

THE
ENCYCLOPEDIA
OF
POLITICAL
REVOLUTIONS

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without the active support of the urban working class and the spontaneous radicalism of the peasantry, to be sure, but in the end an elite of revolutionary intellectuals was thrust into power.

The events leading to the Chinese communist victory of 1949 illustrate with particular clarity the crucial place of intellectuals in modern revolutionary history. The origins of the modern Chinese intelligentsia are found in the 1890s when younger members of the gentry—official ruling class lost faith in the old imperial order and attempted unsuccessfully to transform it radically from within on the basis of models drawn from the West and Meiji Japan. The failure of their reformist efforts hastened the emergence of a revolutionary intelligentsia—alienated from the state and in many cases from traditional culture as well—in the early decades of the twentieth century. From the ranks of that intelligentsia, inspired by the nationalistic and politically activist impulses of the May Fourth movement of 1919, emerged the organizers and leaders of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), who eventually proved victorious by harnessing the forces of peasant revolt in China's vast countryside. While the CCP's social base resided in the peasantry (even though it formally claimed to be the party of the urban proletariat), the 1949 revolution gave power to neither peasants nor workers but rather to a revolutionary elite largely drawn from the May Fourth generation of intellectuals.

It is tempting to conclude from the history of modern revolutions, especially twentieth-century communist revolutions, that the ultimate victors and beneficiaries of successful upheavals have been intellectual elites, perhaps evidence in support of Vilfredo Pareto's theory of "the circulation of elites" (the late nineteenth-century social thinker maintained that innovative and conservative elites tend to alternate over different historical periods). But this would be too hasty a judgment. For even where revolutionary intellectuals have become dominant in a postrevolutionary regime, they have been transformed into bureaucrats in the process, no longer intellectuals as intellectuals but rather rulers often suppressing new generations of intellectuals. A longer-term historical perspective reveals it has been the role of revolutionary intellectuals to prepare the way for the dominance of new economically based social classes. In the French Revolution, this class was clearly the bourgeoisie, although the French bourgeoisie required the better part of a century to consolidate fully its political ascendancy. In the Russian and Chinese revolutions, the ultimate victors appeared to be new (and different) types of bureaucratically generated capitalist classes.

See also *Leadership; Rationality*.

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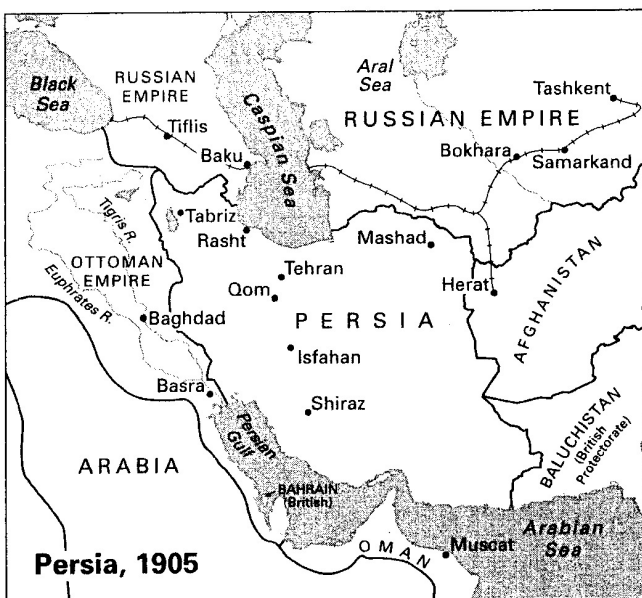
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IRANIAN CONSTITUTIONAL REVOLUTION (1906)

The Iranian Constitutional Revolution was the first democratic political movement of modern Iran and had significant social and cultural dimensions. The revolution brought about a parliament (Majlis) and a constitution that curtailed the authority of both the monarchy and the clerical establishment (*ulama*) and gained much international support before it was put down through Russian intervention.

BACKGROUND TO THE REVOLUTION

The establishment of new transportation systems between Europe and the Middle East in the late nineteenth century led to an unprecedented increase in trade with the West that changed a way of life for millions of people. As with many other developing countries of this era, Iran became a source of cheap raw materials and a market for the more industrialized European countries. Soon, the two Great Powers, Britain and Russia, came to play a more aggressive role in the region. With the treaties of 1813 and 1828, Russia had ended Iran's control of Transcaucasia, and Britain had forced Iran to give up its claim to Afghanistan in 1857. By 1891–1892 greater contact with Western concepts such as modern nationalism and democracy as well as reaction to Iran's losses in the north and east had helped bring about a coalition of merchants, politicians, the *ulama* and theology students, shopkeepers and trade guilds, and religious reformers that demanded commercial protection, revocation of tobacco concessions that had been granted to a British firm, and judicial reforms. Religious reformers included Freemasons, free-thinkers, and affiliates of the persecuted Babi religious movement, whose political clubs and associations helped pave the way for the constitutional movement.



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To generate funds for the government, Minister of Finance Nasir al-Mulk brought Belgian administrators to Iran to reform the customs bureau. Although government revenue from the reform increased substantially by 1904, the reforms that were proposed by the Belgian adviser Joseph Naus created much anxiety among the local merchants. The reforms had favored foreign imports and exposed local merchants to strong competition from abroad. The Russo-Japanese War of 1904–1905, and especially the Russian Revolution of 1905, accelerated and contributed to the national demands for political change. In the spring of 1905 a series of protests against the customs reforms of Naus brought the two leading clerics, Sayyid Muhammad Tabataba'i and Sayyid 'Abdullah Bihbahani, into a close alliance in the nationalist movement. In December 1905, when governor 'Ala al-Dawlah had two Tehran merchants beaten, the opposition gained greater momentum. In July 1906 protesters moved to the garden of the British Legation and the religious city of Qom. With permission from the acting chargé d'affaires, E. Grant Duff, fourteen thousand protesters, including many guild members, took sanctuary in the garden. Several leading reformers, including Sani' al-Dawlah, the shah's son-in-law, formed a committee to discuss the principles of a constitutional government with those who had taken sanctuary in the garden. Soon, the earlier, vague demands for a house of justice were replaced with calls for a house of representatives. As the strikes escalated throughout the city, Muzaffar al-Din Shah was forced to recognize these demands. On August 6, 1906, he agreed to the formation of a National Consultative Majlis.

THE FIRST CONSTITUTIONAL PERIOD (1906–1908)

The electoral laws of September 9, 1906, created a limited male franchise and brought about a Majlis drawn from the ruling Qajar family, the *ulama* and theology students, nobles, landowners and small holders, and merchants and guild members. As in most countries at the time, women were excluded from voting, and property and language qualifications excluded most others from representation in the first Majlis. The heavy representation given guilds and Tehran and Tabriz resulted in a more radical Majlis than would have been elected through universal suffrage. The inclusion of trade guilds, as well as the contributions of liberal and social democratic delegates, made the first Majlis into one of the most respected political institutions of twentieth-century Iran. The constitution of December 30, 1906, effectively limited the authority of the shah, the ministers, and the foreign powers. Deputies gained and practiced the right to ratify major financial transactions, to ban foreign loans, to remove irresponsible ministers and government officials, and to cut the salaries of court employees and the shah. The first Majlis also abolished land allotments (similar to European fiefs), gave administrative autonomy to the provinces, established a free press, and introduced secular laws and judicial codes that reduced the powers of the *ulama*.

Many of these reforms were initiated by radical deputies, such as Hasan Taqizadah, who had been influenced by the ideas of social democracy from Russian-controlled Transcaucasia. The Organization of Iranian Social Democrats, whose headquarters remained in Baku, opened branches inside Iran and followed a modified social democratic agenda. The Social Democrats, as well as other liberal supporters of the movement, helped create modern schools, published newspapers, and encouraged multiethnic participation, especially in the northern provincial councils. Some councils encouraged rent and tax strikes by peasants in the Caspian region in Azerbaijan. Activist women of Tehran took the initiative in organizing societies, schools, and orphanages and also wrote for leading newspapers of the period. There was also a burst of literary creativity centered around journals such as *Sur-i Israfil* ("The Trumpet Call of Angel Gabriel"), in which the writings of 'Ali Akbar Dihkhuda appeared. The new monarch, Muhammad 'Ali Shah (1907–1909), detested the limits that the Majlis and the constitution placed on the previously unbridled power of the monarchy, and he openly began to undermine the new order.

The monarch was encouraged by the leading conservative cleric, Shaikh Fazlullah Nuri, and many wealthy landowners. They backed the shah and stated that the con-

stitution was incompatible with Shi'ite religious laws. This conservative coalition tried to block new laws that guaranteed civil rights for both individuals and newly formed associations. In the protests that ensued, several leading clerics, including Nuri, were forced out of the cities of Tehran, Tabriz, and Rasht by constitutionalist supporters. A compromise was announced in the fall of 1907. The new Supplementary Constitutional Law of 1907, a much larger and more important document than the 1906 constitution, guaranteed some basic civil rights for citizens, including equal rights for all Iranian male citizens. But most of the new rights were burdened with the added stipulation that they conform to Islamic Shariat laws. Furthermore, the new laws gave unprecedented powers to the *ulama*, through a council of clerics whose authority superseded that of the Majlis. Although this council did not function during the constitutional era, as it was ostensibly aimed at placating the hostile clerics, the existence of such an article in the constitution marked the delegates' inability to establish the principle of separation of religion and state in a parliamentary democracy and would have important political and ideological ramifications for twentieth-century Iran. The Anglo-Russian Convention of 1907, which divided Iran between a northern Russian zone of influence and a southern British one, coincided with the growing hostility of the two powers toward the councils and the Majlis, since the new democratic institutions were determined to reduce foreign domination of Iran. On June 23, 1908, Muhammad 'Ali Shah, with the aid of his Russian Cossack adviser, Col. Vladimir Liakhoff, bombarded the Majlis building and brought the first Majlis to an end.

THE MINOR AUTOCRACY OF 1908-1909

The revolutionary center now moved to Tabriz. Royalist forces surrounded the city, but Tabriz mounted a fierce resistance. More than five hundred armed revolutionaries from Transcaucasia, including many Iranian migrant workers, Armenians, Georgians, and Russian socialists, poured into the region. A similar volunteer army gained control of the city of Rasht (in Gilan Province of northern Iran) in February 1909. The struggle to reestablish constitutional rule included an impressive international component. Supporters in Turkey and Central Asia joined those of Transcaucasia in sending volunteers and arms to Iran. Prominent members of the British Parliament, European intellectuals, and Russian social democrats wrote articles exposing the imperialist policies of European governments in Iran. The revolutionary army of the north, known as the *mujahidin*, joined by the Bakhtiari tribesmen from the south, marched toward Tehran and reconquered it on July 16, 1909.

THE SECOND CONSTITUTIONAL PERIOD (1909-1911)

In the summer of 1909 Muhammad 'Ali Shah was deposed, and his young son Ahmad Shah (1909-1925) was named the new shah. Nuri was tried by a revolutionary tribunal and executed. In Tehran elections were held, and new political parties were formed. The Democrat Party, which formed a vocal minority in the new Majlis, espoused a social democratic agenda and included several Armenian and Azeri social democrats in its ranks. The party called for separation of religion and state and a new definition of nationalism that transcended religious and ethnic affiliations. The Democrats were opposed by the more conservative Moderate Party, whose leadership included the ranking cleric, Sayyid 'Abdullah Bihbahani.

Soon the conflict between the Democrat and Moderate Parties escalated into a series of political assassinations, followed by the forcible disarmament of most of the *mujahidin* and the exile of prominent social democrats. These internal conflicts made it easier for Britain and Russia to increase their pressure on the Majlis. On October 14, 1910, Britain handed an ultimatum to Tehran. If the southern trade routes, which were within the British zone of influence, were not recovered from the Qashqa'i tribes who controlled them, Britain would establish its own security force in the south, similar to the Russian Cossack Brigade in the north. Meanwhile, Germany wanted to nullify some of the advantages that Britain had gained through the 1907 Anglo-Russian Convention in the Middle East and Asia. At the November 1910 Russo-German Potsdam meeting, Germany recognized the political influence of Russia in northern Iran in return for economic concessions in that region. A new railroad, financed jointly by Russia and Germany, was planned in order to facilitate the two countries' transportation of goods into northern Iran. Taxes had not been collected for a few years, and the country was in the midst of a fiscal crisis. Britain and Russia did not permit Iran to hire a financial adviser from a major European country to reform its treasury. The Majlis therefore turned to the United States and hired Morgan Shuster and his team to reorganize the national treasury. It was hoped that a financial adviser from the States would have significant political standing, enabling him to withstand the pressure of both Britain and Russia. At the initiative of the Democrat Party a series of progressive laws were passed that established free and compulsory elementary education and universal male suffrage. After Shuster published a letter in the *Times* of London (November 10-11, 1911) in which he exposed the politics of Russia and Britain in Iran, the two powers decided they had had enough of him. In November 1911 the Russian

government, with British support, demanded the dismissal of Shuster. Additionally, Russia demanded a guarantee by the Iranian government that it would not hire foreign advisers without consent of the two powers. Soon, Russian troops began to move toward Tehran. The Russian ultimatum was resisted by the Majlis almost to the end. But the cabinet, faced with the impending occupation of Tehran, closed down the Majlis on December 24, 1911, thereby bringing the Constitutional Revolution to an end.

See also *Iranian Islamic Revolution (1979)*.

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IRANIAN ISLAMIC REVOLUTION (1979)

Iran's Islamic Revolution of 1979 is arguably the most popular revolution of the modern time. Paradoxically, Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi lost the Peacock Throne at the pinnacle of his power and glory despite the full support of the United States; SAVAK, his feared secret police; and the imperial army, the world's fifth largest. Equally surprising was the subsequent establishment of the Islamic Republic by Ayatollah Ruhollah Mussavi Khomeini in a land with more than twenty-five hundred years of monarchical tradition (see map, p. 246).

THE LONG-TERM REASONS FOR THE REVOLUTION

The main long-term reason behind the revolution was that, during the reign of Mohammad Reza Shah (1941–1979), the economy grew considerably and was somewhat modernized whereas the state remained traditional. The shah's policies alienated the nationalists, the *ulama* (experts on Islamic law and Islam), the *bazaaris* (merchants and shop-

keepers), and others. He suppressed his opponents, denied political participation to the masses, and failed to rely on a popular ideology to legitimize his modernizing reforms. While appearing strong, the Pahlavi state was in fact fragile, infected with the virus of autocracy, devoid of much popular support, and insufficiently disciplined to withstand the tensions the king's policies had generated.

When Mohammad Reza became king in 1941, he hoped to emulate his father's autocratic ways but could not. He lacked Reza Shah's iron will and charisma, and the armed forces, upon whose might his father had ruled, were in disarray. The crisis that transformed his rule to autocracy was created by the National Front, an alliance of nationalists formed by Mohammad Mosaddeq in 1949. Mosaddeq became prime minister in 1951, nationalized the British-controlled Anglo-Iranian Oil Company, and reduced the king's powers. In retaliation, the British and American intelligence agencies, with the support from the Iranian military and the shah, staged a coup d'état and overthrew the popular prime minister in August 1953.

The coup that saved the shah was the first major step toward the revolution that ended his dynasty. The shah lost legitimacy and was tainted as "America's shah," irrevocably damaged his relationship with nationalists and intellectuals, and formed a new alliance with the United States that facilitated his ascendance as a powerful autocrat. He appointed Gen. Fazlollah Zahedi, a major player in the coup, as Mosaddeq's replacement. The general, in effect, denationalized the oil industry by making an agreement with a new consortium consisting of British and, for the first time, American oil companies, and he unleashed a campaign of terror, killing hundreds and arresting thousands of people, including Mosaddeq. In 1957 the shah, with CIA support, created SAVAK, which he personally controlled.

In the early 1960s the emboldened king launched the White Revolution, the linchpin of which was the distribution of land to the landless peasants. Supported by Washington as a deterrent against a peasant revolution, land reform created a rift between the shah and the two traditional pillars of monarchical support: the landed upper class and the *ulama*, who were landowners and administrators of some forty thousand charitable religious endowments. Without ever mentioning land reform, Ayatollah Khomeini opposed the White Revolution as a conspiracy against Islam and Iran. (Ayatollah is a revered title in Shi'i Islam conferred on an individual recognized for his piety, expertise in Islamic jurisprudence, and the ability to make independent judgment on all kinds of issues that his followers are obligated to follow.) Khomeini's arrest by the government precipitated the June Uprising of 1963, in which the police killed and