

of the paramount Khans, but it was often sufficient to assure their autonomy. Town quarters and guilds also had a degree of political autonomy. The Qajars, moreover, never captured the aura of legitimacy that had surrounded the Safavids. They maintained their suzerainty by exploiting the rivalries of lesser chiefs.

While the Qajars maintained a tenuous suzerainty, the power of the religious establishment was enhanced. In the course of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the 'ulama' of Iran achieved an unprecedented degree of autonomy, a strong leadership, and organizational coherence. The religious authority of the 'ulama' (known as mujtahids, or interpreters of the religious law) was vastly enhanced by the claim that they had the right to exercise independent judgment and to make new interpretations in religious matters based on their spiritual and intellectual attainments – and further, that the most pious and spiritual leaders were, in the absence of the imam, the true leaders of the Muslim community. It was a religious obligation of ordinary people to take them as their absolute spiritual guides (*marja'-i taqlid*). The Shi'i shrines, ceremonies of *ta'ziya* (the mourning of Husayn), and the passion plays that commemorated his martyrdom helped to capture the allegiance of the Iranian populace. Furthermore, these claims to an enhanced religious authority, wrested from a weak political regime, were backed by the formation of a loose system of communications which bound together the 'ulama' of Iran and the spiritual centers of Shi'ism in Iraq. The Iraqi shrines gave Iranian Shi'ism a base outside the physical control of the Qajar monarchy.

The 'ulama' also consolidated their ties with the common people through the administration of justice, trust funds, and charities, and by presiding over the prayers and ceremonies marking birth, marriage, and death. Their ties with the bazaar population of artisans, workers, and merchants were especially important. A secure financial foundation was built up on the contributions of their followers and the endowment of state lands. This religious body was not quite a church, because it lacked a formal hierarchy and regular internal organization, but it was nonetheless partially autonomous, nationwide, and capable of cohesive religious and political action.

The relationship of the 'ulama' to the Qajar regime was subtle. Despite the weakness of the regime, there were good historical precedents for the collaboration of state and 'ulama' elites. The "twelve" 'ulama' were deeply affected by a long tradition of quietism and rejection of active involvement in political affairs. Their ethos called for concentration on theological and religious matters and deference to the state in all other respects, and they depended upon the state for appointments to office, salaries, grants of land, and endowments for shrines and schools. Fath 'Ali Shah (1797–1834), whose power was precariously based on tribal forces, reconstructed the shrines, appointed 'ulama' to official positions, and respected them as mediators between the government and the populace. He tolerated the independence of leading 'ulama' notables, such as Sayyid Muhammad Baqir of Isfahan, whose power was based on substantial landed wealth, the control of religious

endowments, and the support of numerous strongmen. Fath 'Ali aided in the suppression of Sufism and heretical doctrines. His reign had the double effect of binding the 'ulama' to the regime and preparing the way for their later autonomy.

European encroachment heightened the implicit tensions between the state and the 'ulama'. In the course of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries the Russians seized control of northwestern Iran. The treaty of Gulistan (1813) confirmed the loss to Russia of Georgia, Darband, Baku, Shirvan, and other parts of Armenia. In 1826 the Russians seized Tabriz. By the treaty of Turkmanchai (1828) Russia obtained Armenia, control of the Caspian Sea, and a favored position in Iranian trade. Between 1864 and 1885 a new wave of Russian expansion culminated in the seizure of Iran's central Asian provinces. Russian conquests were counterbalanced by the British, who assumed control over Afghanistan to protect their Indian empire. Iran, which itself aspired to annex Afghanistan, was defeated in 1856 at Herat and was forced to recognize the independence of Afghanistan and to make other political and commercial concessions. The net result was to create a Russian sphere of domination in Inner Asia and the Caucasus and a British sphere in Afghanistan. Significantly, the powers did not take Iran under direct colonial rule.

After 1857 the primary form of British and Russian penetration was economic. In 1872 the Iranian government gave extensive concessions to Baron de Reuter. De Reuter was given control of customs revenues for twenty-four years, a monopoly of rail and tramway construction, exclusive rights to mine numerous minerals and metals, to construct canals and irrigation works, and rights of first refusal for a national bank, roads, telegraphs, and mills in return for royalties and a share of profits for the Shahs. In 1889 the Imperial Bank of Persia was founded under British auspices, and in 1890 a British firm was conceded a monopoly of the Iranian tobacco industry, including both domestic sales and exports. Russia made compensating economic gains. Caspian fisheries were turned over to Russia (1888), and a discount Bank of Persia was formed under Russian sponsorship (1891). In the course of the 1890s Russia became the primary investor in loans to the Shahs. Finally, in 1907 an Anglo-Russian agreement divided the country into two spheres of influence – a northern Russian and a southeastern British zone – with a neutral buffer between. In order to calm their own disputes in anticipation of a general European war, the powers allowed Iran to remain nominally independent with its monarchy intact, but effectively assumed control of the country.

As in the Ottoman empire, European political and economic intervention stimulated the Qajars to modernize and strengthen the state apparatus. Western influence created in upper-class government circles a vogue for the reform of Iran's military and governmental institutions along Western lines. A new military corps was proposed in 1826, but was vigorously opposed by the 'ulama' and by tribal forces. Nasir al-Din (1848–96) organized a military system that required each town or village to supply a quota of soldiers or to pay the equivalent of their salaries. He also tried to break the dependence of the regime on local governors, tribal chiefs,

and landlords and to formalize a government administration along Russian lines. In 1851 the Dar al-Funun, or technical college, was created to train army and civil officers. In the latter part of the century missionary schools brought in Western techniques. Between 1878 and 1880 Austrian and Russian advisors helped the Iranians reorganize the cavalry and form the Cossack Brigade.

The reforms also brought into being a new stratum of Islamic modernist thinkers and Westernized intellectuals, who favored the modernization of Iran as the only effective way to resist foreign control and improve the conditions of life for the mass of its people. This stratum included people educated in Europe, high-ranking government officials in contact with foreign powers, and various religious minorities influenced by radical movements in Russian-occupied Transcaucasia. European commercial activities also generated a small Iranian bourgeoisie which prospered from the roles of middlemen in the exchanges between Europe and Iran.

Neither the governmental nor the intellectual reformers, however, had much impact on the country as a whole. Intellectual reforms reached a small milieu of court officials and Western-educated Iranian journalists, but did not touch the mass of the population. The reform program faltered because the rulers were themselves afraid that they might compromise their authority. Dependent on British and Russian help to maintain their regime, they had little incentive to strike out on their own. They found it difficult to raise money, and when they could do so, being used to thinking of state revenues as a form of private property, they were reluctant to use it in the public interest. Furthermore, tribal groups resisted centralization of military power. The 'ulama' opposed secularization. The Russians hindered railway construction. In the face of such pressures, Qajar reforms were insufficient to oppose foreign encroachment.

At the same time European intervention provoked resistance. The 'ulama' became the leading opponents of foreign influence, and of the Qajar state as a collaborator with foreign powers. Westernized intellectuals objected to the corruption of the regime and to their exclusion from power. Merchants and artisans, hurt by European competition and state-sponsored monopolies, and 'ulama', anxious over the rise of alien influences, were pushed into outright opposition. They resisted the effort to establish a Western-type army regiment along Ottoman lines in 1826, and in 1828 the Russian occupation of the Caucasus led to a nationwide agitation in favor of jihad. Muhammad Shah (1834-48) exacerbated the tension between the state and the 'ulama' by pursuing a deliberately anti-'ulama' religious policy, and by continuing the effort to adopt Western methods of government and warfare.

The tension between the state and the 'ulama' rose higher in the reign of Nasir al-Din Shah under the ministry of Mirza Taqi Khan, the Amir Kabir. The government tried to limit the jurisdiction of the 'ulama' by establishing new courts. It restricted the right of sanctuary in mosques and shrines, introduced measures to control endowments, reduced allowances, and sponsored the formation of secular schools in competition with 'ulama' schools. The state also tried to abolish the ta'ziya.

By the middle decades of the nineteenth century, the 'ulama' found themselves beset not only by the toughened attitude of the state, but also by the rise of new religious movements. The yearning for religious certainty, inherent in Shi'ism, broke out again in the preaching of Sayyid 'Ali Muhammad, who proclaimed that the believers were not in fact cut off from the hidden imam, but that there was always a human representative interpreting his will. In 1844 he declared himself to be that man, the Bab (gateway), and later proclaimed himself the true imam. This claim swept away the authority of the 'ulama', whom he denounced as venal and corrupt servants of the state. Sayyid 'Ali Muhammad further announced a new scripture, the *Bayan*, which superseded the Quran. His teachings included a powerful social message calling for justice, protection of property against taxes and confiscation, and freedom of trade and profit. He inspired rebellions in several Iranian provinces, but his movement was defeated and Sayyid 'Ali Muhammad himself was killed in 1850. His followers divided into two groups. One group, called the Azalis, maintained their intense hostility to the Qajars and were active in the 1905 revolution. The second group followed Baha'ollah, who in 1863 declared himself a prophet and founded the Baha'i religion. From Baha'ism came a pacifist liberal outlook which would later appeal to elements of the Westernized business classes. For the 'ulama', the only compensating development was the emergence of Shaykh Murtada Ansari as the sole marja'-i taqlid, or spiritual leader who requires the obedience of all Shi'a. For the first time the religious leadership was concentrated in a single person.

#### THE CONSTITUTIONAL CRISIS

The tension between the state and the 'ulama' came to a head over the de Reuter concessions. These were bitterly opposed by the 'ulama' as a sellout of Iranian interests to foreigners, and by the Russians as a sellout of Iran to the British. Under pressure they were canceled in 1873. The de Reuter agitation foreshadowed the struggle over the tobacco monopoly conceded to a British company in 1890. In 1891 and 1892 a coalition of 'ulama', merchants, liberal intellectuals, and officers organized a national boycott of the tobacco monopoly. 'Ulama'-led demonstrations were held in Shiraz, Isfahan, Tabriz, and Mashhad. A *fatwa*, or judicial opinion, issued by Mirza Husayn Shirazi, who had succeeded Shaykh Murtada, led to a nationwide boycott of tobacco products and the eventual dissolution of the monopoly. This opposition was also motivated by financial concerns. Merchants were being reduced to the role of intermediaries between foreign firms and the Iranian populace, and the livelihood of Iranian artisans, cotton cloth makers, and weavers suffered drastically from foreign imports. Ideological hostility to foreign intervention on the part of the 'ulama' and political interest in resisting the Qajars were equally important.

The opposition of 'ulama', merchants, and artisans was reinforced by the small stratum of Westernized intellectuals and Islamic modernist thinkers. Through secret societies, publications, and an extensive campaign of letter writing, they helped

provoke and coordinate resistance to the tobacco monopoly. This coalition merged the century-old hostility of the religious establishment with the opposition of middle-class merchants, artisans, officials, and intellectuals to create the first "national" resistance to the Qajar monarchy.

Peasant resistance, however, was minimal. In Iran, the middle-sized landowning peasantry that in many societies has been the basis of resistance to government oppression was scarcely to be found. Most peasants were tenants and sharecroppers dependent upon their landlords. The isolation of the villages also prevented the development of class consciousness. The peasants of Iran were both too poor and too divided to participate in the insurrectionary movement.

The years between 1892 and 1905 were years of preparation for the struggle between the state and the 'ulama' that culminated in the constitutional crisis of 1905-11. While many 'ulama' resumed collaboration with the Qajar monarchy, secret societies composed of intelligentsia, 'ulama', and merchants carried on an underground agitation. The traditional religious and economic objections to government policies were merged with constitutional ideas. The existence of European parliamentary states, the formation of the Russian Diet in 1905, and above all, the modernization of the Ottoman empire and Egypt inspired Iranians to rethink the political structure of their country. Liberal and revolutionary newspapers from Russian-held Transcaucasia, circulating in Iran, also helped to promote a new climate of opinion. Popular sovereignty, rule of law, and patriotism were advanced as the principles for a modernized Persian society. Malkum Khan (1833-1908), an Armenian converted to Islam and educated in Paris, who served most of his diplomatic and political career as an ambassador in Europe, published the newspaper *Qanun* in London to espouse a modernized Iranian society. He advocated a strong monarchy with an advisory assembly to undertake a program of Westernization and the introduction of a new system of education. He argued that reform was compatible with Islam. 'Abd al-Rahim Talibov (1834-1911), a merchant who lived much of his life in Russia, also propagandized for a constitutional government and civil freedoms.

The reformers were joined by pan-Islamic agitators. Pan-Islamic thinkers presented their views in religious terms, although their long-term goal was in fact to modernize Iran. Jamal al-Din al-Afghani and Mirza Aqa Khan Kermani emphasized the political aspects of Islam as an anti-imperialist doctrine which would help revive national pride and mobilize Muslim peoples to resist Western interference. Liberal 'ulama' such as Sayyid Muhammad Tabaṭabai' also embraced a Western and secular concept of government.

A treatise called *Admonition and Refinement of the People*, written by Mirza Muhammad Husayn Na'ini, embodied the position of the liberal 'ulama'. Limitations on the authority of the ruler, he argued, are essential to prevent despotism; the best mechanism for controlling rulers was a national consultative assembly. However, the possible conflicts between Islamic views and Western concepts of constitutional political organization, secular law and Muslim law, equality of citizens and Muslim

supremacy over non-Muslims, and freedom of speech and the propagation of religious truth were not explored. Liberal 'ulama' adopted constitutionalism partly out of misunderstanding and partly for tactical reasons. Some of them confused the concept of constitutional assembly with the traditional Islamic notion of a court of justice. Others saw constitutionalism as a form of government that limited the power of the state and thereby reduced the prospects for oppression and tyranny. Some 'ulama' saw in a constitutional form of government a way of institutionalizing their own authority, and hoped to use parliament to gain a voice in the administration of the country. The confusion between constitutional government and traditional forms of consultation, and between institutions to enforce Islamic law and institutions of representative government, allowed the 'ulama' to form a coalition with liberals and merchants opposed to the monarchy.

The constitutional agitation came to a head in 1905 and 1906. The increasing indebtedness of the Shah to the Russians, Russian support for the Bahai's, and the appointment of a Belgian to the position of Minister of Post and Telegraph, led to protests in the bazaars, and in 1906 to the convening of a constituent national assembly. The assembly, representing a coalition of 'ulama', merchants, and Westernized liberals - 26 percent were artisan leaders, 15 percent were merchants, and 20 percent were 'ulama' - created the constitution that remained officially in force until 1979. The new constitution subordinated the Shah to a parliamentary government, but declared Islam to be the official religion of Iran. It committed the state to the enforcement of the Shari'a, and created a committee of 'ulama' to evaluate the conformity of new legislation with Muslim law.

The promulgation of a new constitution was only the beginning of a protracted struggle. The constitutionalist side was backed by many 'ulama', merchants, artisans, and Bakhtiari tribesmen and had strong popular support in Tabriz and Isfahan. It was opposed by the Shah, conservative 'ulama', and wealthy landowners and their clienteles. Bitter battles were fought. In 1907 and 1908 the Shah used the Cossack Brigade to close parliament; the constitutionalists resumed power from 1909 to 1911. In the second constitutional period, the coalition between liberal reformers and 'ulama' began to break up. When the reformers wanted to disestablish Islam, adopt far-reaching programs for redistribution of land, and introduce a new system of secular education, the 'ulama' became disillusioned. In any case, the Russians intervened in 1911 to destroy the new regime and to restore the government of the Shah.

The constitutional crisis of 1905 to 1911 brought into relief some of the fundamental aspects of Iranian Islamic society in the nineteenth century. Throughout the century, many 'ulama' supported the state, accepted pensions, gifts, positions at court or in government service, owned land, and identified with the ruling elites. Others adopted a quietist position out of religious and doctrinal considerations, turned their backs on the corrupt affairs of the world, and tried to preserve a measure of religious purity while waiting for the return of the hidden imam. They withdrew from political affairs to concentrate on teaching and worship, judicial

administration, and charities. However, foreign influences, economic concessions, centralization of power, and state policies that restricted 'ulama' judicial and educational prerogatives provoked their opposition. This opposition was generally directed against specific policies: the 'ulama' were not in principle anti-monarchical, but were simply concerned that state policies should be consistent with Islamic religious norms. Thus, the weakness of the state and the high degree of organization among 'ulama', tribes, guilds, and local communities made possible revolutionary resistance.

#### TWENTIETH-CENTURY IRAN: THE PAHLAVI ERA

The twentieth century brought a new phase of historical change, but one that repeated and sharpened the basic conflict between the state and the religious establishment. While the power of the state was finally consolidated on the basis of internal reforms and even closer dependence upon European and American support, the 'ulama' continued to be the leading opponents of the state, foreign influence, and policies contrary to Iranian Islamic values. In the twentieth century the long-term conflict between the state and the 'ulama' was renewed in changing ideological, economic, and political conditions.

The modern Iranian state arose out of a period of near-anarchy from 1911 to 1925. During this period foreign intervention reached its peak. In World War I Russian troops were garrisoned in the northern provinces and British troops occupied the south. With the collapse of the Tsarist regime in 1917, all of Iran fell into British hands; the Anglo-Persian treaty of 1919 made Iran a virtual protectorate of Britain. Under the terms of this treaty Britain would train an Iranian army, finance the economic development of the country, and provide technical and managerial advisors. At the same time the Soviet Union supported separatist movements in Gilan and Azarbaijan and communist parties in Tabriz and Tehran. In 1921, however, Iran and the Soviet Union concluded a treaty of friendship on terms very favorable to Iran. The Soviets agreed to withdraw from Gilan, cancel Iranian debts and concessions, and surrender the special legal privileges afforded foreigners. The Soviets reserved the Caspian Sea fisheries and the right to intervene if Iran was threatened by another foreign power. Strengthened by the new treaty, Iran denounced the humiliating 1919 treaty with Britain.

Internally Iran was governed by a succession of ineffectual cabinets until Reza Khan, an officer in the Cossack Brigade, came to power as head of the army and Minister of Defense. He consolidated his control over the army and the police, defeated tribal and provincial forces, brought most of the country under military control, and in 1925 made himself the Shah of Iran, at once a constitutional monarch and the founder of the Pahlavi dynasty, which lasted from 1925 to 1979.

Under the rule of the Pahlavis a strong centralized government was created for the first time in Iranian history. The state was defined in nationalist ideological

terms, committed under authoritarian rule to an ambitious program of economic modernization and cultural Westernization. The state gained control over the tribal societies, and even, for periods of time, over the 'ulama'.

Reza Shah's first accomplishment was to build a modern army. While the Qajars had attempted military reforms along Western lines, they had maintained the traditional pattern of competitive regiments rather than a unified corps. Reza Shah set about training a new officer corps in France, and introduced compulsory conscription. Some 33 percent of the annual government budget was spent for military purposes. Thus he built up a Westernized army which could dominate the country politically, but proved unable to prevent Russia and Britain from occupying Iran in 1941.

Bolstered by its army and an expanded administration, the new regime overcame the opposition of religious, merchant, and tribal elites. It outlawed the Communist Party and the trade unions, reduced the parliament to a rubber stamp, and censored the press. For political support it looked to the landowning classes. New laws in 1928 and 1929 recognized the de facto possession of land as proof of ownership, and required registration, which was favorable to wealthy landowners rather than to poor tenants. For the first time in history an Iranian state won complete control over the country as a whole by breaking the power of tribal communities and Khans. The tribes were forced to sedentarize, and the political power of the Khans was coopted by the state.

Though Reza Shah had come to power with the support of many 'ulama', who expected a strong government to resist foreign influence, the Pahlavi regime also diminished their power. Through the creation of a secular education system, government supervision of religious schools, and other measures the Pahlavis sought to bring the 'ulama' under state control. In 1934 the Teacher Training Act provided for new colleges, and the Ministry of Education introduced its own curriculum for theological schools. Furthermore, as an alternative to religious education, technical schools were founded by the Ministries of Education, Industry, Health, Agriculture, War, and Finance. The University of Tehran was founded in 1935, and operated with a European-educated faculty under the close supervision of the government. Many students were educated abroad and returned to spread technical knowledge and Western ideas of social relations.

A second and equally damaging blow to the 'ulama' was the reorganization of judicial administration. Though civil and criminal codes had been set up in the constitution of 1906, and new civil commercial codes promulgated in 1911 and 1915, judicial administration remained in the hands of the 'ulama'. Reza Shah, however, introduced new law codes in 1928 which replaced the Shari'a. In 1932 the parliament enacted a new law which turned registration of legal documents over to secular courts, and at a single stroke removed the most lucrative functions of the religious courts. A law of 1936 required every judge to hold a degree from the Tehran faculty of law or a foreign university, making it impossible for the 'ulama' to sit in

courts of law. During the 1930s a new court system was organized, following French models, to administer a haphazard mixture of Western and Muslim legal norms. Regardless of the adequacy of the legal system, in political terms it established the supremacy of the state. Other measures were taken to ban the presentation of passion plays, pilgrimages, and sermons and to legislate modern dress codes.

The secularization of legal administration and education was part of a still larger program of state-controlled economic modernization. The infrastructure of a modern economy was developed in the 1920s and 1930s. A new customs office was established, staffed by Belgian officials. American financial missions helped organize tax collection; an Iranian national bank was founded in 1927 under the management of German financial experts. An Iranian railroad was constructed between 1926 and 1938, running from Bandar Shahpur on the Persian Gulf to Bandar Shah on the Caspian Sea. Designed in response to strategic needs, however, the railroad neglected international connections, major cities, and links between the major economic areas of the country. Similarly, postal and telegraph communications and air transportation were introduced to facilitate economic development and help extend the authority of the central government to the provinces.

After 1930, owing to lack of sufficient capital in the private economy and lack of motivation among landowners to make long-term investments in industry, the state sponsored numerous industrial projects. Priority was given to consumer substitution industries (i.e. those replacing imports with domestic products), including cotton, woolen and silk factories, sugar refining, and food-processing plants such as bakeries, canneries, and breweries. By 1941 soap, glass, paper, matches, and cigarettes were all produced in state-owned factories. The state also controlled trade and foreign exchange. In 1925 the government established a monopoly on imports of tea and sugar. It sought to regulate foreign interests. In the 1920s and 1930s, Russian and British influence remained relatively balanced. Russia was an important trading partner; Britain controlled the production of oil. To offset the influence of these two powers, Iran made use of German capital and technical assistance, and Germany maintained a strong presence by the establishment of research and cultural institutes as well as espionage and political networks. In the 1930s the Russian share of Iranian exports fell from 34 percent to 1 percent, and the German share rose from 20 percent to 42 percent. The state controlled approximately 33–40 percent of Iranian imports and exports.

Oil was first found at Masjid-i Sulayman in 1908, and in 1909 the Anglo-Persian Oil Company was founded to exploit the discovery. The British government acquired a controlling interest in 1914. The refineries at Abadan were constructed in 1915. Oil production was profitable for Iran, but was a source of bitter resentment against foreign companies for their manipulation of royalties and the absence of Iranians in managerial and administrative positions. In 1933 Iran demanded a reduction in the territories conceded for foreign exploration and a fixed income; in return, it extended the existing concessions to 1993 and exempted the oil company

from taxation. These arrangements cushioned Iran in the depression years but proved contrary to Iranian interests when prosperity was restored during and after World War II.

This phase of development created a small modern sector in an otherwise backward economy and society. Manufacturing was concentrated in cities, and benefited only a small portion of the population. Agriculture remained unproductive. State centralization, economic modernization, and a new education system helped to create an elite of army officers, bureaucrats, merchants, contractors, doctors, lawyers, engineers, teachers, and writers, who adopted Western values and a Western style of life. This new elite, allied to an older generation of 'ulama' and tribal Khans, dominated an unproductive and impoverished peasant population. The modernized Iranian state defined its legitimacy in nationalist and secularist terms. A revival of interest in Persian history and themes of ancient kingship were used to legitimize the modernization of the army, the government, and the economy.

World War II put an end to this phase of the Iranian experiment in centralization of state power and economic development. Britain and Russia, concerned to keep open the supply routes across Iran to Russia, and to assure the control of Iranian oil, seized control of Iran, forced Reza Shah to resign, and made his minor son, Muhammad Reza Pahlavi, the nominal suzerain. Between 1941 and 1953, Iran passed through a period of open political struggle among its various would-be foreign protectors and internal political parties. In the late 1940s, the United States, on the edge of the cold war with the Soviet Union, eager to create a Middle Eastern barrier against possible Soviet expansion, emerged as the principal patron of the postwar Iranian regime. The United States advised the Iranian government on economic management, organized Iran's police and military forces, and supplied it with military aid. With American backing, Iran successfully resisted Soviet occupation of the northern provinces, Soviet demands for oil concessions, and Soviet sponsorship of separatist movements in Azarbaijan and Kurdistan.

In the late 1940s and early 1950s Iran also struggled to win control of the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company. In 1951, Muhammad Mosaddeq, the leader of the National Front, supported by a coalition of landowners, tribal leaders, leftist intelligentsia, merchants, and 'ulama', pushed through parliament a bill to nationalize the oil company. A bitter three-year struggle followed in which the United States refused to support Iran. The Western powers boycotted Iranian oil. The Iranian economy collapsed and the Mosaddeq coalition broke up. In the ensuing struggle for power the CIA helped the army and the Shah to seize power, dismiss Mosaddeq, and reestablish an authoritarian regime. The dispute with the oil companies was settled in 1954 by the formation of a National Iranian Oil Company and a consortium of foreign oil companies including the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company (renamed British Petroleum) and several American firms. The consortium would produce and market oil and divide the profits with the National Iranian Oil Company. Thus the foreign companies avoided nationalization and maintained control of oil pricing and marketing.

The 1953 coup also put an end to the period of open struggle for political power. The restored regime of Muhammad Reza Shah was technically a constitutional monarchy, but the Shah ruled with virtually absolute powers. He controlled the army and SAVAK, the secret police and intelligence agency, appointed the ministers, selected half of the senate, and manipulated parliamentary elections. A small elite of officers, administrators, landowners, and some wealthy merchants and religious leaders dominated Iranian political life. The Shah's regime was closely allied to the United States and was dependent upon American military and financial support. Having been brought to power with American assistance, Iran joined the Baghdad Pact (1955) and the Central Treaty Organization (1959). Iran maintained close relations with Israel. In the 1970s it assisted the Sultan of Oman in suppressing opposition, and in 1975 forced Iraq to settle disputed boundaries in the lower reaches of the Euphrates River. Close ties with the United States and even the buildup of military forces in the 1970s, however, did not prevent Iran from maintaining good relations with the Soviet Union to balance American influence and political pressure.

The Pahlavi program called not only for the construction of a centralized secular and nationalist regime, but also for the further modernization of society along Western lines. Between 1960 and 1977 the government undertook to reform the structure of landowning, modernize the industrial economy, build up military forces that would assure its regional supremacy, and reform the social structure of the country. In conjunction with agricultural reforms the Shah proposed the formation of a literacy and a health corps intended to bring the direct influence of the state into the countryside. Other reforms included the extension of voting rights to women and their employment in government offices.

A crucial aspect of the "white revolution" was land reform. In Iran the ownership of land was concentrated in the hands of a small number of families, mainly absentee landlords. The peasants were rarely owners. Most were sharecroppers and laborers. In 1962-64 and 1968, landowners were required by law to sell excess land to smallholders and tenants, but because of widespread evasion not as much was distributed as had officially been proposed. The new owners, moreover, lacked the capital, the technology, the cooperative organizations, and the government extension services necessary to maintain and increase productivity. Landless laborers, lacking the resources to farm or to pay for the land, received nothing, and, having lost their employment, had to migrate to the cities. Subsequent redistributions gave peasants benefits in ownership and tenancy rights, but did not give them adequate lands for subsistence.

In fact, the major thrust of the Shah's agricultural programs was the creation of large-scale, state-sponsored farm corporations and private agribusinesses. Farm corporations required peasants to pool their lands and take shares in the larger enterprise, often with the result that farms were mechanized and cultivators driven from the land. Private agribusinesses with heavy foreign investment also favored capital-intensive mechanized farming and forced peasants from the land. Thus, the

state favored capital-intensive agriculture in a country with surplus labor. Similarly, nomads were forced to sedentarize, and pastoral livestock herding was replaced with mechanized meat and dairy farms. These farms commonly failed, and the result was falling per capita production and a large-scale movement of rural people to the big cities, especially Tehran.

As per capita agricultural production declined in the 1960s and 1970s, Iran became more dependent upon industrial development. For the first time since the limited industrialization of the 1930s, Iran experienced an industrial boom. State investments provided the infrastructure and roughly half of the capital invested in industry. The state also supported industrial growth by high tariffs, tax credits, licenses, and other devices, and promoted a boom in steel, rubber, chemicals, building materials, and automobile assembly. The huge growth of oil revenues after 1973 also enhanced the gross national product. Iranian industry, however, was too inefficient to compete in international markets, and suffered from a lack of skilled management and labor. The combination of falling per capita agricultural output, inefficient industry, and heavy purchases of foreign manufactured goods and weapons with a booming oil economy led to severe inflation and probably to a lower standard of living for all Iranians not directly involved in the modern sector of the economy.

The Shah's regime also attempted modest reforms of the position of women. As early as the 1920s a few leading intellectuals, men and women, were working for improvements in women's education, social position, and legal rights. Women, in small numbers, began to enter into teaching, nursing, and factory work. In 1936 wearing of the veil was forbidden, and women of the urban upper and middle classes began to adopt modern dress. In the crucial areas of family law and political rights, however, little was changed. Divorce remained easy for men. Guardianship of children remained the legal right of males. Polygamy and temporary marriage were still permitted. Only with the family protection laws of 1967 and 1975 were male prerogatives partially circumscribed by legislation that required divorces to be reviewed in court and wives' consent for polygamous marriages.

The program of modernization expanded the cadres of Western and modern-educated intelligentsia, officials, soldiers, business managers, and skilled workers. It also provoked first the anxieties and then the active hostility of the 'ulama', the merchants and artisans of the bazaar, and leftist intellectuals who opposed the consolidation of the Shah's power, his dependence upon foreign support, and the policies that brought economic hardship to the peasantry and to the lower middle classes. Above all, the opposition was opposed to the highly authoritarian nature of the regime.

Opposition in the 1960s and 1970s was widespread but scattered and easily defeated. The Tudeh (Communist) and National Parties were crushed by SAVAK. Kurdish, Arab, and Baluchi minorities were defeated in their bids for regional autonomy. While militant guerrilla groups, such as the Marxist Fedaiyan-i Khalq,

and the Islamic leftist Mojahedin-i Khalq, opposed despotism, imperialism, and capitalism, their resistance provoked further repression and did not shake the grip of the Shah's regime.

#### THE 'ULAMA' AND THE REVOLUTION

Throughout this period the position of the 'ulama' was ambiguous. The politically open 1940s had encouraged 'ulama' activism in political affairs. From 1948 to 1953 Ayatollah Kashani, supported by street preachers and lower-ranking 'ulama', carried on an anti-British and anti-imperialist campaign in favor of the nationalization of the oil industry and the termination of foreign influence in Iran. For a time he supported the Mosaddeq government, but later turned against it and assisted in the restoration of the Shah.

The defeat of Mosaddeq, however, introduced a period of religious quietism and tacit collaboration with the state. The government supported 'ulama' interests through appointments at court, opportunities for enrichment through landowning, and marriage into prominent families. It increased the amount of religious instruction in public schools and periodically closed down movie houses, liquor stores, and public musical entertainments. In return, the 'ulama' accepted the Baghdad Pact and tolerated the government's policy of cooperation with foreign companies. Under the leadership of Ayatollah Burujirdi, the 'ulama' remained politically quiet — but they also consolidated their internal strength. In the 1950s and early 1960s, a national network of communications developed, with Qum as the center of Shi'i religious instruction and organization.

In the 1960s the government's economic and social policies generated intense 'ulama' opposition. The 'ulama' opposed the new land laws. Scanty evidence indicates that many 'ulama' were wealthy landowners or controlled extensive waqfs. They opposed the extension of suffrage to women; and they opposed Iran's close ties with the United States and Israel. They were also threatened by the government's proposal to establish a literacy corps which would give the state its own cadres to rival 'ulama' influence in rural areas. The quarrel between the government and the 'ulama' came to blows. In 1963 the Shah decided to call a national referendum on land reform. The proposed referendum and the police crackdown on 'ulama' activities in Qum provoked demonstrations, led by Ayatollah Khomeini, who was exiled to Iraq in 1964.

As important as renewed 'ulama' resistance to the state was the development of a religious reform movement. The reformist view was crystallized in a speech by Mehdi Bazargan in 1962, in which he went back to the Quran and to Shi'i religious traditions to justify an active political role for the 'ulama'. He said that political organization and collective struggle for a better society was the responsibility of the custodians of Islam; no longer should the 'ulama' wait passively for a return of the imam, but actively prepare the way. The reformers further proposed the formation

of a council of 'ulama' to give authoritative religious advice, and the creation of a centralized financial organization to assure their autonomy from both government influence and popular pressure. Between 1967 and 1973 the reform movement took a new direction under the leadership of Dr. 'Ali Shari'ati, who formed the Husayniyah Irshad. This was an informal "university" which was intended to revitalize Shi'ism by reconciling Islamic teachings with European social sciences and thereby generate the commitment to overthrow a repressive government. For Shari'ati, Shi'ism was a religion of protest.

Ayatollah Khomeini, from his sanctuary in Iraq, became the main spokesman of opposition to the monarchy. In 1961 he advocated a parliamentary form of government, but by 1971 in his book, *Islamic Government*, he declared the monarchy an un-Islamic institution and called for a total reform of political society in which the 'ulama' would take a direct and active role. The authority of the 'ulama' would not be limited to religious and legal issues; Shi'ism as a political ideology would define the actions of the government and mold the character of the people. While based on a long tradition of 'ulama' opposition to the abuse of monarchical powers, this was, in fact, a profound innovation. Khomeini's position was the most radical statement of 'ulama' responsibilities. The traditional religious elites joined the radical intelligentsia as the spokesmen of opposition to the powers of the state. At the same time a new image of Husayn, the martyr of Karbala, took shape. He was to be not only the object of mourning and pity, but the example of courage and resistance. His image was redefined from one of passive suffering to one of protest against tyranny.

The influence of the 'ulama' spread throughout Iranian society. *Hay'at*, or informal groups of some thirty to fifty people based in a neighborhood, a factory or a bazaar, and tied to particular religious leaders, met to discuss the issues of the day. *Bazaaris*, the workers in the old-fashioned markets, and *maktabis*, the technical, managerial, clerical, upwardly mobile lower-middle-class cadres, only partially integrated into the modern sectors of the economy, were the leading recruits for revolutionary action. These groups became the basis of a mass movement in opposition to the Shah.

In the course of the 1970s the Pahlavi regime became all the more oppressive. The army and the secret police were widely feared and hated for numerous investigations, intimidation, imprisonment, torture, and assassination of potential enemies of the regime. The regime was widely perceived as being based upon American political and military support and as benefiting only a very narrow elite consisting of the Shah and his family, the army, and a cadre of prominent supporters. The government was not only hated for being a dictatorship but was resented for mismanaging the economy. Great fortunes were being earned from oil income and were being spent on weapons and for the benefit of a small elite, while inflation was undermining the standard of living of bazaar merchants, artisans, and industrial workers. The bazaar population suffered particularly from confiscations, fines, and imprisonments, as the Shah sought to contain inflation by intimidation. At the same time, the 1970s were

disastrous times for masses of Iranian peasants. Millions fled the land for the cities, where they formed a huge mass of unemployed and underemployed people. By the late 1970s, Iran was importing most of its food from abroad.

In these deeply disturbed political and economic conditions, the spark for revolution was a demonstration by religious students in Qum against an alleged assassination by SAVAK. The police shot a number of demonstrators, and provoked a new demonstration to mourn the martyrs of the last. Every forty days the protests were repeated, and grew in scale until the month of Muharram (the fall of 1978), when millions of people demonstrated against the regime. The Fedaiyan-i Khalq and Mojahedin-i Khalq were revived. The oil workers refused to produce, the bazaar merchants closed their shops, and the army either would not or could not suppress the revolt. The Shah fled the country and a new regime came to power. Masses of Iranians had been mobilized by a coalition of religious and liberal leaders under the guidance of the highest Iranian religious authority, Ayatollah Khomeyni.

The Iranian Islamic revolution arose out of the particular configuration of Iranian state and religious institutions, but is nonetheless a signal event in the history of all Islamic societies. It marks the culmination of an almost 200-year struggle between the Iranian state and the organized 'ulama'. In the nineteenth century, the weaknesses of the state, and the strength of non-state tribal and ethnic communities, allowed for the consolidation of a religious establishment capable of opposing the regime and of mobilizing large-scale popular support. State efforts at modernization and European penetration of the Iranian economy led to the tobacco monopoly protests of 1891-92 and to the constitutional revolution of 1906. Again, in the late twentieth century, the effort to centralize and modernize state power led to a crisis in which 'ulama', intellectuals, students, and large segments of the artisan and working population mobilized to oppose the government. The defeat of tribalism as a third force in Iranian society had led to a polarization between the state and the 'ulama', and to an Islamic revolution.

Nonetheless, the history of 'ulama'-state relations in nineteenth- and twentieth-century Iran was ambiguous. Resistance to the state was in fact sporadic, and at different times the 'ulama' have espoused both revolutionary activism and religious quietism. Within Shi'ism there is justification for both. The activist position is justified by the doctrine of commanding the good and forbidding the evil, and by the claims of the mujtahids to be spiritual advisors to all Iranians and the only legitimate authorities in the absence of the hidden imam. The example of Husayn stands as a paradigm of the obligation to confront and resist tyranny in the name of justice and Islam. Equally important, however, are the cultural traditions tending toward political pacifism. The Shi'i expectation of worldly injustice and the hope for messianic redemption works against involvement in public life.

The Iranian revolution, therefore, cannot be said to be due to an inherent religious opposition to state authority, but has to be treated as a response to specific conditions. The Russian invasion of 1826, the de Reuter concessions, the tobacco

monopoly of 1891, the land reform acts of 1960 to 1963, and the economic tensions of the late 1970s impelled the 'ulama' to adopt the active rather than the passive side of their complex tradition. The constitutional revolution of 1906 and the Iranian revolution of 1979 are not expressions of a constant hostility between state and religion but the expression of a recurring possibility of confrontation between them. In Iran the weakness of the state, the organizational strength of the religious establishment, and the latent cultural permission for 'ulama' resistance have all allowed for, though they have not mandated, revolutionary struggle in the name of Islam.

The revolution also had worldwide importance. Revolution came, not primarily from the left, but from the religious establishment; not in the name of socialism, but in the name of Islam. For the first time in the modern era religious leaders have defeated a modernized regime. For the first time the revolutionary implications of Islam, hitherto manifest in lineage or tribal societies, have been realized in a modernizing industrializing society. The event shook the relations between states and religious movements, and opened doubts as to the future, not only of Iran, but of all Islamic societies.

#### THE ISLAMIC REPUBLIC

The victory of the revolution abolished the monarchy and established an Islamic government in Iran. The new regime was built upon the charismatic authority of Ayatollah Khomeyni, the official head of the government and the authority of last resort. It was called the *wilayat al-faqih* - the rule of the jurisprudential scholar. The Ayatollah was called Imam by some of his followers, referring to his roles as head of the religion and implying the messianic function of the 'Alid Imams. A Supreme Council of *Maslaha* (public welfare) was created to oversee the activities of both the Council of Guardians and the parliament. In 1989 the constitution was revised to strengthen the hand of the President of the Republic and the government apparatus, though religious leaders, including Ayatollah Khomeyni, the successor of Ayatollah Khomeyni (d. 1989) remained in principle the highest authorities and in charge of the legal system. The elite of the regime are the cadres of younger 'ulama', graduate and student activists, town and village militias, and the Islamic Republican Party - the party of the 'ulama'.

The new regime consolidated its power by eliminating coalition allies, especially the liberal nationalist, Marxist intellectuals, and the Mojahedin. Thousands of officers of the Shah's government were purged and executed by revolutionary courts. Jews, Armenians, Zoroastrians, and other minorities suffered harassment, arrest, and destruction of property, and Bahai's were relentlessly persecuted. The Westernized middle class was forced into exile. A fierce puritanism took hold. Revolutionary *komiteh*, or vigilante groups, took to the streets to police morals and to assault women who were improperly dressed or who transgressed into men's spaces. Women were forced out of many professions, and were required to be completely veiled in public. Places of entertainment, including movies and theaters, were shut down.



Iran's foreign policy was immediately embroiled in disputes with other countries. The revolutionary government seized the United States embassy and held its personnel hostage for over a year. Iran threatened to export Islamic revolution. A Bureau of Islamic Propaganda was created to stimulate like-minded revolutionary action in other Muslim countries. Iran supported Hizballah as its proxy in the Lebanese civil war and the struggle against Israel.

In 1980 war came to Iran via an Iraqi attack on its oil-rich southwestern provinces. Iraq claimed to be defending both the Arab countries against revolutionary threats and its own Shi'i population from revolutionary contamination, but its principal motive was expansionist opportunism. Eight years of bitter warfare followed. Iran, lacking modern equipment and tactics, hurled countless youths against the Iraqis in a war reminiscent of World War I trench warfare, and Iraq fought with all means at its disposal, including chemical weapons and poison gas. The United States played an ambiguous role in the war, supplying arms and intelligence to both sides, but from 1986 weighed in on the Iraqi side to forestall an Iranian victory.

In many ways, the revolutionary government carried on the work of state building begun by the Shahs. It strengthened the ministries and the bureaucracy, and brought the army under its own control by creating new Guards Corps. While committed in theory to an Islamic state, Islamic considerations commonly yielded to *raison d'état*. Iranian foreign policy remains driven by its national interests. The Shah's did not become the official law of Iran, and the state remained the ultimate promulgator of law. Non-Muslims continue to be citizens of the state. In many respects, the Iranian national state absorbed its Islamic component.

Throughout the Islamic Republican period economic development has been stymied by the war with Iraq, the collapse of international oil prices in the 1980s and 1990s, and by the ongoing and unresolved struggle within the government between 'ulama' favoring a privatized market economy and those favoring government regulation in the interest of popular welfare. The economy, 80 percent controlled by the state, is mismanaged by bureaucratic bungling and by outright corruption. So-called charitable foundations, *bonyads*, control vast resources, and use them for political and clerical favorites. Government policies favor the bazaar merchants, the mainstay of the revolution, but small-scale industries suffer from the lack of necessary foreign imports, weak exports, and black-market competition. Agriculture has generally stagnated resulting in continued importation of food supplies. In general, the Islamic state has had little impact upon the economy, the distribution of wealth, welfare, housing, and other domestic issues.

While state policy has not decisively shaped the Iranian economy, Islamist policies were forceful in shaping the media, education, and the treatment of women. The legal changes favoring women's rights introduced by the Shah were reversed and the family protection laws of 1967 and 1975 were repealed. Men have regained the right to unilateral divorce and to custody of children. Polygamy is again accepted in principle. Women are required to be veiled in public, and an unsuccessful effort



22 A girls' school, Tehran

was made to restrict women's employment, mainly to health care. The war with Iraq, the need in the economy for skilled workers, and the resistance of women who need the work have created more room for maneuver. Women writers, artists, and intellectuals are creating new journals to subtly push back the demands of conservative mullahs and increase the scope for women's self expression. Some women writers invoke Islam itself and contest traditional interpretations as they try to enlarge the boundaries of acceptable public discourse. For example, the journal of the Women's Society of the Islamic Revolution of Iran, *Payam-i Hajer* (Hajer's Message), denounces the extremes of intoxication with the West and the abandonment of cultural traditions, and also of blind submission to what the religious leaders call Islam. The journal interprets Islam in ways that support women's rights, and also argues that each individual has the right to interpret the Quran. The ideal woman is not passive, but knows her roles as responsible and active in society. The journal calls for the creation of a ministry of women's welfare, protests that women are excluded from being judges, criticizes polygyny and temporary marriages, and favors prenuptial agreements that may forbid a second wife and guarantee alimony in case of divorce. In 1991 and 1992 new laws allowed for prenuptial agreements of this kind. The facilities for women's education have been greatly improved, but women's participation in the workforce is still hindered by policy and social mores.

The election of Muhammad Khatami in 1997 as president of Iran, and his reelection in 2001, brought into the open the struggle between conservative mullahs defending an authoritarian Islamic society ruled by the *wilayat al-faqih* and more liberal reforming elements defending Islamic pluralism, democracy, and the rule of law. The clerical establishment, headed by the Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Khamene'i, controls the judiciary and large sectors of the economy. A vast apparatus of military, police, intelligence officers, morals enforcers, and organized "vigilantes" are employed to crush drug use, gambling, homosexuality, prostitution, rape, murder, spying, counter-revolutionary activities, "sowing corruption on earth," and to punish women for being improperly dressed in public. Recently, writers, journalists, and students have been beaten, tortured, and killed.

Still, the regime has not been able to check the demand for a transformation of the Islamic Republic into an Islamic democracy, a government subject to the rule of law and social justice. Post-Islamic-state liberal intellectuals such as Abdol Karim Soroush advocate a tolerant Islamic society built on the rule of law rather than the personal authority of the Supreme Leader. Students call for freedom in daily life, including choice of dress, consumption, and dating. There is a vigorous and open, though embattled, press. Elections in 2000 gave 70 percent of the seats in parliament to liberals, but they are still paralyzed by the powers of the conservatives, and it is not yet clear who will win. While the struggle is sometimes posed in terms of a conflict between Persian and Islamic identities, religion and pop culture, clerical rule and freedom, dictatorship and democracy, in this supple and sophisticated country there is still a profound underlying loyalty to the nation and to the Islamic state.