominance of a secular orientation among the Iranian intelligentsia (Chehabi, 1990:123).

In 1951, Mosaddeq, the leader of the National Front, nationalized the oil industry as soon as he took office as Prime Minister. The nationalization of oil put the Mosaddeq government in conflict with both the Shah and the British and US governments. In September 1951, the British oil company evacuated its technicians and closed down its oil installations. The British naval force in the Gulf was reinforced. As a result of this oil embargo the general economic situation of the country deteriorated. In addition to economic hardship and unemployment, clashes between political forces heightened. In July 1952, Mosaddeq clashed with the Shah over the nomination of the War Minister. Following the Shah's refusal of his nominee, Mosaddeq resigned, criticizing the Shah for violating the Constitution and appealing directly to the public. People poured into the streets in his support and major strikes broke out throughout the country. Popular pressure forced the Shah to ask Mosaddeq to return to office (Abarahamian, 1982: 268-272).

Mosaddeq's victories, however, heightened the ideological differences between the secular and religious wings of the National Front. Moreover, in this period the active presence of the Tudeh with its strong trade unions and its support of Mosaddeq were perceived by

conservative ulama as evidence of the imminent threat of a communist takeover (Yazdi, 1990:284). The religious wing of the National Front, withdrew from the organization denouncing Mosaddeq for having "betrayed Islam" and having imposed a "socialist dictatorship" on Iran. This inevitably weakened Mosaddeq's power (Abrahamian, 1979:4).

In August 1953, a CIA-backed military coup toppled Mosaddeq's government. With the ousting of opposition forces, the Shah embarked on strengthening his position. However, he preserved his alliance with the clergy and big landowners against the left and other opposition forces. In fact, after the 1953 coup, in their recantation letters, the arrested members of the Tudeh Party were compelled to declare their loyalty not only to the Shah, but also to the Islamic faith (Katouzian, 1981:193). The Shah abrogated all freedoms and crushed political organizations, unions, and the independent press. Leaders of the opposition were arrested, tortured, or exiled. The regime did not tolerate any expression of discontent. The number of major industrial strikes dropped from 79 in 1953 to 7 in 1954, and then to 3 in 1955-57 (Abrahamian, 1982:420).

In 1957, four years after the coup, the regime secure in its control revoked martial law. In the same year the secret police SAVAK *Sazemaneh Etelaat va Amniateh Keshvar* (National Security and Information Organization) was created with the help of US advisors²⁵. In 1957 the Shah also established two court-sponsored parties, *Mellhyun* (Nationalist) and *Mardom* (People), headed by two of his most trusted friends. The regime strove to bring the

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As early as 1961, agents of Iranian secret police, SAVAK, were enrolled in American training programs. One hundred seventy-nine Iranian agents were trained in the U.S. between 1961 and 1973. Iran had the highest number of trainees among the Near East & South Asian countries (Klare, 1981:19).

In those years the relationship between the ulama and Shah was so close that some radical members of the Muslim community commented that the ulama had become a 'pillar of the pahlavi state' (Abrahamian, 1989:19, Akhavi, 1980:74-75)

The Shah displayed deep respect for the clergy. He made several pilgrimages to Islamic shrines in Iran and abroad. Prominent religious leaders had easy access to him, the government pledged its allegiance to Islam and continually denounced the Tudeh as Islam's enemy. Falsafi, a famous preacher, had a weekly programme for years on the state radio in which he engaged in polemics against "materialists" as well as the deposed Prime Minister, Mosaddeq (Katouzian, 1981:193).

The economic crisis of the late 1950s and early 1960s, general discontent, and pressure from the US government, forced the Shah to pursue some socio-economic and political reforms. But these reforms alienated him from the support of his strong ally, the Shi'a establishment. After decades of quietism, the ulama turned against the regime in early 1960s. The alliance between the ulama and the Shah came to an end when the Shah introduced the 'White Revolution'.²⁶ Two principles of the White Revolution, land reform and the extension of the suffrage to women, particularly antagonized the ulama and led them to join the opposition.

Iran suffered an economic crisis, beginning in 1957. Despite increases in oil revenues, the rapid growth of imports along with the necessity of paying back foreign loans created a

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The White Revolution consisted of six principles: the land Reform, the establishment of universal suffrage, a law permitting the sale of state-owned factories to the private sector, a law requiring that 20 percent of the net profits of factories and industrial establishments be shared with the workers, nationalization of the country's forests, and provision of a nationwide literacy corps (Farmayan, 1971:103).

trade deficit. Between 1954 and 1959, Iran's imports increased sixfold (Parsa, 1994:138). Government policies to restore the balance of trade caused more inflation. Between 1957 and 1960, the cost-of-living index increased over 35 percent as a result of deficit financing and a bad harvest in 1959-1960 (Abrahamian, 1982:421-422). The financial crisis reached a peak in 1960, when the country's deficit reached \$145 million (Laing, 1977:161). When Iran sought emergency aid from Western countries, the International Monetary Fund promised \$35 million on condition that Iran reduces its budget, freezes salaries and wages, and shelve some of its development projects (Abrahamian, 1982:421-422). Economic hardship and inflation antagonized large portions of the population like the bazaaris, the private sector, the modern middle class, and the workers (Parsa, 1994:138).

In addition to domestic discontent, the Iranian regime was under pressure from the US government to introduce socio-economic and political reforms. The revolution in Cuba in 1959 had sensitized the United States to the threat of political instability. Toward the end of 1959, in his address to the members of the Iranian parliament, President Eisenhower remarked

Military strength alone will not bring about peace with justice. The spiritual and economic health of the free world must be likewise strengthened (Parsa, 1994:138).

Moreover, during his presidential campaign, John Kennedy criticised Republican policies towards corrupt regimes in developing countries in general, and Iran in particular (Katouzian, 1981:213). In November 1960 Kennedy was elected President. The new U.S. administration was of the opinion that "liberal reforms were the best guarantees against communist revolutions. It offered \$85 million on condition that the shah brought liberals into the cabinet

and took meaningful steps to implement land reform (Abrahamian, 1982:422)

It is important to note that the contradictory character of the Iranian regime's policies set the stage for the mobilization and organization of protests. The regime relaxed repressive control when economic crisis, inflation, and its economic and social policies were creating discontent among the general population. Political liberalization allowed the opposition to express its grievances, and to mobilize and organize itself. Although strikes were still considered illegal by the regime, the lifting of the police repression made them possible. Abrahamian reports that the number of major strikes jumped from three in 1955-1957 to over twenty in 1957-1961 (1982:422). Brick-kiln workers and taxi drivers went on strike and high school students held street demonstrations (Jazani, 1980:39; Tudeh, 1970:219-221). Between 1957 and 1961, peasant unrest surfaced in several areas, especially in Gilan and Azarbaijan provinces (Bashiriyeh, 1984:19).

The first sign of the deterioration of the special relationship between the regime and the ulama appeared in May 1960. Ayatollah Boroujerdi publicly denounced the land reform bill as contrary to both Islam and the Constitution (Chehabi, 1990:169). The second confrontation with the ulama occurred in October 1962, when the government published a bill concerning the elections of representatives to local councils. The bill recognized women's suffrage and declared its intention to establish provincial assemblies, without stipulating that their members would have to swear on the Qor'an. This latter provision would allow members of religious minorities to be elected as councillors.

As Khomeini's biographer writes, the high-ranking ulama, including Khomeini, agreed in their anti-bill campaign to attack only the government and not the Shah (Rohani,

1982:158). In their opposition to the bill, the ulama denounced religious minority groups, particularly Jews and Baha'is, as enemies. They also rejected women's enfranchisement as an act against the morality and honour of society. In several sermons and declarations, Khomeini made fiery speeches against women's suffrage on the grounds that it would cause dishonour and moral corruption (Rohani, 1982:177, 300-301, 719). Khomeini argued that with its bill on women rights the government wanted to disgrace Iranian "chaste women and to dishonour the Iranian nation"(in Anon, 1974:143).

When Prime Minister Alam ignored the ulama's protest telegrams and instead staged a media campaign against them, the ulama mobilized their resources against the bill. The clergy fought back against the government by "shutting down classes at the Seminary, refusing to hold public prayers, increasing pressure on the government through their speeches in the pulpits, organizing rallies and demonstrations, and closing the bazaars"(Boroujerdi, 1992:67). On December 1, 1962, the government retreated and withdrew the draft bill.

The reforms suggested in the bill and the opposition of the clergy, however, had set the secular political forces at odds with the clergy. Although they strongly opposed the regime of the Shah, the secular forces had no objection to the reforms proposed by the bill. They were in serious disagreement with clergy and thus were not able to form an alliance with them against the government. Even the Liberation Movement of Iran (LMI), the religious wing of the Second National Front, had difficulty with the clergy's position. Despite its desire for the ulama's participation in politics, the LMI felt it was necessary to justify the ulama's position on the government bill. In its declaration, while praising the ulama for their participation in politics and opposing the regime, LMI declared that the ulama's

statement that 'women's involvement in social affairs is forbidden and must be prevented' should not be interpreted as discrimination against women. The clergy's struggle was directed against lawlessness and against the Baha'is, who as agents of Israel were penetrating all levels of government, and that the clergy fought for free elections to a parliament, in which women's rights would be well looked after (in Chehabi, 1990:166).

The decisive confrontation between the court and the clergy took place on 8 January 1963 when the Shah announced his intention to hold a national referendum on his proposed 'White Revolution'. As Halliday notes the Shah adopted some of the reforms proposed by his opponents and pushed ahead vigorously with those proposed by the US government (1979:26-27).²⁷ The secular forces, who saw nothing wrong with the reforms of the White Revolution, mainly opposed the undemocratic character of the regime. Consequently, they rallied behind the slogan, 'reform yes, dictatorship no' and boycotted the referendum in protest against the lack of democracy in Iran.

Opposed to land reform and women's enfranchisement, the ulama denounced the White Revolution as a fraud. But aware of popular support for the reforms, the ulama, led by Khomeini, confined themselves to challenging the White Revolution on the ground of its illegality.²⁸ The ulama consequently became fierce defenders of the Constitution and

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In fact, a few years later, the Shah complaining about Iranian intelligentsia said "everything they have advocated is being done. We have made even more reforms than they have asked for. I do not understand why they are not with me" (Bayne, 1968: 52).

Land reform, for instance, was so popular among the villagers that despite the ulama's declaration of the distributed farmlands as usurped, faced with "the choice of land or obeying religious decrees, the peasants opted for land" (Jazani, 1980: 63). Therefore, the prominent religious leaders, despite "their opposition to the land distribution, refrained from issuing fatwa, or religious decrees, against it" (Bakhash, 1984: 27-28). Since the end of the Second World War, women's organizations and the left struggled for women's enfranchisement. In 1944, for instance, the deputies of the Tudeh party prepared a resolution asking for women's enfranchisement but it was defeated in Parliament. In 1952, various women groups formed

Constitutional regime Khomeini, for example, argued that "the constitution has been bought with the blood of our fathers, and we will not permit it to be violated. Our sole demand is the execution of law"(in Algar, 1972 247)

The ulama argued that the referendum was unconstitutional because parliament had been dissolved. Prominent religious leaders sent telegrams expressing their opposition to the illegal referendum and urged the population to boycott it. The confrontation between the Shah and the Shi'a establishment became public. During the week of the referendum, for instance, the Shah went to Qom and addressed the crowds of peasants saying: "We are done with social and political parasites; I abhor the 'black reaction' [i.e., the clergy] even more than the 'red destruction' [i.e., Tudeh]"(in Farmayan, 1971 105). On another occasion, the Shah insulted the ulama by calling them 'the lice- ridden mollas' (in Bakhash, 1984 28). As a result of the regime's indifference to the opposition's demands protests, strikes, street demonstrations, and clashes between the opposition and the police took place

At the end of May 1963, as the mourning month of Muharram approached, religious leaders prepared themselves to attack the regime. Khomeini asked the organizers of religious ceremonies to politicize the content of their speeches and dirges by making reference to the current political situation (Vejdani, 1987 IV 91) and to express their hatred of the equality of rights and women's participation in society (Rohani, 1982:430). On June 3, 1963, Khomeini delivered a sermon in which he not only accused the regime of destroying Islam,

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a Confederation and prepared a petition demanding political and economic rights. Following strong opposition from high-ranking ulama, however, women's enfranchisement was not recognized in the bill concerning election laws (Sanasarian, 1982 72-75)

violating the constitution, and selling the country to foreigners, but for the first time he directly attacked the Shah. Addressing the Shah, Khomeini said:

I advise you wretched, miserable 45-year old man to stop and ponder a little. These people prefer to brand you as a Jew, in which case I am required to declare you as an infidel. Then you will be kicked out of the country and will suffer its consequences (Boroujerdi, 1992: 76).

In reply to the Shah's denunciation of the ulama as parasites, Khomeini said

Am I a parasite, and men like me such as Boroujerdi, who was sixty thousand tumans in debt when he died, or these [seminary] students who survive on a stipend of thirty tumans a month? Or are you, O Shah!, the parasite, who have erected towering palaces and filled foreign banks with your untold wealth? (Algar, 1972: 247).

On 5 June, Khomeini was arrested and taken to Tehran. Violent demonstrations erupted in Qom, Tehran and a number of cities as soon as the news of his arrest spread. The army was called to put down the riots and on 7 June, martial law was imposed on Tehran, Mashad, Isfahan, Shiraz, and other cities (Bakhash, 1984: 29). A large number of people were killed, injured, and imprisoned. In April 1964, after some ten months, Khomeini was released and allowed to return to Qom.

7.3. Reflections on the Defeat of the June 1963 Uprising

Despite the presence of nationwide discontent caused by inflation, unemployment and government austerity policies, the clergy failed to gain the protest movement's leadership in the 1960's. The 1963 riots remained limited to Qom, Tehran, and a few other cities. The protests were mainly limited to the bazaar community. Workers, peasants, civil servants and students did not join them. As Parsa writes

No workers' strike or factory shutdown of any sort occurred anywhere in the country, and white-collar employees showed up at their jobs without interruption. Nor did teachers take part in the protests, as they had earlier mobilized successfully against the government and won all their demands... With the exception of peasants from Varamin peasants elsewhere refrained from political action (1994: 154).

In Tehran, despite their strong opposition to the regime, university students remained on the campus and did not join the demonstrators who were protesting the arrest of Khomeini. Instead, they displayed banners and shouted slogans against dictatorship and in favor of reforms and demanded the release of the deposed Prime Minister Mosaddeq.

A number of reasons explain the failure of the religious leaders to gain the support of the populace. After the death of Ayatollah Boroujerdi in late March 1961, the ulama were divided among themselves as to his successor and the leadership of Khomeini was not yet recognized by them. Moreover, the main body of high-ranking ulama felt uncomfortable with Khomeini's confrontational political positions and activities. Al-e Ahamd is of the opinion that Khomeini's political extremism in 1963 scared the clerical community and deprived him of their support (nd II:271-J). Thus Khomeini remained in a minority position and faced the opposition of other clergy in the 1960s. In early 1963, whispers against Khomeini were growing among the high-ranking ulama in Qom and Tehran. Ayatollah Seyyed Ahmad Khonsari, for example, openly criticized Khomeini. After the 1979 Revolution, Khomeini complained that he had suffered at the hands of those ulama (Boroujerdi, 1992: 69).

It is important to note that the clergy's demands did not reflect the economic and political grievances of the populace in the 1960s. Until his arrest in June 1963, Khomeini's speeches and declarations were against the Shah's reforms and in defense of the clergy's

interests. It was after his release from prison, in April 1964, that Khomeini began to address the people's grievances. Even his biographer notices this change and cites Khomeini's sermon of April 1964 as different from the previous ones, because it contained more stress on the people's suffering (Rohani, 1982:655). In fact, in sermons delivered after his release, Khomeini began to talk about unemployment of university students, poor and hungry peasants whose crops were damaged by bad weather, lack of doctors and health care services in towns and villages, and the Iranian poor who were dying of cold and hunger. Khomeini defended thieves and prostitutes and declared them to be the victims of poverty (in Anon, 1974:120-124). One can surmise that the failure and isolation of the June riot drew Khomeini's attention to the economic and political problems of the day.

The anti-modernization position of the ulama was another reason for their isolation in the 1960s. During the 1940s and 1950s, most of the Shi'a establishment rejected modernization to the extent that they banned modern educational systems, radio, television, press, and government jobs and declared them as *haram* (prohibited by Islam) (Rohani, 1982:94, Al-e Ahmad, nd:II:271). For example, Haj Ansari, the famous and popular preacher of Qom, kept "tongue-lashing the inhabitants of Qom who secretly owned television sets. He called modern schools 'centres of infidelity and faithlessness'" (Borghei, 1992:61). Ignoring the developments that took place in society over the decades of modernization, the ulama lost contact with the generations who had grown up in modern Iran, especially the youth and the intelligentsia. Consequently, the ulama were considered by these groups as conservative and backwards and the Shah's denunciation of the clergy as "black reaction" made sense to them.

The clergy's opposition to women's enfranchisement and land reform was a

confirmation of this belief. In the 1960s, Khomeini's position on women's issues, for instance, seemed so reactionary that despite his high respect for him, Al-e Ahmad was compelled to reject it. Al-e Ahmad in re-printing Khomeini's 1964 sermon in his book, removes Khomeini's statement on women and says that it reeks "*akhund-bazi*" (the derogatory Persian term used to refer to the ulama's fanaticism) (nd II:10). In that statement, Khomeini said that if the ulama had been in charge, then female teachers would not be allowed to teach at boys schools and male teachers at girls schools. A practice which, according to Khomeini, caused moral corruption (in Rohani, 1982: I:719).

The secular opposition was not comfortable with the ulama's positions on the White Revolution's reform measures. In effect, Khomeini's biographer and aide, Ayatollah Rohani, claims that the secular opposition was "deceived" by the Shah (1982 I:327). The account of Ayatollah Rohani reveals the isolation of the ulama during the events of 1963. He blames the regime's propaganda as the cause of the ulama's defeat. Rohani writes that the regime successfully presented the ulama as "reactionary, opponents of women's freedom, and opponents of reforms, progress, and civilization" (1982 I:210). Al-e Ahmad writes that in the June 1963 riot, the ulama remained isolated because even the intellectuals considered them as reactionary forces who were fighting the regime for the return of landed property and women's hejab (nd II:271-S).

The political behaviour and slogans of the secular opposition also show that they did not accept Khomeini's leadership. The day after the arrest of Khomeini in June 1963, his followers staged a demonstration in the bazaar of Tehran. Seeking student support, they marched to the university. In his speech, after expressing the students support for the protest

demonstration, the representative of the 'Students Committee of the National Front' praised the deposed Prime Minister Mosaddeq and other arrested leaders of the National Front rather than Khomeini (in Rohani, 1982: I:441).

The slogans chanted by the university students on that day also show their secular position. They not only expressed their opposition to the regime by chanting 'the struggle continues until the downfall of the dictators', but they stressed the separation of religion from the state by praising Khomeini and Mosaddeq as respectively religious and national leaders. The slogans chanted by students were: 'Khomeini the leader of Shi'a, Mosaddeq the leader of nation' and '*Salam* (greet) to Khomeini, *dorood* (greet) to Mosaddeq' (in Rohani, 1982:I:442). In the last slogan students used different terms *salam* and *dorood* for the word 'greeting'. The former, an Arabic word, was used for Khomeini who represented a religion which originated in the Arabian Peninsula, and the latter, a Persian word, for Mosaddeq who represented Iranian nationalism. In the 1979 Revolution such distinctions became blurred. Khomeini was addressed as both the religious and national leader.

The 1963 uprising provided important lessons for Khomeini. During the 1979 revolution, Khomeini was careful not to take positions which would reveal his real agenda and alienate him from the support of the general population. After 1963, Khomeini's relentless and fearless opposition to the Shah increased his good reputation among Iranian political forces.

7.4. The Establishment of an Autocracy

Freedom of thought! Freedom of thought! Democracy, democracy!

Democracy? Freedom? What do these words mean? I don't want any part of them (Mohammad Reza Shah, quoted in Abrahamian, 1982 440-441)

After cracking down on secular and religious opposition in 1963, the Shah aggressively began to concentrate power in his own hands. Between 1963 and 1977, the Shah suppressed the opposition and moved quickly to establish an autocratic regime with himself as sole ruler. The government arrested, executed, and co-opted the opposition. As well, it outlawed independent mass media, political parties, trade unions, women's, student and professional associations. The increase in oil revenues in this period allowed the regime to extend and expand its bureaucratic and police control to all corners of the country, to rely less on domestic taxes, and to pursue the policy of co-optation of the opposition.

Comparing this period to that of the 1953-1963, Jazani notes that the "higher clerics, army top brass, politicians and Parliament have lost their previous roles and are now forced to be blind followers of the Shah and his cronies"(1980:107-108). Excluded from power, the dominant classes could no longer directly influence the politics of the country. The Shah packed parliament with hand-picked deputies and appointed Prime Ministers who were nothing but his yes-men. Bayne writes that some prime ministers had complained privately "of how it hurts a man's morale to be called the chief civil executive but to be shorn of effective power"(1968:238-239).

Besides appointing prime ministers, ministers, military officers, governors, and high-ranking bureaucrats, the Shah interfered in all spheres of Iranian society. He regularly presided over the meetings of councils and commissions and gave

orders on issues ranging from the price of eggs to the duration of medical education, from minimum wages for the textile workers of Isfahan to the

electrification of the trans-Iranian railroad System. In addition, more than 20 of his top aides who held the country's most important military and civilian positions had regular and frequent audiences with him - one to five times a week - to present their reports and receive his instructions (Fatemi, 1982:49)

In order to exercise absolute power, the Shah embarked upon the establishment of a highly centralized political structure. In this respect he used the *Hezbe Iran-e Novin* (New Iran Party - NIP). The party was fostered by the Shah soon after the introduction of the White Revolution in 1963, as the government party. The New Iran Party was not only in charge of the government but also of screening the parliamentary candidates. Its majority in parliament allowed it to control the legislative power and to guarantee the smooth passage of laws. In 1971, for instance, 230 of the 268 deputies of parliament and 28 of the 30 elected senators were from the NIP (Weinbaum, 1973:439). It also controlled municipal, district and village politics. In 1968, 150 of the 165 municipal councils were won by NIP and after the 1972 elections, 307 of the 329 city and township councils were controlled by NIP (Weinbaum, 1973:449).

After eliminating independent political parties, occupational and professional organizations, and the press, the regime carefully funded government-sponsored ones. Many of these associations like trade unions, bazaar guilds, civil service associations, and farm cooperatives were affiliated to the New Iran Party. In 1971, in Tehran, for instance, some 90 workers' organizations with 100,000 voting members and about 90 percent of the nation's 8,328 farm cooperatives, with a combined membership of 1.1 million, were incorporated in the New Iran Party (Weinbaum, 1973:447). Major big business associations like the Syndicate of the Owners of Textile Industries, the Syndicate of Metallic Industries, the Syndicate of

Iranian Industries and the Chamber of Commerce were controlled by the NIP (Bashiriyeh, 1984:30). The New Iran Party intervened in conflicts between workers and employers as a mediator. For example, in March 1971 it mediated a dispute between Tehran bus workers and their employers, both being NIP affiliates (Weinbaum, 1973:450). In 1971, the New Iran Party dissolved the 'High Council of Guilds' in an attempt to increase government control over the bazaar. Instead it established the 'Chamber of Guilds' which had supervisory power over all guilds (Bashiriyeh, 1984:31).

To exercise his personal control over the country's affairs, the Shah established the High Economic Council. Presiding over the Council, the Shah was able to exercise his absolute power over the state and the economy. The High Economic Council was

a weekly session held at the court between the cabinet and the Shah to discuss (especially) economic matters and was the major source of proposals for legislation... The guidelines given by the Shah in the council were translated into proposals for legislation by the ministries and were sent to the NIP's Central Committee for investigation. Then the proposals were sent to the Executive Committee attended by the party's parliamentary group. The Executive Committee finally prepared the bill to be presented to the majles where the NIP assured its smooth passage (Bashiriyeh, 1984:32).

The structure of the Shah's regime took the form of a web. The Shah was located at its centre and was surrounded by a network of an elite consisting of royal family members and close cronies (Bill, 1972). Fatemi writes that the administration was highly centralized, totally unintegrated, and responsive only to the Shah (1982:49). Despite its formal and hierarchical appearance, decisions were taken in the informal fashion of a patrimonial regime. Hierarchy and rank were often not respected by the Shah himself. In an interview, the Shah said that "often I order minor officials to tell their superiors what I want done" (Laing, 1977:17).

In this web-like political structure, the Shah was the ultimate decision-maker. In order to gain greater favour with him rivalry and conflict developed between elites at all levels of Iranian society (Bill, 1972:40-42). The networks that served as channels to petition and access to the Shah included relatives, personal friends, ministers, army generals, and courtiers. They, in turn, were surrounded by their own entourages which served as a lower channel to power (Bill, 1973:134). Consequently, not only members of the political network but also their drivers, cooks, and secretaries were sought after in order to become an intermediary between a petitioner and the power source. But even membership in the web system, could not create security. Whenever members of the state apparatus were liable to pose a danger to the Shah by gaining popularity, they would be dismissed. No amount of wealth or connections could save the individual from exclusion and disgrace (Bill, 1973:144). No military commander was allowed to be "too popular or in control of the forces for too long. Popularity, competence and leadership in the Chief of Staff made him a threat to the crown which the Shah could not tolerate"(Afshar, 1985:187). Thus, the Shah frequently shuffled top commanders in order to prevent them from forming power bases or alliances (Halliday, 1979:68).

In order to preserve his control the Shah used all means to fragment and atomize social groups. The Shah not only strove to prevent the formation of a collective identity among social groups by using the secret police and spreading distrust, but he also set individuals and groups against each other. In the case of the army, the generals of the three branches were not allowed to meet or communicate directly with each other. They had to meet with the Shah and report to him about their branches of the army as well as their fellow

officers (Afshar, 1985: 186-189)

After the 1963 events, SAVAK became Iran's main state repressive apparatus. SAVAK with its vast network, sophisticated means of surveillance, control, and torture, allowed the regime to deal with the opposition not only in a reactive but also in a proactive way. To deter the population from joining the opposition, the regime made SAVAK's activities an open secret. The government "leaked" information on torture and the population was aware of its extensive use. Although the exact number of SAVAK's personnel is not available, sources estimate the number of full-time staff between 5,300 and 10,000 and the part-time informants as high as 200,000 (Rudolph, 1978: 373; Abrahamian, 1982: 436). Branches of the secret police were installed in firms, offices, and university campuses. SAVAK controlled and scrutinized all potential trouble spots like universities, factories, offices, labour unions, bazaar guilds, press, professional associations, and peasant organizations. It scrutinized applicants for government jobs, factories, and universities.

SAVAK did not conceal its presence in these settings. For instance, after the attack of commandos on the university in 1962, it "openly moved into the universities, and at Tehran University a military general sat in the Secretariat with files on every student" (Bill, 1972: 99). SAVAK closely monitored students, suppressed their independent organizations, and intervened in university affairs. With the exception of the Abadan Institute of Technology, no Iranian institute of higher education had a student council. The students naturally deserted the existing student organizations because they were controlled by the government. The result of a 1966 survey of four hundred university students and secondary school seniors showed that eighty-eight percent of them did not belong to any youth organization (Bill, 1972: 94-95).

In addition, SAVAK ran the 600-odd government trade unions and had offices in some factories (Halliday, 1979:85). Some foreign businessmen working in Iran complained about the interference of SAVAK's agents in factory affairs and the fact that they had to pay salaries to SAVAK officials working in their factories (Halliday, 1978:11). The regime also undertook to bring the mass media and intellectuals under its control. In 1966, the government sent a circular to all print shops ordering them to submit copies of every book they proposed to print to SAVAK's controlled Writing Bureau of the Ministry of Arts and Culture (Baraheni, 1977:119, 1978). SAVAK not only censored the media but also published "books and magazines, and even used some of its ex-opposition members to promote certain kinds of confusionist 'opposition' thinking" (Halliday, 1979:85).

The regime's repressive machine worked so well that by 1966 the conventional opposition disappeared from view and the regime felt itself to be in total control (Katouzian, 1981:240). In fact, the regime felt so secure that it discontinued the anti-riot training program started after the 1963 riots. Afshar writes that the program was disbanded partly from the "belief that the rising prosperity of the country would in itself undermine the rebellious tendencies and partly on the assumption that control was so extensive that no one would dare to riot any more" (1985:188).

7.5. The Fall of the Shah

After an increase in the price of oil in December 1973, Iran's annual revenue quadrupled, jumping from \$5 billion to \$19 billion (Graham, 1980:16). A brief period of economic boom saw a 30 percent increase in Iran's GNP between 1973-1974 and a further

42 percent increase in 1974-1975 (Amir Arjomand, 1986:397). But with the influx of oil revenues and higher prices for imports, inflation also rose quickly after 1972. In 1974, the inflation rate was 30-35 percent, but the advantages of the booming economy still outweighed the disadvantages (Hiro, 1985:60). The Shah predicted that by the year 2000, Iran would become one of the top five world powers (Nyrop, 1978:6).

Secure in his power, the Shah increased his grip over society and ignored the rise of discontent among the population. In 1975, he abolished the court-sponsored political parties like New Iran Party and announced the establishment of a single party, the Iran Resurgence (*Rastakhiz*) Party. This was not the first time the Shah had established a political party. What was new this time was that all Iranians were forced to be members. The Shah declared that

We must straighten out Iranians' ranks. To do so, we divide them into two categories: those who believe in Monarchy, the Constitution, and the Sixth Bahman Revolution (the Shah's White Revolution), and those who don't...A person who does not enter the new political party and does not believe in the three cardinal principles which I referred to, will have only two choices. Such an individual belongs in an Iranian prison, or if he desires he can leave the country tomorrow, without even paying exit fees (in Halliday, 1979:47).

The Resurgence Party became a new instrument of control and repression. It opened branches in cities, villages, and in the bazaars and forced donations from small businesses. It dissolved the guilds and created its own guilds under a chamber of commerce in each city (Foran, 1993:335). The nominees of the Resurgence Party controlled radio and television networks, and the Ministries of Information and the Arts and Culture. As a result of strict censorship the number of books published fell from 4,200 in 1974 to 1,300 in 1976 (Hiro, 1985:63).

The Shi'a establishment became another target of the Resurgence Party. It denounced the clerics as 'black reactionaries' and claimed the Shah to be a spiritual as well as a political

leader, and replaced the Muslim calendar with a new royalist calendar (Abrahamian, 1982:443). The government increasingly put under its control the holy endowments and put the secret police and military personnel in charge of holy shrines (Bill, 1982:25).

By 1975, international oil demand had dropped. Considering that oil revenue made up 78 percent of the Iranian budget, the impact was dramatic (Graham, 1980:100). The fiscal crisis which resulted from fluctuations in oil exports led to a major reduction in the government revenue from oil. Iranians started to face economic hardship such as high rates of inflation and shortages of housing, electricity, and other commodities. Housing, for instance, became one of the main pressing social problems. The rents soared so fast that the highly paid state officials had to pay 50 per cent of their salaries for accommodation (Katouzian, 1981:334). Rents rose 200 percent in 1974/75 and 100 percent in 1975/76 (Foran, 1993:331). Between 1967 and 1977, the percentage of urban families living in only one room increased from 36 to 43 (Abrahamian, 1982:447). On the eve of the revolution, a large number of people were living in slums.

The regime blamed entrepreneurs and bazaaris for inflation, and in August 1975 began the "anti-profiteering" campaign. This generated more shortages and stimulated the black-market, as well as adding the bazaaris to the malcontents. The anti-profiteering campaign had devastating effects on the bazaar. Parsa reports that in

August 1975, prices of sixteen thousand items officially reverted to their January levels. The government set the profit rate at 14 percent even though inflation, according to the regime's own reports, was at least twice that figure. According to the Ministry of Interior, 20,000 shopkeepers had been jailed by the end of 1977. By fall 1978, the nationwide total of shopkeepers in violation of the controls was 220,000 (1989:103).

Almost every bazaar family had at least one member who had suffered from the regime's anti-profiteering campaign (Abrahamian, 1989:29). Furthermore, the regime threatened the bazaar by establishing big supermarkets. These supermarkets had access to bank credit at a 12 percent interest rate, whereas the bazaar merchants had to pay 25 to 100 percent interest on their borrowing (Hiro, 1985:62). From early 1977, bankruptcies among merchants increased as a result of bank credit and interest rates difficulties (Bashiriye, 1984:98). As if these were not enough, in 1976 the municipal government of Tehran announced plans for an eight-lane highway to pass right through the city's bazaar, meaning its demolition. These factors pushed bazaaris into the opposition. As one of them told an American reporter:

If we let him, the Shah will destroy us. The banks are taking over. The big stores are taking away our livelihoods. And the government will flatten our bazaars to make space for state offices (in Foran, 1993:335)

The rate of unemployment increased from one percent in 1974 to nine percent at the end of 1977 (Bashiriye, 1984:98). In an attempt to compensate for its declining revenues, the government resorted to a policy of high taxation which further increased discontent. In 1975 alone, taxes were raised by nearly 72 percent. In 1977, corporate taxes were increased by 80 percent. Taxes on salaries were raised by 71 percent in 1976 and 51 percent again in 1977 (Bashiriye, 1984:98).

By 1977 there was widespread economic and political discontent among the population. There were sporadic and spontaneous outburst of discontent such as university student protests on campuses, strikes in industries, and confrontations between slum dwellers and the authorities who wanted to evacuate them. In the presence of strong repression, however, Iranians could not express their frustrations publicly and in an organized form.

Jimmy Carter's stress on the theme of human rights during his electoral campaign, and the fact that he mentioned Iran as a friendly country with a bad record, worked in favour of the Iranian opposition. In order to please the new president, the Shah introduced some mild political reforms. For instance, a law was passed in early 1977 declaring that all political detainees had to be charged or released within twenty-four hours and that trials for political opponents were to be held by civilian rather than military courts (Parsa, 1989:108). The Iranian secular opposition, taking advantage of Carter's human rights campaign and the Shah's controlled liberalizations, were first to speak up

Social democratic and liberal intellectuals began to write open letters of protest and criticism. A number of associations and societies were formed and revived, such as the Association of Iranian Jurists, the Writers' Society, and the National Association of University Teachers, which demanded improved civil and political rights, an end to censorship, and academic freedom (Moghadam, 1989:152).

The clergy, however, remained aloof and hesitant in joining the protesters. The opposition suffered from a lack of independent resources and places where they could gather and organize themselves without fear of being attacked and arrested. In October 1977, for instance, the Iranian Writers' Society organized a series of poetry readings at the Irano-German Institute in Tehran which attracted crowds of over 10,000 (Graham, 1980:210, Pakdaman, 1995). What is significant about this event is the location of the gathering -- the Irano-German Institute's diplomatic immunity protected the participants. The following month, however, when the Writers' Society organized another poetry reading program on the university campus, participants were attacked by the police. In the initial stages of the uprising, bazaaris tried to mobilize themselves outside the mosque, but were hampered by

repression (Parsa, 1989: 95). This forced the secular opposition to use 'safe' settings such as mosques, funeral ceremonies, and cemeteries. But these were controlled by the Shi'a establishment.

The Shah's comparatively soft policies towards religious groups put them far ahead of the more strictly repressed secular groups in terms of organizational and financial resources. Moghadam, comparing the resources, writes that "on the eve of the revolution, no liberal or left-wing parties or institutions operated legally. On the other hand, there existed a nationwide network of mosques, theological seminaries, religious shrines, charitable endowments, and religious lecture halls" (1989: 153). The estimates put the number of the clergy at between 180,000 to 200,000, and the number of religious students (*talabeh*) at 11,000 in the 1970s. Moreover, there were an estimated 80,000 to 100,000 mosques throughout Iran, plus countless shrines (Foran, 1993: 336; Hussain, 1985: 62). Furthermore, there existed a strong network of Islamic associations, some 12,300 by 1974 (Hussain, 1985: 64) and numerous informal women's Islamic networks (Betteridge, 1983: 111).

In early 1978, this nationwide network was mobilized by religious leaders. In January 1978, following the publication of an offensive article against Khomeini, a demonstration was organized by his disciples and followers in Qom. The police shot and killed a number of demonstrators. During the fortieth-day mourning celebration in Tabriz, the security forces fired and killed several demonstrators. Hence, the fortieth-day of mourning, funeral ceremonies, cemeteries, and mosques became major occasions and settings for mobilization of the protest movement.

The bazaar, which has always played a crucial role in Iranian political history, placed

its weight behind the protest movement. In comparison with those who worked in offices and industries, the bazaaris were more free to participate actively in the revolution. Moreover, since the bazaaris "were generally known to each other and the family and professional background of newcomers were scrutinized by guild members" the agents of secret police had difficulty in infiltrating and identifying bazaari activists and organizations (Foran, 1993: 335). The financial support of the bazaar was decisive in the victory of the 1979 Revolution. The bazaar financially supported the families of demonstrators killed in the revolution as well as large sections of the striking workforces such as teachers, civil servants, and oil-workers (Graham, 1980: 225, Zabih, 1979: 27-30).

The shared hatred of the Shah provided what Khomeini called the 'unity of purpose'. The opposition forces from different political perspectives came together and formed an alliance against the Shah, as the common enemy. Members of modern middle classes flocked to Khomeini in order to get rid of the Shah. In the midst of the revolution, a prominent academic and researcher explained:

I hate Khomeini, but if anyone says anything bad about him I get angry. Why, you ask? Because I hate the Shah even more! (Green, 1982: 87)

The intervention of the Shah in all spheres of social life made him the main target of the opposition. Iranians saw his hand behind all the country's ills and held him responsible for them. A study of 800 slogans uttered during the revolution shows that 50 per cent of them were against the Shah and his family (Mokhtari, 1987: 44), the main slogan of the revolution was 'Down with the Shah!'

The Shah's response to the riots and demonstrations was inconsistent and erratic. He

vacillated between concession and clampdown, between political relaxation and brutal repression. To quell the opposition the Shah released political prisoners, announced freedom of the press, promised free elections and democracy. But as soon as he felt he was losing control, he ordered the army to fire on the demonstrators, installed a military government, and imposed a curfew. These shifts confirmed Iranians' deep suspicion of the Shah's sincerity. His concessions and promises were perceived as a ruse to allowing him to gain time to muster his forces and crush the opposition.

Khomeini was instead astute enough to rally behind him a wide spectrum of political and social forces. He was careful not to isolate himself by declaring his real agenda, a mistake that he had committed in 1963. In Paris, for example, his reply to the question about "Whether the Islamic government means theocracy?" was: "No. We do not intend to govern"(Paese Sera, 24.10. 1978). Khomeini assured opposition forces and social groups that their rights would be respected and that he did not intend to establish another dictatorial regime. In an interview Khomeini was asked whether an Islamic Republic will "ensure democratic rights for all, will the Marxists be given the right of free expression?" He responded that the Islamic Republic is a "democratic state in the true sense of the word and everyone can voice his own opinion, and the Islamic state will respond with logic to all the arguments put forward"(in Nomani, 1990: 5). Listing the grievances of Iranians, among other things Khomeini stated that under the Shah's regime "the individuals freedoms are eliminated, elections are prohibited, press and political parties are suppressed"(L'Unita', 5.6.1978). On women's rights, Khomeini said

As for women, Islam has never been against their freedom. It is, to the

contrary, opposed to the idea of woman-as-object and it gives her back her dignity. A woman is a man's equal, she and he are both free to choose their lives and their occupations. But the Shah's regime is trying to prevent women from becoming free by plunging them into immorality. It is against this that Islam rears up. This regime has destroyed the freedom of women as well as men. Women as well as men swell the population of Iranian prisons, and this is where freedom is threatened (in Betteridge, 1983: 118).

These assurances led secular and educated women to view with scepticism the rumours that Khomeini and other religious leaders were opposed to women's rights. They thought such rumours were a plot to quell women's support of the revolution (Sanasarian, 1982: 117).

7.6. The Establishment of the Islamic Republic in Iran

Soon after the overthrow of the Shah in 1979, the unity of the revolutionary forces was shattered. There emerged a situation where no political force was dominant. The Islamic forces were divided into three main factions, in addition to Khomeini's faction there were moderates (headed by Ayatollah Shariatmadari and Bazargan), and radicals (led by the Mojahedin Organization). The Left was internally divided and included independents, pro-Soviets, Maoists, and Trotskyists groups. The liberal and moderate parties were small with no mass following. There were also national minorities, like Kurds, Turkemen, Arabs, and Beluch who were not Shi'a Muslims and who demanded regional autonomy from the central government. Some of these forces like the Fadaian and Mojahedin organizations, and the Kurds were armed and experienced in armed struggle. Moreover, in the post-revolution democratic environment many independent organizations sprang up, along with papers, councils (*Shora-ha*) of workers, farmers, students, and soldiers - all with the claim of direct participation in decision making.

Furthermore, after the revolution, there existed high expectations for radical economic and political changes. Workers, farmers, ethnic minorities, the poor and unemployed pressed for social justice and their rights. But the country's economy was in bad shape. As a result of an economic crisis and two years of political upheavals, there was a high rate of unemployment and inflation. During the first six months of the revolution, the rate of inflation rose to 47 per cent and out of an economically active population of 11 million more than 3 million were unemployed. Unemployed workers held marches to the governor's office asking for 'work, bread and housing', but they were confronted by armed Revolutionary Guards who dispersed them with violence (Bashiriyeh, 1984: 144).

Moreover, it is important to note that the idea of a theocratic regime was new to Iranians. In December 1978, on the eve of the fall of the Shah, for example, when a journalist asked a group of Khomeini's followers whether they wanted Khomeini as the head of the state, one of them replied: "Khomeini is like our father, he is not a politician. But we expect him to choose the authentic representatives of the people to lead the government. We trust only him" (la Repubblica, 7-12-1978). An Iranian oil worker told an American correspondent, "We want Khomeini. He will take power from the rich and give it to us" (in Parsa, 1989: 157). Even when the clerics took over the state, many believed that they would not last more than six months.

Khomeini was not yet in control of an organized force strong enough to crush the opposition and to establish an Islamic regime, led by the ulama. Ayatollah Beheshti, one of the main architects of Islamic regime, reported that during the revolution he and others followers of Khomeini thought about the formation of a party and had been in touch with

Khomeini on the matter, but because of the rapid escalation in the development of the Iranian revolution such a step had not been taken (in Benard, 1984 105-106). Again as Ayatollah Beheshti reports, Khomeini asked them "several times during 1979 whether they could form the government, but they had responded they were not ready yet" (Benard, 1984:109). Thus, in the first year of the revolution, despite his dislike of them, Khomeini had to seek the support of moderate and liberal secular forces, like the National Front and Liberation Movement, and to share power with them.

Soon after the revolution Khomeini embarked on the establishment of new organizations, the strengthening of already existing Islamic networks, and the take over of major state institutions. A few months before the fall of the Shah's regime, Khomeini had established two political institutions: the Provisional Revolutionary Government (PRG), headed by Bazargan, a liberal lay Muslim, and the Revolutionary Council (RC), dominated by Khomeini's disciples and ex-students. The appointment of Bazargan as Prime Minister was an astute move on the part of Khomeini because it was perceived as an indication of his desire to turn power over to lay moderate and liberal forces and to return to the holy city of Qom to function as the spiritual leader of Iran (Benard, 1984 103-104). It became increasingly clear, however, that Khomeini and his disciples believed that the government of Bazargan could buy time for them to become better organized. As Bazargan later admitted, his biggest mistake was to overlook the possibility that the clergy could set up their own 'dictatorial' machinery. Throughout his premiership, Bazargan underestimated the danger from the clergy and overestimated that from the left (Abrahamian, 1989 52).

The Provisional Revolutionary Government legally had control over the apparatuses

of the state left from the old regime like the army, the police, and the judiciary, and the Revolutionary Council controlled institutions like revolutionary committees, guards, and tribunals that had emerged during and immediately after the revolution. These revolutionary institutions gradually assumed the bulk of actual political power.

The *Komitehs* (committee) were neighbourhood organizations that had emerged immediately before the fall of the Shah. Their main task was to defend the neighbourhood against the attacks of anti-revolutionary forces. Soon after the overthrow of the Shah, Khomeini set up a *Komiteh-e Markazi* (Central Committee) in Tehran and placed the neighbourhood committees under its control. One of the tasks of the Central Committee was to supervise the local committees, purge unreliable committees, and to coordinate their activities.

A state-wide militia, *Sepah-e Pasdaran-e Enqelab-e Eslami* (The Army of the Islamic Revolutionary Guards) was formed on the order of Khomeini to protect the revolution. It numbered 10,000 and provided an alternative security force to the army and the gendarmerie (Bashiriyeh, 1984: 135). The Revolutionary Council set up Revolutionary Tribunals with the authority to investigate and punish anti-revolutionary activities. The judges were clerics despatched from the city of Qom and the courts were under the authority of the revolutionary general prosecutor appointed by Khomeini (Bashiriyeh, 1984: 135). Another institution established by Khomeini's disciples after the revolution was the Islamic Republic Party (IRP). Its main slogan was 'One community (*mellat*), one religion, one order, one leader'. The IRP grew rapidly and became a country-wide organization. It published its own newspaper, created Islamic Associations to absorb the factory committees that had appeared during the

revolution, and set up organized gangs of *chomaqdaran* (club-wielders) and *hezbollahis* (partisans of God) whose main function was to attack and disrupt the activities of the opposition (Abrahamian, 1989: 45-49)

In addition, Khomeini's faction strengthened the already existing traditional Islamic networks such as the mosques, the *hosayniehs* (religious lecture halls), the religious foundations, and the Islamic seminaries. For instance, the enrolment in the Qom seminaries increased from 6,500 in 1978 to 18,000 in 1984. Moreover, Khomeini created in Qom a Central Office of Mosques through which he could appoint the *imam jom'ehs* (Friday prayer-leaders) of the provincial capitals. These *imam jom'ehs*, in turn, could appoint the district and local mosque leaders (Abrahamian, 1989: 49)

One should not forget that Islamic regime inherited an already strong nation-state. The state bureaucracy, for example, had been remarkably extended and centralized by the Pahlavis. By 1979, there were twenty-one ministries with over 300,000 civil servants and some 1 million full-time and part-time white-collar and blue-collar workers. The interior Ministry had over 21,000 employees and was structured into 23 provinces and 400 administrative districts. This allowed it to nominate and supervise even village headmen and rural councils (Abrahamian, 1989: 13). The Islamic government not only took over the state apparatuses but also expanded them. Between 1979 and 1987, the state bureaucracy grew by as much as 300 per cent (Abrahamian, 1989: 71-72).

Khomeini's disciples also established a number of new state-wide organizations like the Martyr's Foundation (*Bonyad-e Shahid*) to help the families that had suffered during the revolution, the Construction Crusade (*Jihad-e Sazandegi*) to build bridges, roads, schools and

electrical lines in the countryside as well as to take Islam to the peasantry, and the Foundation for the Dispossessed (*Bonyad-e Mostazaafin*) This latter organization soon owned 20 per cent of the country's private assets, and administered 7800 hectares of farmland, 230 commercial companies, 130 large factories, 90 cinemas, and the only two national daily newspapers (Abrahamian, 1989:50-51). These foundations created a large pool of jobs for the followers of the Islamic regime. The Foundation for the Dispossessed, for example, employed over 150,000 people (Abrahamian, 1989:50-51).

Thus only a few months after the revolution, Khomeini's faction controlled not only the traditional religious networks, but also an array of nation-wide organizations. This vast and centralized nationwide network enabled the regime to mobilize and organize its supporters. The neighbourhood revolutionary committees and mosques, and the Muslim associations established in offices, firms, universities and high schools provided an extensive network of surveillance and control of dissident forces. It is important to remember that members of these Islamic organizations had knowledge about the political orientations of their neighbours, co-workers, and schoolmates who had been allies during the anti-Shah struggle.

Immediately after the revolution, confrontations between various opposition groups and the Islamic government began and soon turned into violence. Ethnic minorities were the first to challenge the new regime by demanding regional autonomy. Uprising for regional autonomy ended in blood shed as they lost the military battle to the central government forces (Hiro, 1985:111-113). Women were another group that came under ferocious attack from the fundamentalists (see chapter nine). Hezbollahis and Revolutionary Guards attacked the opposition's offices, papers, and bookstores. Armed with clubs, chain, stones, knives, and

hand guns they attacked demonstrators. The atrocity and brutality of the attackers deterred ordinary people from participation in public demonstrations and the expression of their opposition. More and more, protest became a risky adventure that only militants could dare to undertake. The pervasive and repressive character of the Islamic regime is depicted by Shamlu in his poem "*Dar In Bonbast*" (In This Blind Alley):

They smell your mouth
lest you might have said: I love...
they smell your heart.
    Strange times, my dear!
And they flog love
by the roadblock.
    We should hide love in the larder
In this crooked blind alley, at the turn of the chill
they feed the fire
with logs of song and poetry
hazard not a thought.
    Strange times, my dear!
he who knocks at your door in the noon of the night
has come to kill the light.
    We should hide light in the larder
There, butchers
posted in passageways
with bloody chopping blocks and cleavers
    Strange times, my dear!
And they chop smiles off lips
songs off the mouth
    We should hide joy in the larder
Canaries barbecued
on a fire of lilies and jasmines
    Strange time, my dear!
Satan, drunk with victory
squats at the feast of our undoing
    We should hide God in the larder
(in Karimi-Hakkak, 1991: 518)

The success of Khomeini's faction in seizing power, however, can not be fully explained by

its use of repressive action. It is also necessary to take into account the attitude of Iranians' secular opposition towards democracy and democratic rights. The success of the clerics in the abrogation of democratic rights and suppression of oppositional forces needs to be considered in relation to the authoritarian frame of interpretation of the opposition forces. These issues are discussed in the following two chapters.

CHAPTER EIGHT

SOCIALIZATION UNDER DICTATORSHIP & FRAME OF INTERPRETATION

Three themes can be identified in the Iranian political discourse of the 1960s and 1970s: the 'Westoxication' thesis or a return to original roots; a positivist and corporate perception of history and society; and a veneration of martyrs and heroes. In the 1960s' and 1970s' climate of distrust, powerlessness, and uncertainty, Iranian opposition resorted to visions of society which assured them of trust, control, and predictability. A close look at these three themes shows, first, the absence of the people as active participants of history; and second, their belief in the existence of an a-priori and supreme truth about history and society possessed by certain individuals and organizations.

Westoxication is an invitation to the restoration of a culture and identity that existed in the past. The aim is not to create a future but to re-create the past by rejecting alien values and beliefs. The populace is conceived as culturally alienated and in need of leaders to guide them to re-discover their authentic identity. The positivist and corporate perception asserts the existence of one intersubjective truth about history and society that, once discovered, needs to be followed in order to establish the ideal society. This ideal society is defined according to the narrow vision and interests of each social group rather than universal principles. Heroes and martyrs with their deeds and self-sacrifices have shown their strong belief in the existence of an ideal society that they herald its coming. As sincere and trustworthy messengers they or their organizations can guide the populace along the right

path leading to an ideal society

These three perceptions provide a particular perception of truth and an attitude toward the possessors of truth. Truth was conceived as a given entity rather than a social product, which exist independent of subjects, and that can be discovered by trusted knowledgeable and committed individuals and organizations. In political terms, they believe in a 'just' rather than a 'democratic' society, ruled by given 'just' laws rather than laws produced by active involvement of citizens through democratic processes. What is conspicuous in this frame of interpretation is the absence of popular participation in defining what the ideal society should look like. In this frame, the populace is absent from history and is perceived as an ignorant and passive mass which needs to be guided by leaders toward an ideal society. In other words, there is a lack of consideration for popular sovereignty and democratic institutions and processes.

In this chapter the impacts of the dictatorial regime of the Shah on frame of interpretation of opposition forces are studied. To this aim a socialization approach (discussed in chapter one) to political repression is used here.

8.1. Corporate & Positivist Frame of Interpretation

The presence of police control and the threat of persecution not only prevented Iranians from exercising their democratic rights and engaging in public debates, it also made trust central to their political relationships and interactions. The presence of fear and distrust led Iranians towards small secret and semi-secret groups of trusted individuals where they were able to safely discuss politics. The internal structure of these settings, however, was such

that their members were not exposed to opposing opinions and ideas in a public fashion. This, I contend, was conducive to the development of a positivist and corporate perception of truth (discussed in chapter one). Truth was conceived not as a social product but as a given entity.

In the 1960s and 1970s, the myth of the omnipresence of the secret police and distrust was such that if someone made a political statement against the regime, others would suspect him/her of being a SAVAK agent provocateur. In this context of fear and suspicion, interpersonal trust or, using Simmel's terminology, knowledge about the 'secret of being' of others became crucial for sharing a secret/truth and including them in a political back-stage. In such circumstances, the question on which one's very life was dependent was: Can I trust this person and share my ideas?

The Regime's persecution led Iranians to gather in *dowreh* (circle) and underground organizations as back-stage spaces, where, in the security of mutual personal trust, they could talk politics. For most Iranians *dowreh* was the dominant form of gathering. Like any association operating under risky circumstances, these back-stage spaces had their own characteristics. Therefore, before undertaking the study of Iranian *dowreh* and underground organizations, it is necessary to review some of the features of small groups operating in risky circumstances, like mutual personal trust, strong ties between members, internal cohesion, isolation, and the density of ties.

As Fine and Stoecker stress, each small group develops its own culture. Members of small groups "talk about things, and do things, and these things are meaningful to them" (1985: 15). They share a set of experiences to which they can refer and expect to be understood by other members of the group. Each small group gradually creates its own

"culture, although factors such as the length of time a group has been together, the intensiveness of their interaction, their isolation from others, and their mutual dependency will affect the extensiveness and richness of their culture"(Fine & Stoecker, 1985 16)

The degree of risk and likelihood of being arrested, persecuted, and infiltrated by informers affect the secret group's recruitment standards. Comparing drug users, Erikson shows that since the degree of risk involved in the use of marijuana is lower in comparison to heroin, marijuana users are "willing to share information or drugs or activities with a wider range of people than the more endangered and hence more cautious users of heroin" (1980:12). Moreover, when operating under risk most mechanisms of recruitment for non-risky circumstances are precluded. More information about the character of potential recruits is required. A group member who wants to recruit a new member is putting at risk both him/herself and the group by disclosing a secret to a non-member. Aubert writes that during the Nazi occupation, it was necessary that an established member of an underground resistance movement vouched for the patriotism and reliability of the potential recruit. The "emphasis upon secrecy and the personal nature of recruitment tended to give priority to considerations of character, trustworthiness, courage, and loyalty"(1965 290-291)

Long term relationships, however, are necessary in order to obtain these types of information, something difficult to do in risky circumstances. In such situations, the pre-existing networks of kinship and friendship become the main sources for recruitment because the answers to many questions about the character of potential recruits are already available. Della Porta, for instance, reports the presence of strong ties among Italian terrorists. She writes that in

at least 843 cases out of 1,214, the decision to join an underground organization was taken by people who had at least one friend already involved in that organization. Second, in 74% of these cases, the recruit had more than one friend and in 42% he or she had even more than seven. Moreover, the intensity of the relations is also shown by the high frequency of kinship ties in 298 cases of my quantitative sample, militants in underground organizations had at least one relative - usually a husband/wife or brother/sister- who shared their commitment (1988:158).

Secrecy and risk intensify the tendency for internal cohesion and discourage internal discord and disagreement of group members. In risky circumstances, internal discord not only may lead to schisms but could also cause dangerous situations. This consequently increases the desire for internal cohesion. In contrast to groups operating in non-risky situations, competing and conflicting ideas are usually excluded from secret groups.

Furthermore, the secret structure of the group itself limits internal conflicts. Due to the presence of risk, a member has contact with a limited number of group members. The dissatisfied or dissident member is not able "to communicate with more than a very small number of other similarly situated members in the organization"(Aubert, 1965:300). A group's internal cohesion is further intensified by limited links with other groups. This isolation reduces members' exposure to, and their public engagement with different and opposing ideas. Group isolation leads to what Erickson calls the "density of ties" between members. In comparison to family, friendship, and professional ties, the solidarity and mutual commitment of members of secret groups is stronger.

Excitement and comradeship of shared risk can lead to stronger affiliation with the secret society and with other members. Participants may gradually restructure their networks, interacting more and more with other participants and less and less with outsiders (Erickson, 1980:22-23).

The small secret group, consequently, has a strong influence on the decisions and choices of individual members (della Porta, 1988 163)

These features are present in both the Iranian *dowreh* and political underground organizations, though with different degrees of intensity. Although not a secret organization, *dowreh* has some of these features including strong ties, isolation, internal cohesion, and density of bonds. *Dowreh*, an informal group, consists of a small number of individuals, from 10 to 20, who meet regularly. The way that Miller determines the number of *dowreh* participants indicates the informal character of this institution. He writes that the number of people is "limited to those who can stand beside a buffet dinner table or sit along the walls of a living room" (1969: 164). *Dowrehs* are organized around some common purpose like "card playing, poetry, music, and, of course, politics" (Zonis, 1971 238)

Dowreh is a circle of homogeneous people who share similar socio-economic backgrounds. For instance, regarding the *dowreh* of the upper class, Zonis writes that "with few exceptions, these *dowreh* members are all in the same generation and have had similar educational experiences" (1971 239). In fact, some of the *dowrehs* are formed by individuals who studied in the same Western country, the same discipline, or share the same occupation. Shams Ale-Ahmad's descriptions of a political *dowreh* formed by his father and other clergymen during the Reza Shah's rule, illustrate the homogeneous status of its participants and the informality of their relationships. For instance, the *dowreh* meetings would end by supper time and the participants would have their meal with the host's family members. In other words, there was a passage from the serious mood of a group of individuals discussing political issues to the mood of a family gathering under the same roof (Al-e Ahmad,

1990:186-187). The Shah's regime did not tolerate formal groups and organizations and the informal structure of *dowreh* was its safeguard against the regime's persecution (Bill, 1972:47-48)

During the 1960s and 1970s, the increasing political control and repression of the Shah's regime and the experience of the revolutionary movements in China, Cuba, Algeria and Vietnam persuaded some members of the opposition to opt for guerrilla warfare. They argued that traditional means and tactics of political struggle (e.g., formation of political parties and unions, labour strikes, street demonstrations, and parliamentary struggle) were ineffective in dealing with the Shah's regime. They formed underground organizations and set themselves up in small groups. Members usually had strong ties of close friendship and/or blood relationship. The three founding members of the Mojahedin Organization, for instance, had been close friends at Tehran University (Abrahamian, 1989:87). In 1972, nearly 40 per cent of sixty-nine mojaheds arrested and tried by military tribunals had familial ties with each other: 20 were brothers and at least 5 others were brothers-in-law (Abrahamian, 1989:130). Sometimes, it was the underground organization that promoted the development of strong ties. The Mojahedin Organization, for example, encouraged its members to live together in small collectives in order to "get to know each other better, and where feasible marry fellow members" (Abrahamian, 1989:126).

Not only were underground organizations kept isolated from each other but even subgroups from the same organization could not meet with each other. Mojahedins, for instance, following the 'grape' form of organization, set themselves in "small cells of two to three members. Three cells formed a group. These groups were instructed to communicate

only vertically with an assigned member of the Central Cadre" (Abrahamian, 1989: 126). In situations when members of two secret cells had to get together, precautions were taken to limit members' contact to a minimum. A female guerrilla relates that since the coming and going of visitors to the safe house of an underground cell made neighbours suspicious, she and her male comrade made a mock family visit to them. She was instructed not to look at the face of members of the other cell while loudly exchanging greetings with them at the door as a sign of friendship. She was then led to a room to sit there by herself (Anon, 1980: 102).

The isolation of group members from others was also used as a mechanism to prevent contacts with other groups and to preserve the internal cohesion and unity of a group. From Beh-azin's account of prison life, we learn that isolation of members of political groups from each other continued there. In prison members of each political group lived, ate, and studied together in their *komun* (community) (Beh-azin, 1975).

The internal structure of the *dowreh* and underground organizations (e.g., their size, isolation, and internal cohesion) and their lack of exposure to opposing opinions and ideas in a public fashion had important effects on members' perspectives and the development of the group's own culture. These factors, I argue, were conducive to the development of positivist and corporate perceptions of truth. Truth was conceived not as a social product but a given entity which reflected the limited interest and vision of the small group. It is to these two aspects that I now turn.

In the absence of political rights and independent political organizations and mass media, the *dowreh* and underground groups became powerful agencies of socialization in Iran. They were among those few settings where people could talk politics. *Dowreh* and

underground groups, however, were not public settings where individuals of different opinions debated public issues until reason prevailed. They were not either part of a society where organizations and social movements could freely meet, exchange, and debate their ideas. Members of the *dowreh* and underground organizations were not exposed to public debates and consequently the 'truth' of the group was rarely challenged. They mostly argued with trusted and like-minded individuals. In other words, *dowreh* and underground organizations reinforced the norms and values shared by their members. The truth of the group was consequently perceived as the only and supreme truth. This contributed to the development of corporate and historicist or positivist perspectives.

Following the Gramscian distinction between the "corporate", "class", and "hegemonic", I argue that *dowreh* and underground organizations were social settings at a corporate stage where a corporate perspective could develop. Members of these groups were engaged in elaborating and defining the immediate interests and ideas of their members rather than that of the larger society. For them, democracy consisted of an ensemble of rules that protected the immediate interests of that particular social group. As a result of the lack of communication and dialogue with other social forces, they did not develop a universal perspective. After the revolution, the Mojahedin Organization, for instance, refused actively to support protests against the anti-democratic activities of the Islamic government. Instead, it warned protestors that imperialism was in waiting to take advantage of internal divisions and asked them to direct their energies against imperialism, the primary danger, rather than raising secondary issues like democratic rights. The Mojahedin, however, became the defender of democracy and political pluralism as soon as it felt itself threatened by the ever-

increasing power of the clergy. By mid-1980, the leader of Mojahedin, Rajavi, declared that political freedom and "true" Islam were inseparable (Abrahamian, 1989: 184). The Mojahedin even proclaimed that the struggle for democracy rather than anti-imperialist struggle was the primary goal of revolution. They argued that

an attack on any group was an attack on all groups; that the issue of democracy was of 'fundamental importance'; and that other issues, including imperialism, hinged on it, for without political freedom the country would be vulnerable to foreign intrigue. 'Only democracy,' Rajavi declared, 'can safeguard us from American imperialism' (Abrahamian, 1989: 209).

In the 1960s and 1970s, influenced by historicism, the Iranian opposition believed in the existence of a supreme truth and laid claim to the possession of the knowledge of the laws of history. Terms like "scientific knowledge of history", "law of history", and "historical determinism" appeared widely in the literature of both left and Islamic opposition. The oblique terms used for reference to Marx and Marxism, for example, were "the German scientific philosopher", "the founder of scientific sociology", and "the scientific method of analysis".

With these terms, the opposition aimed at conveying the message that their knowledge of the "laws" of history and society allowed them to predict the course of history and act in accordance. Ehasan Tabari, the leading theoretician of the Tudeh (Communist) Party, for instance, writes that Marxism-Leninism is the culmination of the perfection of human knowledge (*ma' refat*) and the method of analysis which provides clarity in our perception of natural and historical matters. Marxism-Leninism is powerful and problem solving, Tabari asserts, because it is the truth (1971: 6). In 1975, in its manifesto, the break-away Marxist Mojahedin explained the reasons for its conversion from Islam to Marxism, saying that Marxism

was 'scientific' and, like physics and the movement of atoms, could explain the evolution of human society, whereas Islam was 'unscientific', 'idealistic', and incapable of understanding historical change (Abrahamian, 1989 156-157, added emphasis)

The Islamic Mojahedin Organization also extensively used the term "scientific" and defended the positivist conception of history. The armed struggle was referred by Mojahedin as "scientific method of struggle", and in their analysis of a university strike, they pointed out the lack of "scientific tactics of strike" as one of the weaknesses of the strike leadership (Mojahedin, 1973:38-39, 1974 49-50). They claimed that their method of interpretation of Islamic texts, like the Qor'an, was "scientific-realistic"(1979:9). In one of their pamphlet published immediately after the 1979 revolution, they explained the law of evolution, 'historical determinism' (*jahr-e tarikhi*). Mojahedin argued that God not only created the world but had also set in motion

the law of historical evolution. Historical evolution had created private property, class inequality, and had supplanted the early egalitarian communities with class-divided in equalitarian societies. Class divisions had brought into being oppressive states, false ideologies, and fundamental contradictions between owners and workers and between the 'modes' and the 'relations' of production. These fundamental contradictions had generated historical dynamism, propelled qualitative changes out of quantitative ones and ensuring the destruction of all outdated social systems, such as slavery, feudalism, and capitalism, and the eventual appearance of the just, egalitarian society (in Abrahamian, 1989 92-93)

Each opposition group, influenced by corporate and positivist perspectives, claimed that it possessed scientific knowledge of the laws of history and that it acted in accordance with those laws. However, if there is one supreme a-priori truth then differences of opinion could not be accepted and tolerated. Converting rather than convincing was the purpose of "ideological debates" because each group believed itself to be in possession of the truth. One

of the leaders of the Marxist Fadaïyan Organization, for example, talking about the Fadaïyan's position towards the National Union of Women (NUW) organization says: "the objective was to penetrate the NUW using a handful of Marxist-Leninist women who would push for a Marxist-Leninist line, would capture the leadership organs in support of the interests of the toiling masses and would shut out the intellectual women who were considered as suspicious, petty-bourgeois and counter-revolutionary"(in Moghissi, 1994:154, added emphasis) He recalls that when some women from the NUW demanded a more radical position in favour of women's rights and freedoms on the part of the Fadaïyan, most members of the Central Committee argued that

dealing with such divisionary issues...would estrange our relations with the anti-imperialist forces and the government...And if you asked them why then was our organization active in the NUW, they would bluntly respond because we want to establish a correct Fadaï line there (in Moghissi, 1994:155, added emphasis).

Resistance or rejection of an organization's ideology or platform was not tolerated and could turn into physical confrontations and accusations such as "petty bourgeois", "revisionists", "opportunists", and even "agents of secret police" In 1975, for instance, following the conversion of the majority of the Islamic Mojahedin Organization to Marxism, conflicts broke out between the two factions which ended up in murder and accusations such as "traitors" and "potential SAVAK collaborators"(Abrahamian, 1989:163) This took place despite the presence of family members and close friends in opposite camps

8.2. The Veneration of Heroes and Martyrs

A shahid [martyr] is the heart of history. The heart gives blood and life to the otherwise dead blood-vessels of the body (Shariati, 1986 248)

In the 1960s and 1970s, the theme of martyrdom gained momentum and moved to the centre of Iranian political discourse. The disposition of Iranians to consider the sincerity and self-sacrifice of heroes and martyrs as extraordinary or charismatic are studied here in relation to moral conflicts caused by living under a dictatorship.

Charismatic qualities are defined by Weber as qualities by virtue of which an individual is

set apart from ordinary men and treated as endowed with supernatural, superhuman or at least specifically exceptional qualities. These are not accessible to the ordinary person, but are regarded as of divine origin or as exemplary, and on the basis of them the individual concerned is treated as a leader. It is recognition on the part of those subject to authority which is decisive for the validity of charisma (1966 358-359)

From Weber's conception of charismatic authority two inter-twined issues can be extracted first, there are certain qualities that are recognized as extraordinary or charismatic, and, second, there are individuals who are disposed to perceive these qualities as extraordinary. In relation to charismatic qualities, Shils states that what are recognized as extraordinary qualities of an individual lie in what is thought to be central and vital to the existence of human beings and the cosmos in which they live. Shils then provides a long list of central powers which connection with them can act as the source of charismatic authority. They include divine powers which control and influence human life and the cosmos, laws governing the universe and/or human's conduct, scientific discovery, artistic creativity, and political and organizational authority (1965 201, Willner, 1984)

The charismatic quality of an individual stems from his/her connection with power

centres that provide frameworks and put otherwise disconnected life events in a meaningful order. The belief in the connection of a charismatic individual with these power centres gives a sense of security to followers. Life and social relations become predictable and meaningful.

Religions 'explain' by reference to divine intention how the world came into existence and why it exists. They assess society in the light of those order and assert what it should be. The fundamental discoveries of modern science in cosmology, astronomy, medicine, neurology, geology, genetics, are significant as disclosures of the basic order of the cosmos (Shils, 1965:204).

The second issue, the propensity of a group of individuals to perceive a quality as charismatic, is mainly explained by Weber in psychological terms. The veneration and absolute trust that a group of individuals show toward a charismatic person arises "out of enthusiasm, or of despair and hope"(Weber, 1966:359). This psychological state, according to Weber, emerges "in times of psychic, physical, economic, ethical, religious, political distress"(quoted in Eisenstadt, 1968:xxiii). In what follows, the role of political repression in setting apart certain qualities as extraordinary or charismatic is discussed.

As noted previously, distrust and fear of persecution led Iranians to resort to dissimulation - techniques of concealment of their true self and beliefs. Although dissimulation protects one from the risks of persecution, one can not ignore the feelings of humiliation and frustration that this practice can cause. Intrapsychic emotions caused by moral conflicts, in turn, affect one's definition of leadership. In the following paragraphs, first the concepts of dynamic adaptation, guilt, and shame are defined. After considering situations that could cause moral conflicts, I will discuss some of the reactions exhibited by Iranians to moral conflicts. I end this section by arguing that these circumstances were conducive to the veneration of heroes and martyrs as charismatic personalities.

Iranians who used dissimulation as a tool to adapt to threatening circumstances could experience, using Fromm's terminology, 'dynamic adaptation'. Fromm differentiates 'static' from 'dynamic' adaptation. He defines static adaptation as the adaptation to a situation which "leaves the whole character structure unchanged and implies only the adoption of a new habit"(1965:30). Taking the example of a Chinese person who comes to America and adopts the habit of using a fork and knife, Fromm argues that this adaptation has little effect on the Chinese visitor because it does not arouse new drives or character traits.

In contrast, 'dynamic adaptation' refers to an adaptation which affects the character structure of the individual. This occurs, for example, when a boy submits to the commands of a threatening father.

While he adapts himself to the necessities of the situation, something happens in him. He may develop an intense hostility against his father, which he represses, since it would be too dangerous to express it or even to be aware of it. This repressed hostility, however, though not manifest, is a dynamic factor in his character structure. It may create new anxiety and thus lead to still deeper submission; it may set up a vague defiance, directed against no one in particular but rather toward life in general (Fromm, 1965:30)

In the context of Iran, the practice of dissimulation in the face of a threatening situation often became a dynamic adaptation because one not only concealed one's true opinion but also one's rage and frustration. The conflict between the need to protect oneself by concealment of one's true self and the urge to live with dignity by expressing the truth could lead to 'self-directed adverse judgements' like shame and guilt.

Guilt and shame, as Taylor writes, are two emotions of 'self-assessment' or 'self-directed adverse judgements' that appear following one's deviation from moral norms and principles. In other words, guilt and shame appear whenever a person comes to a conclusion

that he/she has deviated from some norms and that in doing so that person has altered his/her standing in the world (Taylor, 1987:1). The two internal authorities of 'Super-ego' and 'Ideal-ego' are identified as the sources of guilt and shame, respectively. Whereas the former consists of internalized norms defining certain behaviours as negative, the latter refers to one's wished-for self-image (Creighton, 1990:285). Ideal-ego contains a core of narcissistic omnipotence which represents the sum of positive identification with both the parental images (early identifications) and social roles (later identifications) (Piers, 1971:26-27). Therefore, whereas guilt is

generated whenever a boundary (set by the superego) is touched or transgressed, shame occurs when a goal (presented by the ego ideal) is not being reached...Guilt anxiety accompanies transgression, shame, failure (Piers, 1971:23-24).

Guilt and shame are not in a mutually exclusive relationship, one could lead to the other depending on circumstances. In this respect, Rawls' example is instructive. He says:

Suppose you have not spoken up when you think you should. You will feel shame if your thought is that this just shows what a moral coward you are. But you will feel guilt if you think that because of your keeping quiet justice has not been done (in Taylor, 1987:87).

Guilt and shame can be further distinguished as 'private' and 'public'. Private guilt and shame refer to the intrapsychic tensions that one feels inside as a result of violation of moral values and principles. But guilt and shame become public when one's moral infringement has been noticed by others.

There is an increased potential for moral conflict in a culture that tolerates and encourages dissimulation, on one hand, and values sincerity (*yek-rui*) and stalwartness (*javan-mardi*), on the other. One often hears Iranians admiring a person who is "*yek-rui*" (one-faced).

meaning his/her public and inner-self conform, and to scorn those who are "*do-ru*" (two-faced), meaning hypocritical. Among the characteristics of highly valued *javanmardi* are that of speaking the truth, avoiding bringing harm to anyone, championing the weak, and opposing cruelty and arbitrariness (Arasteh, 1970:26). Iranian obsession with these latter moral values could be an indication of the difficulty they face in achieving them in a society ruled by repression and arbitrariness. The consolidation of the Shah's autocratic regime in 1963 exacerbated conflicts between these two drives. Caught between two sets of conflicting values, i.e., the concealment of one's true self in a culture that highly praises sincerity and bravery, Iranian opposition experienced moral conflicts.

In the post-1963 period, the defiant and fearless actions of some members of the opposition, caused an increased sense of guilt and shame among Iranians. On one hand, the regime's repressive policies disseminated fear and distrust among the population and encouraged them to resort to dissimulation. On the other hand, there were individuals who, despite the risk of imprisonment and torture, expressed their opposition in their words and actions. Their actions discredited and refuted the dissimulation argument on the necessity of being cautious. The actions of heroes and martyrs, as well as the writings and speeches of defiant intellectuals, played the role of society's moral conscience and disturbed Iranians' sense of moral responsibility. In the 1960s and 1970s, being a hero became so attractive that some intellectuals could not resist and ignored the distance that existed between their real and ideal self. Concerned with presenting a progressive image, they claimed to be fearless committed dissidents, something which they were not. Consequently, dissident intellectuals like Tonekaboni (nd) and Momeni (1977:53-57) ridiculed them as pseudo-revolutionary.

intellectuals

Some Iranians not only experienced private moral conflicts but sometimes public shame or guilt. This happened when they were faced the choice of either fighting the regime defending their moral and political principles or complying with it. Around 1970, for example, when the regime arrested Tonekaboni for publication of his book, the Writers Association protested. It issued a declaration against the regime and asked writers to sign it. Signing was a risky venture which could result in arrest. Those who did not dare to sign the petition felt ashamed. One of the members of Writers Association, Beh-azin, for instance, recalled a friend who hid himself out of shame. Despite his initial expression of support and willingness to sign the petition, when Beh-azin took the petition to his house he was told by his friend's wife that he could not sign the petition (1975 11)

The question haunting members of the opposition and anyone who wanted to join them was whether they could resist torture and not betray their comrades and organization. Torture was so brutal that guerrilla organizations instructed their members to carry cyanide pills with them in order to commit suicide, in case of arrest (Jazani, 1980 XII). The question of whether they could resist torture and the hardships of struggle, led some to test their resistance by self-imposed austerity and physical suffering in an act of taming fear by setting themselves artificially in rough life conditions.

Veneration of heroes and martyrs was one form of reaction to moral conflicts and tensions. The regime's arbitrary and ruthless exercise of power set apart certain qualities as extraordinary and charismatic. The regime aimed at the dissemination of fear, distrust, and pessimism among the population by "leaking" information on torture and forcing opposition

members to public recantation. Stories about the horrible methods of torture used by SAVAK circulated among the population. The message that the regime wanted to get across was: No one can resist torture. This, however, affected the perception of the opposition of leadership in Iran: if persecution and torture are so harsh that no one can tolerate it, then those who resist are extraordinary and must be in possession of extraordinary qualities. In addition to their resistance to physical and psychological torture, martyrs and heroes were also venerated for demonstrating their sincerity and high commitment to their moral and political principles through their deeds and self-sacrifice. These qualities were considered by the populace as extraordinary qualities which set them apart and above the rest. Those who had not been able to attain these qualities were responsive to their manifestations in others and had a propensity to admire them. Baraheni, the Iranian writer and essayist, writes that in Iran

a writer's authenticity and integrity are, more often than not, veritably measured by the degree to which he has suffered under torture, repression and censorship (1977: 116-117).

The veneration of heroes and martyrs was also fed by the opposition. In the 1960s and 1970s, Iranian opposition forces stressed the heroic actions of their members and martyrs. The authority of dissident individuals and opposition organizations was legitimized more by their heroic behavior and self-sacrifice than their problem solving ability and theoretical soundness. A former cadre of the Fadaïyan Organization says that in the post-revolution period "in a sense, a caste system existed within the organization, with ex-political prisoners at the top of the hierarchy and intellectuals who had lived and worked in Iran before the revolution, and the group returning from abroad, with rare exceptions, at the bottom" (in Moghissi, 1994: 130).

The opposition organizations not only maintained that the courage and self-sacrifice of their members and martyrs would contribute to the downfall of the regime, but also believed that the heroic actions of their members could break their isolation and establish a line of communication between them and the populace, thereby gaining the trust of people and legitimizing their organizations. In their defense of the armed struggle, for example, guerrilla organizations pointed to the tight and effective police control which made it impossible for them to establish contacts with the populace and to form political organizations. One of the leaders of the Marxist Fadaïyan Organization, Pouyan, describing their isolation and severance from people, writes that "we live not as fish in the sea of masses' support, but in isolation from the people and encircled by crocodiles and herons" (1971: 6). In situations where independent media and organizations are outlawed and political activities mainly take place underground, the establishment of political trust becomes very difficult. In such circumstances, the heroic actions of an organization's members can function as a medium. Through their actions and deeds, heroes and martyrs are able to communicate an organization's ideas at a distance or in a non face-to-face situation. The following statement of the Fadaïyan Organization about the role of its members' heroic activities shows that

Now the people have new things to talk about. Such bravery and sacrifice, how is it possible? What are they fighting for? They see that sacrifice is possible to stand up against an enemy armed to its teeth with only a small force (Pouyan, 1971: 3-4).

The heroic actions were also considered by the opposition to be a means of establishing trust relationships with the populace and to legitimize their authority. The issue of martyrdom, for example, is used by the Tudeh (Communist) Party as an indicator of its sincerity and

trustworthiness. In one of its publications, it states that the trial and execution of Ruzbeh, the leader of Tudeh military branch, showed people that contrary to the enemy's propaganda, the Tudeh is not the party of mistakes, relegation, decadence, surrender, and treasons. Instead, it is the Tudeh party that has created such heroes (Namvar, 1964-60, Tudeh, 1970). The Marxist Fadaiyan Organization states that the loss of its leaders is at the same time

indicative of the fact that the guerrilla fighters, irrespective of their position in the Organization, are always at the forefront of the struggle against the Shah's tyrannical regime and will never flinch from their duties. This is a highly important factor in our country. It is only thus that the bitter memory left by the treacherous opportunists of Left and Right, chiefly those of the leadership of the defunct Tudeh (Communist) Party, who live abroad, can be erased from the minds of our people and especially from the minds of the working class (in Jazani, 1980: VIII, added emphasis)

In late 1960s and early 1970s, the issue of martyrdom became also central to radical Shi'a discourse. It is in this period that a passage from the paradigm of Imam Hossain 'as intercessor' to that of the Imam Hossain 'as example' occurred. According to the drama of Imam Hussain's martyrdom he and a small number of his relatives and companions were massacred by thousands of soldiers of the caliph Yazid while heading toward the city of Kufa, in the 7th century. The story of suffering, death, and bravery of Shi'a martyrs is relayed in different ceremonies like *Ta'ziyeh* (passion play), *Rowzeh-khani* (recitation of the sufferings of holy martyrs), and street processions. In these ceremonies, the believers are emotionally involved. During the *rowzeh-khani*, for instance, when the narrator describes in detail events of the drama, the "audience bursts into loud, unrestrained sobbing, moaning and slapping of the forehead and beating of chests" (Thaiss, 1972: 355-356).

One of the main themes of this drama is that the people of Kufa, who invited Imam

Hussain and promised to support him, did not come to his aid in the battle with the soldiers. In the drama, the bravery and self-sacrifice of the martyrs is contrasted with the cowardness of the people of Kufa who failed to keep their promises. In the passion play (*Taziyyeh*), for instance, Imam Hussain enters and turning to the audience cries 'Is there no one to help me?' or his relatives are portrayed as begging permission to go to the field of battle. The audience are "reminded that the ritual has its origins in the gathering at Kerbala of the 'Penitents,' the Muslims of Kufa who had invited Imam Hussein to join them but abandoned him"(Good, 1985: 387-388). The audience, who identify themselves with the people of Kufa, beat their chests and fronts and strike their backs with chains.

Although on the surface, these ceremonies are about an event which took place in the 7th century, it is important to note that in these ceremonies, the audience are invited to identify their own sufferings with those of the martyrs of the drama. With weeping and beating themselves, the audience release their own grief caused by death, illness, and suppressed personal rage and frustration. This function is clear in Abedi's account of the unbearable life condition of a house custodian and his contained rage. Abedi writes that the guard, who was on duty twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, complained that he could see his wife, back in the village, only three times a year. Abedi relays that the guard always wanted him

to sing religious dirges (*nowheh*) for him, so he could cry, since as he put it he could not go out to *rowzehs* (the preachments that end with weeping for Hossain). Once we shared Ashura together, and he begged me to sing the dirges for Hossain. He began to beat his chest so hard, I feared he would cause himself real harm, so I stopped. He begged me to continue. I said I would, but only if he moderates his chest beating. We began again. He continued to pound his chest. I stopped, but he continued wailing. Hossain,

Hossain,' interspersing his invocations of and to Hossain with laments about his family and hard life, until he collapsed (1990: 79)

According to the paradigm of Imam Hossain as intercessor, he is capable of interceding between the believers and God. Shi'a believers, therefore, with weeping and self-beating would be able to acquire Imam Hossein's intercession on the day of the Last Judgment (Chelkowski, 1979: 2; Hogland, 1983: 221). The passive and acquiescent character of this paradigm is clear from "the epithet *mazlum* which often follows Imam Hossain's name in popular usage. *Mazlum* in colloquial Persian means a person who is unwilling to act against others, even when he is oppressed, not out of cowardice or diffidence but because of generosity and forbearance"(Enayat, 1982: 183)

In 1968, Ni'matullah Salihi Najafabadi, a religious scholar, published a book titled *Shahid-i Javid* (The Immortal Martyr) in which he took to task the quiescent character of the drama of Hussain and launched the paradigm of Imam Hossain as an exemplar. Najafabadi rejected the idea of redemption and asserted that Imam Hossain's movement to Kufa was a rational and well-planned attempt for political reasons. His failure in seizing power was entirely due to objective factors and not the vagaries of supernatural powers (Enayat, 1982: 190-194). This interpretation of the drama, as Enayat notes, led to the emergence of a "growing tendency among the Shi'i militant to treat the drama of Karbala as an essentially human tragedy, and concurrently, to avoid regarding Hossain's heroism as a unique and inimitable event in history, above the capacity of the common run of human beings"(1982: 193-194)

In the 1960s and 1970s, radical Muslims tried to popularize the paradigm of Imam

Hossain as an exemplar and direct the aggression caused by the feelings of guilt outward, against political targets. To reject the paradigm of Hossain as intercessor, Shari'ati, for instance, asks his audience why Imam Hossain after losing all his dear ones and when there was no one in the battlefield except the enemy cried 'Is there anyone to stand at my side?'

This is the question posed to future generations, to each one of us. This question revealed Hossain's expectations of those who love him. We belittled this invitation, this expectation, and this message by misreading its content. Instead of, 'Hossain demands followers in every age and generation,' we read, 'Hossain demands only tears and weeping. He has no other message. He is dead and demands mourners' (1986:247).

To re-enact the feelings of shame and guilt of his audience, Shari'ati uses the drama of Hossain as vehicle, and tells them:

Sister and brother! The *shuhadah* [martyrs] are now dead, and we - the dead - are alive. The *shuhada* have conveyed their message and we - the deaf - are their audience. Those who were bold enough to choose death, when they could no longer live, have left; we - the shameless - have remained. We have remained for hundreds of years. It is quite appropriate for the whole world to laugh at us, because we, the symbols of abjection and humility, are weeping for Hossain and Zaynab [Imam Hossain's sister], the manifestations of life and honour (1986:244)

In this alternative view, the martyrdom of Imam Hossain serves as an example for the behavior of believers.

8.3. WESTOXICATION THESIS

In early 1960s, Ali-e Ahmad, a renowned Iranian writer, secretly published *Qarb-zadeghi* (westoxication) and introduced a new paradigm for explaining Iran's backwardness. His book soon prompted heated debates among Iranian intellectuals and became one of the most popular books of the 1960s. The idea of westoxication was popularized by other Iranian

intellectuals, particularly Ali Shari'ati, a French educated sociologist

Al-e Ahmad glorified the Islamic period of Iranian history and disparaged the pre-Islamic one. His book identified Westerners rather than Muslim Arabs as the destroyers of Iranian civilization. He presented Islam and Islamic institutions as the only entities which had not yet succumbed to Western influences and therefore as bulwarks against the danger of Western cultural, economic, and political domination. Al-e Ahmad's positions went against the dominant discourse among the intellectuals and opposition. Until 1960s, Iranian nationalists glorified Persian pre-Islamic Empire and civilization and blamed Muslim Arabs for its destruction. Iranian writers and poets, longing for the bygone glorious pre-Islamic Persian Empire, filled books and journals with stories of the Achaemenian and Sassanian military and cultural glories. Persia's defeat by the Muslim Arabs, in the 7th century, was held responsible for Iran's backwardness. In the first decades of the 20th century, for instance, a famous Iranian poet, Arif Qazvini, wrote:

Ever since the Arabs got a foothold in Iran,
No word of happiness was heard from the land of Sassan
(in Katouzian, 1979: 542, Soroudi, 1980: 134)

Chauvinist feeling was further encouraged by the Pahlavis. During the reign of the Pahlavis, Iranian pre-Islamic civilization was glorified and publications and activities praising that period were promoted and encouraged (Vaziri, 1993: 161)

Until the 1960s, Iranian intelligentsia looked at Western civilization as a significant other, with which they compared their country's state of development and progress. The evils of society were seen more as owing to Iranian customs and traditions than to Western imperialism and encroachments, and the solutions were seen as coming from Iranians finding

ways to change their customs and traditions (Keddie, 1981:200). In contrast, the westoxication perspective considered Western civilization as a decadent civilization not worthy of being looked upon as a model and blamed the Western powers' domination as the main cause of Iran's deterioration. Consequently, it insisted that a return to 'Islamic roots' was the solution to Iran's deterioration and exhorted Iranian intellectuals to abandon Western culture and values and to rediscover their own "authentic" cultural identity, the Islamic one. The ulama were urged to cease their quietism, conservatism, and interminable hair-splitting over irrelevant religious issues and instead address important problems. The modern intellectuals were encouraged to form an alliance with revolutionary clergy and Muslims in defending Iranian cultural, political, and economic independence against Western powers.

The timing was ripe and favourable for the popularization of the westoxication thesis. The 1953 CIA-backed coup d'état was still fresh in Iranian memory. The post-1953 influx of large numbers of American military and civilian personnel and their immunity from the Iranian jurisdiction increased Iranians' resentment of the presence of Westerners. Moreover, the strong presence of Western cultural products in the Iranian media became a source of concern among Iranian intellectuals. Baraheni, for instance, blamed Western movies for taking away the innocence and generosity of Iranian youth (1984:88-89). The 1960s coincided with the expansion of mass-media, in particular radio, in Iran. Due to a high rate of illiteracy, the radio became a principal and growing medium of mass communication in Iran. In 1965, on average three out of four families owned a radio (Behnam, 1969:360). In the late 1950s and early 1960s, a "significant portion of the entertainment programs of Radio Iran was made up of translations of American radio detective series and soap operas" (Banani, 1971:328). In 1961-

62, of 1041 movies shown in Iran about 48 percent were American while only 2 percent were Iranian (Hambly, 1964:135). The encroachment of American publishers and publications added to the concern of Iranian intellectuals about the influence and spread of Western culture in Iran. Behrangi, for instance, concerned about the impact of American pedagogic style on Iranian teachers, estimated that "more than 90 percent of the education and psychology texts used in Iranian teacher training schools are American educators' texts translated into Persian"(Hanson, 1983:5).

Westoxication thesis introduced a politicized version of Shi'a Islam by re-interpreting and presenting its tenets, institutions, and rituals in an anti-regime and anti-imperialist guise. In the post-1963 period, parallel with the increasing exercise of arbitrary power and oppressive control by the regime and the incorporation of civil society into the state, Iranian society experienced a process of politicization. Like the regime, more and more Iranians tended to conceive and evaluate ideas, social institutions and relations along the pro- and anti-regime paradigm. Moreover, the regime and imperialism were perceived as the main source of the country's ills and attention was shifted away from their indigenous socio-cultural roots. Women's issues, for instance, were chiefly explained in relation to the policies of the Shah's regime and imperialism, and the role of patriarchy, Islam, and the socio-economic conditions of Iranian society were overlooked. This politicized frame was used to present and justify non-democratic and reactionary ideas in a new and revolutionary cloak. The changes in the status of women under the Pahlavis, for example, were rejected as a conspiracy of the regime and imperialist powers, whereas the use of the hejab was defended as an anti-regime, imperialist action. Talking about the ritual of the *Hajj* (pilgrimage), Shari'ati provides a

political interpretation of the Islamic ritual of throwing stones at three idols during the pilgrimage. He claims that those three idols symbolize the idols of 'capitalism, despotism and religious hypocrisy'. He then says that during *Hajj* "You promise God that you will fight to save the people from being burned by the fire of oppression, ignorance and reaction... Help people to step out from the swamps of stagnated and useless lives. Awaken them from their stupor so that they refuse to suffer oppression in the darkness of ignorance"(Hussain, 1985:81-82). In the late 1960s and 1970s, the youth and intelligentsia turned towards politicized Shi'a Islam and perceived it as a revolutionary ideology.

It is important to note that the proponents of Westoxication thesis were critical of the clerical establishment. They criticized the Shi'a establishment for its quietism and failure in conveying the true and revolutionary message of Shi'a. Even Ali-e Ahmad, who introduced the term of *qarb-zadeghi* (westoxication), attacked clerics for their hypocrisy (Keddie, 1981:200). Shari'ati openly denounced the clergy and stated, we "want the Islam of fighters, not that of rouhani (spiritual leaders). Revolutionary Islam can be understood by the uneducated. In fact, sometimes the comprehension of the uneducated for genuine Islam surpasses that of the *faqih, alem* and prestigious theologians"(in Hussain, 1985:80, added emphasis). The clergy took offense at his remarks and condemned him.

Westoxication thesis articulated and popularized an anti-democratic, authoritarian, and chauvinistic frame of interpretation in a revolutionary and anti-imperialist dress. The defenders of the westoxication thesis not only condemned Westerners but also rejected and refuted Western cultural products as decadent and alien to Iranian culture. They rejected much of modern political and cultural values as alien and destructive to Iranian culture. They created

and popularized a version of Iranian history where the populace were portrayed as ignorant and passive multitudes, and modernity as a foreign project introduced by the Western powers and westoxicated puppet regimes and intellectuals. Westoxication did not recognize the contributions of the Iranian people to the establishment of modernity and reduced Iranian history to one of the plots of foreign powers. Westerners were blamed for introducing ideas like nationalism, secularism, liberalism, and democracy in order to destroy Easterners' cultural identity. The advocates of the westoxication thesis, consequently, praised the anti-constitutional religious leader Nuri for upholding the integrity of Iran and Islam in the face of the invading West; they regretted the fall of the Islamic Ottoman Empire and rejected democracy, secularism, and nationalism. Some components of westoxication thesis are discussed in the following sections.

8.3.1. Rejection of the West & Cultural and Moral Superiority of the East:

I have been witnessing the Western decline ever since the Spengler period. The Asian graph is going up, and the Western graph is coming down. The victory belongs to the East (Shariati, 1981:115).

Westoxication is defined by Al-e Ahmad as a disease, imported and implanted by Western powers and their domestic allies, which has alienated Easterners (including Iranians) from their cultural identity.

Have you ever seen how wheat rots? From within. The husk remains whole, but it is an empty shell like the discarded chrysalis of a butterfly hanging from a tree. In any case, we are dealing with a sickness, a disease imported from abroad, and developed in an environment receptive to it (Al-e Ahmad, 1982:3).

In his critique of Iran's educational system as an institution producing westoxicated youth, Al-e Ahmad depicts a westoxicated individual.

As soon as a grammar school student memorized the 'Imperial Anthem' as his national anthem, he forgets his prayers. As soon as he reaches sixth grade, he is separated from the mosque. As soon as he enters a cinema, he completely forgets about religion. For this reason also 90 percent of our high school graduates are nonbelievers. Not nonbelievers, actually, they are totally without belief, spinning in the air. Their feet do not rest on solid ground... Our school is weststricken. They turn out cardboard people, ready to be infected with westitis (Al-e Ahmad, 1982:49).

Al-e Ahmad and other defenders of the westoxication thesis maintain an essentialist perception of 'West' and 'East' and define them as monolithic and homogeneous entities. Easterners and Westerners are defined and distinguished as 'us' and 'them' groups with contrasting interests and characters. The West is presented as a wealthy, materially powerful entity which is culturally in a state of decay; whereas the East is depicted as a materially poor and weak entity, but with a rich and flourishing culture (Al-e Ahmad, 1982:4). As part of an imperialist system, all Westerners are involved in plundering and exploiting of Easterners. Shari'ati, borrowing the leftist' concept of 'labour aristocracy', states that even the European proletariat is pillaging and robbing Easterners because they have been bourgeoisified. The relation between workers and capitalists in the West, according to Shari'ati, is not that of a class relationship but the one between bandit members (i.e., workers) and their heads (i.e., bourgeoisie) (nd.a:251-252). Westerners are also depicted by the advocates of the westoxication paradigm as racist and egocentrist. Shari'ati argues that Western thinkers like Nietzsche, Hegel, and Freud have defended the racial superiority of the West. To convince his audience, he states

Yes, I have seen it with my eyes in universities such as the Sorbonne in Paris. In the twentieth century an M.D. writes his dissertation on the subject of the cells of the blacks vs whites. And a group of world famous professors offer him his degree since he has proven that brain cells of the black man's cortex are inferior to white's (1981:36)

In contrast to traditionalist Muslims, the defenders of the Westoxication paradigm are in favour of the use of Western technologies and exact sciences. These Western products are perceived as universal and therefore compatible with all societies, including Eastern ones. A scientific theory or law, Shari'ati states, is universally valid and does not matter where you apply it (nd.a: 253). The situation for the social sciences and humanities, however, is different. Because they are not universal. Al-e Ahmad, for instance, writes:

We need to take certain things from the West. But not everything. From the West, or in the West, we are looking for technology. Technology we have to import. We will also learn the science that goes with it. That [in itself] is not Western; it is universal. But not the social sciences and humanities. These, that is, from literature to history, economics, and jurisprudence, I [as an Iranian] have and know well. One can learn the scientific method from someone who knows. But as it pertains to the subject of social sciences and humanities, those I have (in Dabashi, 1993:62)

It is interesting that some go even further and claim that Western sciences and technologies are the continuation of Islamic culture. In 1970, Ayatollah Mottahari (one of the architects of Islamic regime), for instance, states

If we only consider the intellectual and scientific aspects of Europe, no matter how close we get [to them] there is no danger for us, because science is science, and the European science is the continuation of the Islamic science (in Dabashi, 1993:173-174)

A number of reasons for the rejection of Western cultural values can be discerned in the westoxication literature: the social context and experience of Western thinkers, the infancy of their ideas in comparison to Eastern cultural richness, the decadence of Western

civilization, and the incompatibility of Western cultural products with Iranian society and culture. Western cultural and moral values, the advocates of the westoxication thesis insist, are produced in response to the needs and issues relevant to Western social environment. Even the ideas of intellectuals like Sartre and Brecht, which were highly respected by some of the defenders of the westoxication thesis, are not considered compatible with Eastern society and culture, because these intellectuals are unable to feel and understand the needs and problems of Easterners. Their ideas

have nothing to do with our miseries, pains, and fate. The fact is that the Easterner suffers from hunger while the Westerner suffer from a full stomach. Therefore, what the latter says does not make any sense to the former, though in their Western atmosphere they are proper and make sense (Shari'ati, 1981: 30).

Furthermore, although the West is superior in science and technology, the East is superior in cultural richness. "We Easterners," Shari'ati says, "have been civilization builders and humanity's teacher throughout man's history, so much so that we now own a collection of vast and deep cultural, mental, and social experiences of humanity" (1981: 43). Western cultural products are considered poor in comparison to their Easterner counterparts. In fact, Easterners who studied literature, philosophy, and art in Europe on their return bring concepts "that are being taught in our high schools and religious seminaries" (Shari'ati, 1981: 31). For instance, in comparison to Iranian philosophy, Shari'ati claims, the philosophical basis of existentialism is in a state of infancy.

Existentialism in our country is an immature Western imitation which is in need of being enriched with our 3000-year-old theosophic experience in order to be called philosophy (Shari'ati, 1981: 118, added emphasis).

Or comparing existentialist issues to the Eastern spiritual experiences, Shari'ati finds them "very elementary" Anxiety and related issues, Shari'ati continues, which are the most fundamental problem of existentialism, but are "as easy as 'learning the alphabet' in Eastern theosophy. They existed in Laotse, Buddhism, and Islamic theosophy long ago" (1981:31)

The defenders of westoxication, then, criticized Iranian intellectuals for imitating Western civilization, a civilization in a state of decay To backup their argument, they cited the critiques of Western civilization by Western intellectuals, like Sartre, Unesco, Bertrand Russel, and Becket (Baraheni, 1984:77-79)

8.3.2. History as Conspiracy and Plot: The proponents of the westoxication thesis insisted that the East needed to free itself from the economic, political, and cultural domination of the West by becoming self-sufficient and independent. In order to liberate themselves from the yoke of the West, however, Easterners need to return to their cultural roots, because it was through cultural domination that the West succeeded in imposing its economic and political control over the East Al-e Ahmad and other proponents of westoxication argue that the Western powers were aware of the important function of Islam and Islamic institutions in maintaining a strong Muslim world, and planned to rob Easterners of their cultural identity The Western powers and the indigenous westoxicated intelligentsia first attacked and undermined the Islamic cultural identity of Easterners Once having lost their identity, Easterners became easy prey to Western domination In their version of colonialism, cultural domination came first and paved the way for the encroachment of Western economic and political colonialism The Westerners' first step was to take away pride

and esteem that Easterners felt about their cultural identity. Once convinced that their culture was worthless, Easterners became ready to accept Western cultural superiority and eventually its political and economic domination.

Iranian history is presented by the advocates of westoxication as a conspiracy drama written and staged by Western imperialist powers and their westoxicated indigenous allies. The Iranian people, the victims of this conspiracy, are either absent or are the deceived participants of the show (see for example, Shari'ati, nd.b:4). To convey the foreign origin of modernity, advocates of westoxication stressed the fact that in the writing of the Iranian Constitution, European constitutions were consulted and used. To discredit the Constitutional Revolution, the defenders of westoxication also emphasized the non-Islamic and non-Iranian origins of some of the leaders of the Constitutional Revolution. For instance, by stressing the Armenian origin of Malkom Khan and Yeprem Khan, and the Caucasian origin of the social democrat Talebof - three leaders of the Constitutional Revolution - they tried to give the impression that the Revolution was imported from abroad by foreigners. The popular support enjoyed by the Constitutional Revolution and its leaders is ignored in this version of history. Al-e Ahmad's famous statement in defence of the relentless anti-constitutionalist Nuri is a good example in this regard:

The hanging of the spiritual leader [i.e. mojtahed Nuri] who favoured the rule of the Shari'at in the Constitutional movement was in itself an indication of this retreat [in front of westoxication]. And this was going on at a time when the leader of our west-stricken intelligentsia, Malkom Khan, was a Christian and Talebof was a social democrat from the Caucasus. I consider the corpse of that great man hanging from the gallows, to be the banner bearing the emblem of the final victory of westitis over this country (1982:32-33, added emphasis; Shari'ati, nd.b:7).

By stressing the idea that modernity was a foreign project imported from abroad by cunning Western powers and their Iranian westoxicated accomplices, the defenders of the Westoxication thesis sought to discredit the authenticity of social movements that were behind the establishment of modernity in Iran. The struggle of the Iranian people for constitutional government, civil and political rights, women's rights, modern education, and secularism were presented as a conspiracy of Western powers. Westoxication advocates refused to acknowledge popular participation in the construction of Iranian history. The danger of believing this version of history is that it justifies the attack on, and dismantling of the institutions of modernity. When history is reduced to plots by Western powers and the treason of a small number of Iranians, and there is no recognition of people's participation in its building, and its destruction is more easily justified. People will be less motivated to resist the dismantling of institutions if the memory which connect them to the past is severed.

8.3.3. Westoxication Thesis & Democracy:

Come, friends, let us abandon Europe, let us cease this nauseating, apish imitation of Europe. Let us leave behind this Europe that always speaks of humanity, but destroys human beings wherever it finds them (Shari'ati, 1979:23).

Western cultural and political values, the advocates of the westoxication thesis claimed, are not compatible with, and are even dangerous to Eastern cultures. Shari'ati insisted that in the social sciences, contrary to the exact sciences, we should not pay attention to the logic of an idea or theory but to its geography. Shari'ati says that sometimes the same idea that brought progress to the West can destroy the East. For example, nationalism which

was the source of Europe's progress and power destroyed the Islamic Ottoman power in the 19th century. It eliminated the unity of Muslims, the source of power of the Ottoman Empire. Therefore, in social issues, Shari'ati concludes, it is more important to consider the geography of an idea than the idea itself (nd.a. 253-256). In other words, who said something is more important than what was said. Moreover, Shari'ati claims that nationalism, liberalism, progress, and humanism are ruses and deceits used by the European bourgeois in the colonial era to destroy Eastern religions (nd.b. 4). Rejecting secularism, for instance, Shari'ati says that "the West wants us to accept a division between politics and religion; that is a way of making us impotent" (Fischer, 1980: 154).

One of the Western political concepts rejected by westoxication is the idea of democracy. Due to its relevance to the topic of this thesis, this issue is dealt with in more detail. Democracy and democratic governments are refuted by the defenders of westoxication on the grounds that it is a product of a Western rather than an Eastern social context, it is hypocritical, and people are ignorant and unable to make the right decision and therefore revolutionary and knowledgeable leaders are required to guide them.

Baraheni argues that the East does not get anywhere if it imitates the Western model of democracy because its cultural, social, and revolutionary roots are absent in the East. The East needs new ideas coming from its own identity and experience, ideas which are in complete harmony with an Eastern mentality (1984: 66). Moreover, Western democracy is hypocritical. Shari'ati reminded his audience that it was Western liberal democracy and not the government of kings and priests that bombarded Algeria and killed 45,000 people in Madagascar (in Fischer, 1980: 155). Moreover, even in the most advanced Western countries

democracy is not practised. In addition to vote buying, Western democratic countries are, according to Shari'ati, run by a small powerful group of individuals

The Presidents of France and the United States and the Prime Minister of Great Britain had to sycophantically address problems that will convince bankers, big capitalists, even Jews, even the owners of cabarets and gambling casinos and racists of their political mission. Even Robert Kennedy had to pander to the filthy-rich New York Jews who run America with the help of the Mafia (in Chehabi, 1990:72).

Democratic government and popular sovereignty are also refuted on the grounds that the people are ignorant and incapable of governing and can destroy society and the revolution if they take the country into their control. The elite or revolutionary leaders, therefore, should not listen to the people until they have reached a state of maturity and the ideal society has been established. Shari'ati, for example, argues that while the aim of democracy is to achieve the welfare and prosperity of members of society, the aim of *imamate* (following Muslim committed and revolutionary leaders) is to guide people toward perfection. However, since the populace are shortsighted, they always choose welfare over perfection. It is, therefore, the duty of leaders to guide and lead people, even by using force, to the right path (Shari'ati, nd.c:26-31). Shari'ati argues that intellectuals of the recently liberated developing countries have realized that

if they act according to the votes of the people and rely upon them, these people are people who sell their vote for a nickel [or] hot soup. Therefore, if we want to elect a leader by public vote, the person who is elected will only serve the enemy (in Benard, 1984:44).

During this long and difficult journey, which Shari'ati likened to a caravan travelling a long and dangerous route, ignorant and short-sighted people, allured by superficial benefits and pleasures, can stray or impede the caravan from its journey. It is the duty of leaders to guide

the group, even by using force, on the right path (nd c. 26-31) Leaders who are in possession of both revolutionary knowledge and determination are necessary. Leaders are, therefore, necessary for guiding the populace toward the ideal society, where eventually people will be allowed to exercise their democratic rights.

In this chapter, the effects of dictatorship on the process of socialization have been studied. I argued that fear and distrust caused by the regime's control and persecution led Iranians to form back-stage settings with a small number of trusted acquaintances. The internal structure of these settings, however, was such that their members were not exposed to opposing opinions and ideas in a public fashion. This was conducive to the development of a positivist and corporate perception of truth. Truth was perceived as *apriori* and given rather than a social product. I also argued that mistrust and fear led Iranians to the practice of dissimulation which, despite protecting them from persecution, created moral conflicts. I set out evidence for the presence of feelings of rage, guilt and shame stemming from these moral conflicts. This added yet another component to the Iranian conception of leadership: sincerity and bravery became paramount and was personified in heroes and martyrs. In relation to the impact of absent institutions and information, I argued that it contributed to the perception of people as culturally integrated into the western/imperialist culture and politically passive and absent from Iranian history.

In summary, in the 1960s and 1970s, three perspectives emerged as a result of political repression: positivist and corporate perception of society and history, veneration of heroes, and the westoxication thesis. The underlying assumptions of these perceptions were the belief in people's passivity and absence from history and their claim of the existence of an

apriori truth about history and society possessed by certain individuals and organizations. As part of frames of interpretation they influenced the course and outcome of the 1979 revolution. This will be the topic of the next chapter.

CHAPTER NINE

THE REPRODUCTION OF DICTATORSHIP

During the 1979 Revolution, the opposition forces accusing the Shah's regime of suppressing democratic rights demanded freedom and democracy. After the revolution, however, in its attempt to seize power and to establish an Islamic regime, Khomeini's faction attacked democratic rights and institutions. It became clear that the opposition did not perceive those rights as universal nor as having priority. Every time the issue of democratic rights was raised, "democracy for whom?" was the response, and priority was given to the anti-imperialist struggle. It was argued that to raise these "secondary" issues when the revolution was threatened by imperialist plots was either an indication of naiveness or of a counter-revolutionary scheme.

After the revolution, the natural fear of counterrevolution turned into paranoia. Not only the Islamic government, but also secular and leftist forces constantly warned Iranians of the threat of imperialists' plots and admonished that plotters were everywhere and acting in disguise. One of the leaders of the Tudeh (Communist) Party, for example, cautioned Iranians that

Counterrevolution is everywhere, in the government, in the revolutionary institutions, in the universities. It appears as a Marxist, as liberal bourgeoisie, as a revolutionary Moslem (in Milani, 1993: 313)

The paranoia of being surrounded by plotters was detrimental to the development of democracy and political pluralism in post-revolution Iran. People tended to equate political dissent with treason, differences of opinion with divisive alien conspiracies, and political

toleration with permissiveness toward the enemy (Abrahamian, 1993: 130)

Several scholars have pointed out that the presence of a crude version of dependency theory among Iranian opposition forces led them to exaggerate the threat of imperialism and to overlook democracy and related issues (Mashayekhi, 1992; Moghadam, 1988; Shahidian, 1994). In addition to the theoretical deficiency of the opposition, I contend that the exaggeration of the plots of imperialism and counter-revolution also stemmed from their authoritarian frame of interpretation. Despite its populist rhetoric during the 1979 Revolution, the opposition in fact had little confidence in the intellectual and moral capability of the Iranian people. A closer look at warnings about the threats of imperialism shows that the underlying argument was that people could be mis-informed and misled by counter-revolutionary propaganda and thus could play into the hands of imperialist forces.

The fervent anti-imperialist rhetoric, I argue, involved a frame amplification strategy, that is, the elevation of already existing beliefs and values in society. The amplification of fear of the imperialist's plots and suspicion of "westoxicated" strata of society such as modern Iranian women and intelligentsia were strategies used to mobilize the populace against democratic rights. The threat of an imperialist conspiracy was used by the Khomeini's disciples to justify their attacks on democratic rights and generate support among the population. The left and secular forces also used that same argument to discard the demand for democratic rights, to dissuade Iranians from defending their rights, and to attack those who opposed the anti-democratic actions of the Islamic regime. This chapter will discuss the reactions of the Iranian Left and secularists to the attacks on democratic rights in general, and women in particular.

9.1. Democracy & Its Assumptions

The idea of democracy, broadly defined as a political system ruled by the people, revolves around three interrelated assumptions: citizens are politically equal, sovereign, and in possession of the capacities and resources necessary for self-government (Sartori, 1987: 58-59). The emergence and persistence of a democratic government requires citizens to believe that they are

all about equally well qualified to participate in the decisions of the group, and no single member, and no minority of members, is so definitely better to rule that the one or the few should be permitted to rule over the entire association. They believe, on the contrary, that all the members of the association are adequately qualified to participate on an equal footing with the others in the process of governing the association (Dahl, 1989: 30)

These assumptions, however, are not shared by the defenders of authoritarian political system who reject them on two inter-related 'epistemological' and 'anthropological' grounds. They reject democracy on the grounds of the existence of an already defined and given "good life" and "ideal society" which exists beyond the intellectual ability of ordinary people. To characterize this epistemological dimension of authoritarianism, Estlund (1993: 71-72) has coined the concept 'normative epistemological authoritarianism'. It consists of the following three tenets:

1. The Cognitive Tenet: Normative political claims that are true or false
2. The Elitist Epistemic Tenet: Some (relatively few) people know the normative political truth significantly better than others
3. The Authoritarian Tenet: The normative political knowledge of those who know is a strong moral reason for their holding political power

For example, in recommending the government of enlightened despots, Plato argues that 'the good life' is an objective phenomenon which exists independently of its immediate state and

can be grasped through systematic study. Thus, the philosopher, who has rigorously acquired knowledge about the good life, is the appropriate holder of power (Held, 1987: 31; Arblaster, 1994: 20). The defenders of democracy, however, reject the existence of independent exalted truth and argue that "the common good is constituted by expression of a majority preference" (Estlund, 1993: 73).

The negative perception of ordinary people's competence to govern is another objection to democracy. It constitutes the 'anthropological' basis of authoritarian discourse. This argument is used by the defenders of authoritarianism to dismiss popular sovereignty and to legitimize the rule of a qualified minority. The issue of who governs derives from the view that society has of its members' capacity and competence (Berlin, 1969: 134). In effect, in each society there are categories of the population who, despite their membership in the community, are deprived of certain rights and duties. For instance children are not allowed to elect and be elected for political office, because society does not consider them qualified for such functions.

Khadduri notes that society's preference for 'positive' or 'natural' conception of justice is determined by how that society perceives its members. 'Positive' justice is to be found in societies which presuppose that their members are capable of determining their individual or collective interests. Such a positive belief allows the establishment of "a public order under which a certain scale or scales of justice are likely to evolve by tacit agreement or by formal action" (Khadduri, 1984: 1). 'Natural' justice, instead emerges in societies which assume that their members are essentially weak and incapable of rising above personal failings. Consequently, the idea that they can

determine what their collective interests are and lay down an impartial standard of justice is scarcely acceptable. In such a society a superhuman or divine authority is invoked to provide either the sources or the basic principles of the public order under which a certain standard of justice is established (Khadduri, 1984: 2).

In the previous chapter, discussing the impacts of the Shah's dictatorship, I identified two basic assumptions of the opposition discourse in the 1960s and 1970s: the belief in the existence of a supreme truth/knowledge as an apriori entity rather than a social product, and the belief in the existence of a few individuals who hold that knowledge as the result of their charismatic virtues. These two characteristics, which are in contrast with the underlying assumptions of democracy and compatible with authoritarianism, affected the course of the 1979 Revolution.

9.2. The Opposition's Frame of Interpretation

In the 1960s and 1970s, the cultural and ideological integration of the general population was one of the dominant themes of Iranian opposition organizations and intellectuals. Nearly all strata of Iranian society were portrayed as intoxicated with the regime/Western/ capitalist/ imperialist decadent culture. The opposition identified some of the main institutions of socialization (e.g., educational system and mass media) and those who worked there (e.g., teachers, writers, and artists) as agencies for the distribution of this degenerated culture. The famous leftist writer, Samad Behrangi, for instance, considered that professors and teachers were "microbes." He believed that it was necessary to examine them in order to develop antidotes against the poison produced by them and a cure for the diseases emanating from them. They have already infected, Behrangi warned, one generation of high

school and university graduates, which in turn will infect the entire society (in Hanson, 1983: 4). In the literary works of 1960s, women and office workers were depicted as both victims and perpetrators of westoxication (Abedini, 1989: 208).

The opposition perception of Iranians as 'inactive', 'passive', and 'integrated' stemmed from the presence of the dictatorship and passive revolution. Due to the presence of police control and surveillance, hardly any news about protest activities could leak out and circulate among Iranians. Censorship and suppression of opposition activities concealed the presence of discontents and dissidents in society and gave an impression of the passivity of people. The role of passive revolution should also be underscored in this regard. The Pahlavi monarchs, aiming at presenting themselves as the original architects of reforms, tried hard to erase all traces of the people's contributions to modernization. In other words, in the official version of Iranian history the people were inactive and monarchs were the sole actors. Seeing the populace as "inactive" and "absent", the opposition groups argued that people were integrated and infected by the regime's cultural and ideological policies and a cultural-ideological crusade was necessary in order to cleanse their culture.

A look at the texts of Iranian influential oppositional forces illustrates that they perceived the populace to be politically ignorant and culturally corrupted by Pahlavi/ Western/ capitalist/imperialist values. A profoundly negative conception of human capacity is expressed by Khomeini. Discarding "man-made" laws, Khomeini argues that "in his unredeemed state, man is like an animal, even worse than the other animals. Left to his own devices, he will always be inferior to the animals, for he surpasses them in passion" (1981: 330, Aziz, 1996). The ulama, in Khomeini's view, are the trustees of ordinary people and their task is not

"different from that of the trustee over minors, except quantitatively"(in Benard, 1984: 43)

The secular and leftist opposition forces shared the same negative image of the populace. Nearly all strata of Iranian society -- youth, women, students, intellectuals, teachers, artists, and blue and white collar workers -- were depicted by the opposition as intoxicated with the imperialist decadent culture. Al-e Ahmad, critical of the Iranian educational system for producing westoxicated youth, attacked teachers, scholars, and university graduates. He said "from this ragtag group what good or blessing can be expected? Except greater submersion into *gharbzadegi* [westoxication]"(in Hanson, 1983: 11). Pouyan, one of the founders of the Marxist Fadaian guerrilla organization, argued that the working class did not show enthusiasm for political education, despite their dissatisfactions with their life conditions. The workers, Pouyan wrote, spend their time on

cheap petty bourgeois pastimes. A majority of them have acquired lumpen traits. On the job, when conversation is possible, they try to shorten working hours by resorting to banal chats. Those who are able to read, are usually attracted to the most decadent and filthiest contemporary reactionary works (1971: 7).

He then asserted that it was necessary to liberate the working class from the dominance of this decadent culture and "to cleanse it from the poisons of petty bourgeois thinking and living"(Pouyan, 1971: 10). With such negative image of the populace, there is little wonder that in the post-revolution period, the opposition did not actively defend democratic rights. They could hardly demand and defend people's active participation in decision making, if they conceived the populace as being incapable of wise choices and infected by a decadent culture and ideology. Instead, the populace needed a guardian to guide them to the right path and to prevent them from going astray.

Borrowing Gramsci's distinction between the "corporate", "class", and "hegemonic" levels of consciousness, I argue that in addition to this elitist and patrimonial frame, the opposition's corporate conception of democracy eased the success of Khomeini faction in the abrogation of democratic rights and suppression of the opposition. For each group of opposition, democracy consisted of an ensemble of rules that protected the interests of that particular group rather than that of the larger society. In effect, in post-revolutionary Iran, repression of one group by the Islamic regime did not invoke the protest of other opposition groups because it was not perceived as an attack against the principles of democracy but as an attack against another group. Nevertheless, each group was quick to react and condemn the Islamic regime for its anti-democratic behavior every time its own rights were attacked. The reactions of political forces to the abrogation of the freedom of the press is briefly discussed here as examples in this respect.

Few months after revolution, in response to mounting criticism of the Islamic government's actions, Khomeini called for the repression of the independent press because, according to him, its criticism of the Islamic government would endanger the revolution and destroy the unity of the nation against imperialism. In other words, the freedom of expression that had been one of the main demands of Iranians during the revolution, now became a threat to the revolution. In early June 1979, the Islamic government introduced a press law which made any criticism of the clerical leaders or governmental personnel punishable by imprisonment. In August, the Islamic government banned forty-one papers, among them *Ayandeghan*. However, the main target of the Islamic government was *Ayandeghan*, the last national daily newspaper not yet controlled by the Islamic government and still critical of

Islamic government and clerics (Hiro, 1985: 129-133)

After a few weeks, the government lifted its ban on some papers including the *Mardom* (People), the organ of the Tudeh Party, but not *Ayandegan*. The Tudeh openly congratulated the "responsible authorities" for suppressing the "anti-revolutionary" press like *Ayandeghan*. It asserted that in the first year of revolution liberals and pseudo-leftist groups taking advantage of democratic rights misled people and inflicted much damage on revolution by wrangling about negative and unimportant issues. Tudeh then complained that as a result of the infiltration of counterrevolutionary elements in government its own journal was sequestered along with the counter-revolutionary papers. Fortunately, Tudeh continued, after a period of time these undemocratic actions were ended and many journals which were unjustly sequestered, were freed (Tudeh, 1980: 99-100, added emphasis). The Tudeh failed to see that the removal of freedom of expression of other groups was an attack on democratic rights.

9.3. Abrogation of Women's Rights in Iran

To illustrate the role of the opposition's interpretative frame in the establishment of Islamic regime, the reactions of Iranian leftist and secularist forces to the suppression of women's rights are studied here. It is important to stress that during the revolution Iranians did not march in the streets demanding the veil and seclusion of women, nor did Khomeini announce that as part of his agenda. In other words, the oppression of women's rights was a post-revolutionary phenomenon. Therefore, the Islamic regime needed to generate support for its attacks and to this end it resorted to a frame amplification strategy. The Islamic regime

elevated the existing negative belief about modern Iranian woman and the support of the Shah's regime of women's rights to a level which would justify their repression

9.3.1. Modern Woman: The Fifth Column of Imperialism: In Iran, women have traditionally been conceived as mothers and as the pillar of the family. The mother has been perceived as the principal agent of primary socialization, the guardian and transmitter of Iranian values. Referring to this function of women, the constitutionalists who defended women's right to modern education, for example, argued that educated mothers would create a new generation of enlightened patriots (Bayat-philip, 1978:297). Al-e Ahmad, critical of westoxicated/modern Iranian women, for example, writes that in the past women were "guardians of our customs, the family, the new generation"(1982:46).

With the increase in the contact of Iranians with Western culture, the role of gate-keeper was added to the role of woman as mother. Standing between Western culture and Iranian family, the Iranian mother was perceived as responsible for the spread of Western cultural values among the younger generation. Women could, consequently, become a threat to the family and society if they succumbed to Western culture. The enemy, then, was at home and in direct and intimate contact with family members and not in the outside world like the mass media and educational system. She could become a "fifth column" of imperialism if she were attracted to its decadent culture.

The reason that women were considered more at risk for westoxication than men stems from the predominant image of women as weak and vulnerable creatures. According to Shi'a clergy, women are emotional, irrational, tenderhearted, and easily-influenced

creatures (Javadi, 1985:42, Ferdows, 1985:16-19). This lack of confidence in women's intellectual and moral ability was also shared by lay intellectuals. In one of his short stories, entitled *American Husband (Shohar-e Amrikayi)*, Al-e Ahmad ridicules the modern Iranian woman for her easily-influenced character. He depicts an Iranian woman who has returned to Iran after a few years of living in the US with her American husband. Influenced by American values and alienated from her own culture she can not even recognize Iranian cheese and cannot drink Iranian liquor (*aragh*), yet she knows all Western-made cheeses and liquors (1984). The image of women as intellectually weaker than men was also shared by the left. For instance, a Marxist organization, Peykar, in order to justify the establishment of an independent women's organization, argues that:

It is true that women should never fight for freedom separate from men but we should not forget that women from the point of view of their thoughts about society have remained backward. Therefore, [they] have always been unable to understand problems and have found out about their rights later as well (in Afshar, 1983:162)

The negative image of modern woman was widely present among traditional men in the 1970s. Reporting his interviews with a group of Iranian young men, who were the sons of bazaaris, Thaïss writes that

comments such as 'Modern girls don't even nurse their children, this is very, very bad,' 'Modern girls are after money, they deceive men and go with many boys,' and 'women have always been free in Islam, but they [i.e. modern women] want to go naked in the street' were very common in the interviews (1971:201, added emphasis)

In 1971, in one of his public lectures, Shari'ati introduced the politicized version of the belief about women's psychological vulnerability and intellectual weakness, which became very popular. Talking about the Western/modern woman, Shari'ati portrayed her as one who has

obtained socio-economic independence and many freedom but suffers from loneliness and lack of significant relationships. As a result of these changes in her position within society, the Western/ modern woman has become so individualist and egocentric that she is unable to remain faithful to her husband if that requires her to curtail her own freedom, pleasure, or comfort (1971:65-72)

The Western/modern woman, according to Shari'ati, is created by Western capitalists in order to fulfil two functions: first, as sex-objects, to distract the attention of workers, professionals, and intellectuals from revolution and other serious issues by keeping them busy with sex; and second, as consumers, to promote consumption of capitalist goods (1971:72-73). Women, particularly the Eastern ones, Shari'ati claims, due to their sensitive psyche are easily attracted to consumerism. Moreover, in Eastern society, women more than any other group are disadvantaged. She is deprived of education and intellectual growth (Shari'ati, 1971:76-77).

Because of her strong influence on the family, on the moral and spiritual values of society, and her predilection for consumption, the Muslim woman is the main target of Western imperialists. Once she is attracted to Western values, the whole society will follow suit and come under imperialist domination. For this reason, Shari'ati calls the modern Eastern woman the "fifth column" of imperialism (1971:76-77, 87-90). Consequently, the victim becomes perpetrator and collaborator too.

The modern Iranian woman, according to Shari'ati, has no feelings, no ideals, and no values. She does nothing but consume. To complete the negative picture of the modern Iranian woman, he provides an example of her sexual laxity. Shari'ati relates his encounter

with a young Spanish musician in France who told him that while in Europe men spend several days before being able to take a woman to bed, during his stay in Iran he conquered many modern Iranian women by just blinking' (1971: 55). Such negative images of modern women became popular. In December 1978, at the brink of the revolution, for example, an illiterate veiled woman told a reporter who asked her if she would prefer to have more freedom: "Look at American women. I'm told they have all kinds of freedom. But they aren't happy. They're all seeing psychiatrists"(in Sanasarian, 1982: 111). In the post-revolution period, this perception of women and their link to imperialism became the official explanation of the Islamic Republic's actions against women's rights.²⁹

A similar view of modern woman was present among other forces of opposition. The Iranian left criticised Western/modern women as sex-objects and subjects of consumerist culture as well. They argued that imperialism has exported a "decadent and corrupt culture, heavily based on fashion, commercial art, and lax sexual morality, to dependent societies" in order to distract the attention of the younger generation from essential issues and to preserve its dominance (Shahidian, 1994: 230). After the revolution, one leftist women's organization,

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²⁹ In April 1984, an editorial of *zan-e ruz*, a weekly women's journal, states "Colonialism was fully aware of the sensitive and vital role of woman in the formation of the individual and human society. They considered her the best tool for subjugation of the nations. Therefore, under such pretexts as social activity, the arts, freedom, etc., they pushed her to degeneracy and degradation and made of her a doll who not only forgot her human role, but became the best tool for emptying others of their humanity. In the underdeveloped countries women serve as the unconscious accomplices of the powers-that-be in the destruction of indigenous culture. So long as indigenous culture persists in the personality and thought of people in a society, it is not easy to find a political, military, economic or social presence in that society. And woman is the best means of destroying the indigenous culture to the benefits of imperialists"(in Najmabadi, 1991: 67).

the National Union of Women, for example, went so far as to consider young educated females as a potential pro-Shah force. It argued that through its mass media, the Shah's regime presented the Western women as an ideal model to Iranian women.

High school students and young girls, in big towns in particular, also came under the pernicious influence of this propaganda. The regime would manipulate these women and girls as its own proponents and political base against the struggle of the toiling classes (in Tabari & Yeganeh, 1982: 148-149).

Thus, in the 1970s, the anti-women argument was that due to their intellectual weakness and psychological vulnerability, as well as their essential role in primary socialization of the younger generation, Iranian women were perfect targets for imperialists and their domestic allies. By winning over women and attracting them to Western values, the imperialist powers would be able to influence the rest of society and eventually to rob the country's resources. With such a negative perception of women, the opposition could hardly defend and recognize women's democratic rights.

In addition to this factor, it is important to take into consideration that the status of Iranian women had mainly changed in a passive revolution manner, that is, from above through state intervention and legislation. It is to this issue that now I turn.

9.3.2. Passive Revolution & Women's Rights:

Look - to go through with reform one can't help but be authoritarian. Believe me, when you have three quarters of a nation afflicted with illiteracy only the most strict authority can ensure reform; otherwise nothing would have been achieved. If I hadn't been strict I couldn't have carried through even agricultural reform and my whole programme would have been at a standstill (The Shah, in Laing, 1977 218)

After the 1953 coup, the Shah's regime had eliminated the opposition women's organizations. In 1958 it established its own women's organization, the High Council of Iranian Women. It was renamed as the Women's Organisation of Iran (WOI) in 1966. WOI was highly centralised and controlled by the Shah's twin sister who presided over its Central Committee. By the late 1970s, the Women's Organization of Iran had branches across the country. Its activities, however, were devoid of any oppositional character and were carried out within the framework set by the regime. It provided a number of services including literacy classes, sewing classes, libraries, and family counselling (Bahar, 1983 181, Pahlavi, 1980). The government looked upon WOI as its right arm and encouraged the organization's members to display their approval of the government. In November 1976, for example, WOI members demonstrated as 'mothers of families' against student protesters of the Shah's regime (Nategh, 1987 48).

Following the 1953 coup, the government became the only channel through which steps for women's rights could be taken and any independent initiatives, even charitable, were prohibited. Although a number of legislative reforms were passed by the regime, they suffered from a lack of 'history'. A history of public debates among contenders who publicly defended and refuted proposed reforms, trying to win over the hearts and minds of the populace, and

inform and mobilize public opinion was missing. In other words, the reforms introduced from above were not based on the solid ground of historical memory, but on government decrees and legislation. By eliminating independent women's groups and concealing pressures coming from below for those reforms, the Shah presented himself as the main architect of reform. No reform was allowed to be perceived as having resulted from women's own initiatives (Najmabadi, 1991:60-62). Women's rights such as enfranchisement (1963) and the Family Protection Laws (1967 and 1975) were presented as royal grants rather than demands pressed for by women.³⁰

The opposition dismissed the reforms introduced by the regime either as a sham and window dressing or as a response to the political and economic interests of capitalists and imperialists. For instance, they argued that changes in the status of women stemmed from the need of capitalists for cheap labour; the regime's need for office workers in its growing bureaucracy; or an imperialist plan for spreading a decadent western culture among the population. They, for instance, argued that

the granting of the vote to women, the small improvements in the marriage and divorce laws, and the furthering of educational and job opportunities for them were all aspects of the post-war capitalist development of Iran, but this development was totally dependent in character without causing fundamental social and economic changes that could lay the grounds for the emergence of a social democracy as in the West. The needs of Western capital for profitable markets, cheap and docile labour and easily accessible, inexpensive raw materials, particularly oil, were all expressed in the nature of the Shah's regime (Azari, 1983:191, Bahar, 1983).

The Left and secular opposition failed to recognize the pressure of the women's movement

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They were passed in 1967 and 1975 and gave women greater freedom in the initiation of divorce procedures, more rights on child custody, and more restrictions on polygamy.

for reforms. The association of the reforms with the Shah, however, brought the risk of their being rejected along with the regime. Conceiving of the Shah as a puppet of imperialism and responsible for the ills of society, the general population as well as the opposition organizations were prone to reject the reforms associated with the regime or at least to view them with suspicion.

9.3.3. The Suppression of Women's Movement and Rights:

They are calling us American dolls because we don't want to wear the chador. They say our moral character is flawed because we wear Western clothes. But we are getting tired of people who cannot tolerate another way of life or another point of view. Khomeini knows that this is why we got rid of the Shah and he is now talking a different tune from what he used to say in Paris. He has betrayed our trust. (An Iranian woman in the protest demonstration against hejab, 8 March, 1979, in Betteridge, 1983: 119)

Immediately after the fall of the Shah's regime in February 1979, the Islamic Government barred women from the judiciary and repealed the Family Protection Laws. A few days later, on 7 March, 1979, Khomeini recommended that women employees should wear the Islamic hejab at government and public offices. This led to a massive demonstration by women the following day. An estimated ten to twenty five thousand women marched in the streets of Tehran demanding not only the right to choose what to wear but also a greater voice in the government, equal wages for equal work, and the preservation of the Family Protection Laws (Sanasarian, 1983: 99-100).

Despite the lack of support from progressive political organizations and the attack by organized Islamic fanatics, women's demonstrations continued for several days. Khomeini and the government soon retreated. Khomeini's aides qualified his remarks on the *hejab*, saying

that he was simply recommending that women should dress modestly. Prime Minister Bazargan promised that there would be no compulsory veiling and that the government would look into the grievances of women and their demands for equality in law and at work (Azari, 1983: 195).

Although the opposition forces did not endorse the repressive policies of the Islamic government against women, they refused to back the women's protest movement and even criticized and condemned the women protesters. They warned the women protesters that imperialism and counter-revolution were scheming to exploit any internal dissension. The Tudeh (Communist) Party argued that the counterrevolution was trying to incite women against the revolution by stressing their lack of rights. The Tudeh then encouraged Iranian women to sacrifice their rights for national freedom and anti-imperialist struggle (Azad, 1980: 89). "Underlying such statements", Moghissi writes, "was an unstated and deep seated contempt for and a repudiation of women's intelligence and cognitive capacity. Women did not know what they were doing, as they were acting not from an intellectual and political assessment of post-revolutionary events, but from their emotions" (1994: 103).

The Mojahedin Organization judged women's concerns to be secondary issues and warned that raising issues like the mandatory *hejrah* not only would waste revolutionary energies but would also provide pretexts for a counter-revolution (in Tabari & Yeganeh, 1982: 126). Some organizations and intellectuals went so far as to accuse the demonstrators of being pro-Shah and upper-class and to condemn them for "serving the interests of the bourgeoisie and of imperialism" (Nategh, 1987: 56). The subject of one of the pamphlets on the women's movement published by the Left in Iran was the coup d'état in Chile and the help

of the bourgeois women's movement in the fall of Allende. It warned against bourgeois feminists including those who were fighting against compulsory veiling and women judges who were fighting for their professional rights. In the eyes of the left such problems did not concern working class women anyway (Afshar, 1983: 160). These warnings had resonance even among women protesters. Many of them believed "the regime's claims, echoed by left organizations and individuals, that the loyalists and agent provocateurs had infiltrated the women's demonstrations and were instigating their non-compliance" (Moghissi, 1994: 143).

In July 1980, after nearly one and a half years, when the opposition was in disarray, the issue of compulsory veiling was raised as part of a cultural revolution by the Islamic government.³¹ It was decreed that all women employees must wear the hejab in government and public offices. In order to force women to observe Islamic dress in public street attacks against unveiled women were made by organized Muslim fanatics. Finally, one year later, in June 1981, when the Islamic regime had fully consolidated its power, the Parliament passed the Islamic Dress Law which applied to all women in Iran, whether Muslim or not. Violation of the law was punishable. The employment of unveiled women in any public or private firms and offices was banned. Shops, restaurants, cinemas and all public places were instructed not to serve unveiled women. The national airline was also instructed not to carry unveiled women (Haine, 1986: 45-46, Azari, 1983: 206). In such circumstances, the pro-government

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By this time, the main organized opposition forces became the Islamic regime's primary target. In August 1979, the headquarters of the Fadaïyan and Mojahedin, in Tehran, were taken over by Islamic Revolutionary Guards. In April 1980, the universities, one of the last strongholds of opposition, were stormed and closed by the regime under the pretext of a cultural revolution, cleansing universities from the influence of the Pahlavi and Western culture and bringing back Islamic values.

Marxist Fadaïyan Organization was not only still stressing the threat of imperialist plot and the priority of an anti-imperialist struggle, but condemning modern women as painted dolls. It invited women not to fight for their rights but to struggle against imperialism which was the main enemy and had produced 'doll' women:

We must struggle decisively against all relations and beliefs that trample upon the social status of women and reduce them to the level of 'dolls'. We ask all militant and conscious women to mobilize their forces in the struggle against American imperialism and its internal allies. Only with the complete destruction of imperialist domination and dependent capitalism can militant toiling men and women gain their democratic rights (in Tabari & Yeganeh, 1982:137, added emphasis).

The anti-government faction of Fadaïyan argued that Iranian toiling women were well aware that the liberation promised by supporters of the bourgeoisie was nothing but the spreading of degenerate imperialist culture. Their defence of "women's liberation means defending prostitution, drug addiction, setting up houses of lust and a thousand other manifestations of capitalist culture"(Shahidian, 1994:230). The Tudeh Party not only did not defend the rights of women but in early May, 1981, the leader of its women's organization stated

Perhaps never before in the history of Iran have we seen a person who has valued women in as fitting a way as Imam Khomeini. I myself, as a woman and mother, feel proud of myself every time that I remember what Imam [Khomeini] has said, that, 'Women make human beings, the Qur'an makes human beings' I also feel anxious, because this saying is very deep and meaningful. On the one hand, it lays on women a very difficult and important task. On the other, it tells the statesmen that they should not undervalue the status of women (in Tabari & Yeganeh, 1982: 139)

The honeymoon between the Islamic government and Tudeh, however, came to an end in 1983. In this year, after four years of supporting the Islamic regime, the Tudeh was outlawed and its leaders were arrested on charges of treason. Immediately the Tudeh's women's

organization "discovered" women's oppression and complained about the mistreatment of women

The right-wing Islamic Republic is trampling over the constitutional law for which people sacrificed their lives, through their special civil courts that are based on the 'Islamic Laws,' and this has turned into ashes all the hopes that Iranian women cherished (in Shahidian, 1994.236-237)

Nategh is not then wrong when she blames Iranian intellectuals and opposition groups for playing along with the Islamic regime in the constraints placed on women (1987 56)

CHAPTER TEN

CONCLUSIONS

When thinking about the fall of any dictatorship, one should have no illusions that the whole system comes to an end like a bad dream with that fall. The physical existence of the system does indeed cease. But its psychological and social results live on for years (Kapusinski, 1985: 58)

There are many countries ruled by dictatorial regimes. Despite that, the issue of socialization under repressive rules has not yet received adequate attention. Dictatorship is usually denounced and treated as a destructive force that eliminates democratic institutions, abrogates democratic rights, and persecutes the opposition. It is perceived more as an invading force that leaves no trace on the soul and mind of society. This is not the point of view taken in this thesis. Political repression deeply affects and permeates society and social relations and is long-lasting in its impacts. As a condition of everyday life of members of society, it affects them at a cultural, cognitive, and socio-psychological level. Its effects are so deep that rejection and condemnation of dictatorship cannot easily wash them away.

One of the questions I proposed to discuss in this dissertation was: What are the effects of political repression on the frame of interpretation of members of society? In this regard I have explained the relationships between certain institutional processes and certain constellations of consciousness. In this thesis, dictatorship is perceived as an agent of socialization. By creating institutional changes and engendering complex socio-psychological mechanisms and processes, dictatorship shapes the frames of interpretation of members of society, including those of the organized opposition and dissident intellectuals. This thesis has

illustrated the way that the Shah's repressive regime dictated the presence and absence of certain institutions, organizations, practices, and information, on one hand. On the other hand, it put in motion micro-mechanisms such as fear, distrust, feelings of guilt and shame that affected Iranians' social relations and interactions. Though the focus of this study is on Iran, the characteristics of Irania society discussed here are not unique to Iran. Similar patterns and discourses can be found in other countries ruled by dictatorial regimes.

There are other mechanisms involved in the socialization process that need to be identified. Freire, for example, has recognized that as a result of 'identification' with oppressors, poor peasants tend to reproduce the oppressive relationship once they are in a position of power.

Who are better prepared than the oppressed to understand the terrible significance of an oppressive society? Who suffer the effects of oppression more than the oppressed? Who can better understand the necessity of liberation? But almost always, during the initial stage of the struggle, the oppressed, instead of striving for liberation, tend themselves to become oppressors, or 'sub-oppressors'. This phenomenon derives from the fact that the oppressed, at a certain moment of their existential experience, adopt an attitude of 'adhesion' to the oppressor. Even revolution, which transforms a concrete situation of oppression by establishing the process of liberation, must confront this phenomenon. Many of the oppressed who directly or indirectly participate in revolution intend - conditioned by the myths of the old order - to make it their private revolution (Freire, 1973: 29-31).

This thesis has also suggested that dictatorship does not automatically create a desire for democracy among the oppressed population and that discontent with a repressive regime is not synonymous with anti-authoritarianism. The establishment of the Islamic regime in Iran illustrates that those who oppose a dictatorial regime are not necessarily defenders of democracy. It should be remembered that solutions to grievances are subject to one's frame

of interpretation. For instance, due to their lack of confidence in the moral and cognitive capability of Iranian people, political forces did not demand and defend the active participation of the populace. It is therefore necessary to go beyond the denunciation and claims of the opposition forces and to study their frames of interpretation and actions in relation to the assumptions of democracy.

In this thesis, I have argued that revolution and its outcomes are influenced by the opposition's interpretive frames and the political circumstances under which revolution unfolds. Through these frames, the opposition define their present situation and relationships with the surrounding social world, anticipate the future, and decide on how to act. As products of socialization processes, these frames are not static but dynamic. Factors such as the flourishing of civil society, political freedom, and the encounter with new discourses enrich interpretive frames. To illustrate this contention, a comparative study of the 1906 and 1979 revolutions was conducted which showed that neither the establishment of a Constitutional regime in 1906 nor that of the Islamic regime in 1979 were inevitable. In effect, until the very last months of the victory of revolution in the 1906 Revolution, the constitutionalists were cautious about publicly demanding the establishment of a constitutional regime. And in 1979, Khomeini concealed his real agenda, that is the establishment of a theocratic regime, until after the fall of the Shah. Constitutionalists through 'frame transformation' and Khomeini disciples through 'frame amplification' generated support among the general population for constitutional and Islamic regimes respectively. The political climate of the revolutionary period also played an important role in making their interpretive frames hegemonic.

Since 1979, Iranians have been living under one of the most brutal and pervasive dictatorships. They have been deprived of exercising their political and civil rights and they have been controlled by the Islamic regime in even basic activities such as listening to music and deciding on the style of their attire. After the establishment of an Islamic government, for example, during games with children, teachers of elementary schools would show them pictures of Marx, Lenin, or leaders of the Iranian opposition, as well as photos of unveiled women sitting with men around a table, and ask children to talk about these photos. In this way children would become informers. Consequently, mothers teaching dissimulation to their children told them that if teachers "asked whether she prays or not, answer yes!" or "If they asked whether your mother has the proper coverture at family gatherings or not, say yes!" (Haines & Woods, 1986:68). There is widespread discontent with the Islamic regime expressed through a range of activities that go from character assassination of the clerics and the use of oblique language to strikes, protest demonstrations, and rioting.

The issues raised in this dissertation suggest that one needs to go beyond discontent and opposition and explore issues such as socialization under an Islamic dictatorship and the mechanisms of socialization, if one does not want to have another reproduction of dictatorship in the next uprising. Moreover, it is essential to study opposition frames of interpretation and ask oneself how they answer to what Gramsci called the fundamental question in politics: "Does one wish there always to be rulers and ruled, or does one wish to create the conditions where the necessity for the existence of this division disappears?" (1968:143).

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