

Armenian Social Democrats, the Democrat Party of Iran, and *Īrān-i Naw*: a Secret Camaraderie

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INTRODUCTION

CHRONICLERS OF THE CONSTITUTIONAL REVOLUTION have often hailed the courage and fearless commitment of the Armenian revolutionaries who participated in the restoration of the Constitutional order in 1327/1909. What is often lost in these accounts, however, is the contribution of Armenian social democrats to the debates over revolutionary and democratic ideas in the Second Constitutional Period of 1327–9/1909–11. As historians in the West have become more committed to documenting the multicultural nature of their societies and social movements, so should we pay more attention to the fact that the democratic order of the Constitutional Revolution stemmed in part from the multicultural and multiethnic leadership of the revolutionary movement which included religious dissidents, non-Persians, and non-Muslims.

Iraj Afshar, who has contributed so much to our understanding of the Constitutional Revolution, published in 1980 a new documentary collection entitled *Awrāq-i tāzah'yāb-i Mashrūfiyat marbūṭ bih sālhā-yi 1325–1330 Qamarī*¹ which is of considerable importance for gaining an understanding of the above issues. This volume stands out in particular for illuminating the origins of the Democrat Party (*Firqaḥ-'i Dimūkrāt-i Īrān*) (1327–9/1909–11), Iran's first modern political party, and the intellectual and organizational contribution of several Armenian-Iranian social democrats to the Party. Afshar's facsimile publication in this volume of close to one hundred pages of private correspondence conducted in French between two Armenian-Iranian social democrats, Vram Pilossian and Tigran Ter Hacobian (T. Darvish), and Majlis deputy and leader of the Democrat Party, Sayyid Ḥasan Taqī'zādah, shows that there was a close affinity of ideas between the Muslim and Armenian

social democrats who created the Party. The correspondence indicates that the idea of forming the Party took shape in Tabriz during the siege of that city in the late 1326–early 1327/winter and spring 1909.² The letters also point to the intimate camaraderie of Ter Hacobian and Pilossian with the two celebrated Transcaucasian Muslim social democrats, Ḥaydar Khān 'Amū Ughlū and Mehmet Emin-Resulzade, who also worked within the Democrat Party. Moreover, Resulzade and Ter Hacobian helped shape the journal *Īrān-i naw* which remains one of the most sophisticated socialist newspapers of 20th century Iran.

THE TABRĪZ SOCIAL DEMOCRATS, THE ORIGINS OF THE DEMOCRAT PARTY, AND *ĪRĀN-I NAW*

On 23 Jumādā I 1326/23 June 1908, the Majlis was closed by a royalist coup led by the Russian officer of the Cossack Brigade, Colonel Liakhoff. Many leading Constitutionalists of Tehran went into exile, and the revolutionary center moved to Tabriz. The Āzarbāyjān Provincial Council (*Anjuman-i Iyālāt-i Āzarbāyjān*, also known as *Anjuman-i Tabriz*), the social democratic Secret Center (*Markaz-i Ghaybī*), and the rank-and-file *mujāhidīn* fighters would soon form the revolutionary army of Tabriz whose military leadership was held by the former horse-dealer and outlaw Sattār Khān and his colleague the stone mason Bāqir Khān. A number of Transcaucasian revolutionaries (Muslims, Armenians, Georgians), as well as many Iranian-Armenians, joined the resistance as well.

On 19 Ramaḍān 1326/16 October 1908, a group of thirty mostly Armenian social democrats, who held leadership positions in the resistance army of Tabriz, organized a conference in that city where they discussed the future direction of the movement. Two different political strategies were discussed during this conference. The majority believed that socialists should struggle for the establishment of liberal democracy and for the achievement of radical social and economic progress for the poor and the working class of Āzarbāyjān and ultimately Iran. The minority argued that social democrats must temporarily abandon their more radical agenda, and instead fully enter the democratic movement, forming alliances with the leadership of the Constitutional movement.³ After the meeting Vasu Khachaturian and Arshavir Chalangarian on behalf of the majority, and Tigran Ter Hacobian who represented the

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¹ Afshar 1980; the cover title of the book is slightly different: *Awrāq-i tāzah'yāb-i Mashrūfiyat va naqsh-i Taqī'zādah*.

² Pilossian to Taqī'zādah, 19 August 1909, in Afshar 1980, 239–40. See also Chaquëri 1988, 1–51.

³ Afary 1994, 30–6.

minority wing of the conference, each sent copies of the minutes of the meeting to the leading Russian Marxist Georgi Plekhanov.⁴

The correspondence between Taqī'zādah, Pilossian, and Ter Hacobian shows that following the victory of the Constitutionalists and the reconquest of Tehran in Jumādā II 1327/July 1909, the minority wing of the Tabriz social democrats defied the majority and followed through on precisely the policies they had presented at the October 1908 conference. They became close colleagues of the Majlis deputy Ḥasan Taqī'zādah, who had arrived in Tabriz in the month of Dhū al-Hijjah 1326/late December 1908, and explored with him the possibility of organizing Iran's first modern political party.

Taqī'zādah returned to Tehran on 21 Rajab 1327/8 August 1909 after its reconquest by the revolutionary army, and became the foremost member of the provisional government which began preparations for elections to the Second Majlis. During the same period, Taqī'zādah campaigned for the formation of the Democrat Party which he and his colleagues from Tabriz had discussed. Gradually, branches of the Democrat Party were formed in a number of cities, including Tabriz, Urūmiyah, Mashhad, Rasht, Kirmānshāh, Iṣfahān, Qazvīn, and Hamadān. Many of the local branches published their own newspapers, but the most important newspaper of the Party was *Īrān-i naw* which was published in Tehran between 1327/1909 and 1329/1911.⁵

Īrān-i naw had a circulation of two to three thousand and was the most sophisticated daily paper of Tehran during the Second Constitutional Period. The paper was founded in Rajab 1327/August 1909 (hence the phrase "*Rajab 1327*" incorporated in its caption title) and began publication on 7 Sha'bān 1327/24 August 1909. It became the official organ of the Central Committee of the Democrat Party on 21 Shawwāl 1328/26 October 1910. Edward G. Browne would thus praise *Īrān-i naw* for its contribution to the Constitutional Revolution:

Iran-i-Now had the most extraordinary adventures in defending its Liberal policy and during the period of its publication was frequently the object of vehement attacks on the part of the journals which opposed it, so that most of its time was spent in polemics and it became both the

⁴ See Chaquèri 1979, 44–9 and Ravāsāni 1989, 101–17. Ravāsāni and Iṭṭihādīyah, who made extensive use of these documents in her study of the development of political parties during the Constitutional Revolution, have assumed that Ter Hacobian was a member of the Dashnak Armenian nationalist party. But Taqī'zādah, as we shall see later, argues otherwise, see Ravāsāni 1989, 104 and Iṭṭihādīyah 1982, 244.

⁵ Ṣadr Ḥāshimī [1948–53] 1984–5, 1:345–48. For a list of the newspapers of this period see Gharavi Nūri 1973, 76–103. See also Iṭṭihādīyah 1982, 218 and Kuhin 1981–3, 2:537–60.

agent and victim of important political events . . . Since the *Iran-i-Now* was in opposition, that is to say was the partisan and organ of the minority (i.e., the Democrats), it was always liable to repression or suppression, and was the constant object of the anger, vengeance and recriminations of the supporters of the Government.⁶

The paper, which introduced European-style journalism to the country, broke new ground in its social criticism. Its targets included class society, prejudice towards women, anti-Semitism, and other forms of ethnic and religious prejudice. In addition, the journal made significant literary contributions. Some of the earliest poems of Malik al-Shu'arā' Bahār and Lāhūtī Kirmānshāhī, two leading poets of the early 20th century, were first published in *Īrān-i naw*.⁷ The works of several major European writers, among them Alexandre Dumas and Leo Tolstoy, were made accessible to the Iranian public through Persian translations. Edward G. Browne's *The Persian Revolution of 1905–1909* was translated and published in serialized form in *Īrān-i naw* soon after its publication in Britain. Browne's lectures in Europe in behalf of the Constitutionalists were also extensively reported in *Īrān-i naw*.

Of special importance was the regular coverage of the debates in the Parliament under the title *Akhbār-i Dār al-Shūrā-yi Millī* (News of the National House of Consultation). These reports provided readers with a perspective different from that of the official *Rūznāmah-i Majlis* (Majlis Newspaper) which sided with the conservative Moderate Party (*Ijtimā'iyūn-I'tidāliyyūn*). *Īrān-i naw* printed letters and commentaries on social issues of the time. It discussed—often in articles written by women—the need for greater freedom for and education of women, the many grievances of workers and artisans, and, to a lesser extent, the oppression of the peasantry. In addition, it reported on major labor and socialist movements on the international scene. Reports on China, India, Russia, and North Africa, as well as news of labor movements, socialist organizations, and especially women's suffragists in Western Europe were published with much sympathy. The editorials were highly critical of the imperialist policies of the European powers in the Middle East, Asia, and Africa. The harshest criticisms were reserved for the tsarist government, which had occupied the northern provinces of Āzarbāyjān, Gilān, and Qazvīn, while a strong bond of solidarity was drawn between the revolutionary movements in Russia and Iran.

⁶ Browne [1914] 1983, 52–3.

⁷ Kubířková 1968, 366–7.

The nominal editor of *Īrān-i naw* in its first year was Muḥammad Shabastārī, also known as Abū al-Ziyā', a former editor of the paper *Mujāhid* in Tabriz.⁸ The principal financial backer of the paper, as well as its managing editor, was a wealthy Armenian named Joseph Basil, who also financed the Dashnak Armenian paper *Ārāvud* (Morning).⁹ The editorial board included Muslims and Armenians from both Iran and Transcaucasia. The actual editor, Mehmet Emin Resulzade (1884–1954), a Muslim social democrat from Baku, came to Gilān in 1327/1909 on behalf of the Organization of Social Democrats (*Firqah-i Ijtimā'iyūn 'Āmiyūn*). A month after the reinstatement of the constitutional government, he helped to establish *Īrān-i naw* in Tehran. Resulzade had been involved in the 1905 Russian revolution, had joined the Russian Social Democratic Workers Party, and had assumed the editorship of the socialist paper *Tekāmil* (December 1906–March 1907) in Baku. Even before his arrival in Iran in 1327/1909, Resulzade was known as an accomplished journalist, poet, and playwright. Though he knew little Persian at first, and for the first three months worked through a translator, Resulzade regularly contributed to the paper, and some of his articles appeared under the pen name *Nīsh* (Sting).¹⁰

Many of the more ground-breaking theoretical articles in *Īrān-i naw* did not have Resulzade's signature. Edward G. Browne has argued that the more significant articles were written by Amīr Hājibī, also known as Ghulām Rizā. He identifies Hājibī as a Georgian who assumed the identity of a Muslim, wrote his articles in French, and had them translated into Persian.¹¹ The correspondence between Taqī'zādah and Ter Hacobian confirms, however, that it was Ter Hacobian, an Iranian-Armenian and not a Georgian, who, under the pen name T. Darvīsh, submitted many of the more important theoretical essays that were published in the paper, particularly after autumn of 1328/1910.¹² These articles were originally written in French and then translated into Per-

sian. Ter Hacobian, who had studied political science in Switzerland, was a key theoretician of the minority wing of the Tabriz social democrats. It was he who had written to Plekhanov in the fall of 1908 and argued for a "democratic," rather than a "social democratic" ideology for the future party.

Both Pilossian and Ter Hacobian corresponded in French with Taqī'zādah because, as members of ethnic minorities, they were beginners in the Persian language, a deficiency they deplored and were trying to remedy.¹³ Our information about both men and their other Armenian colleagues is limited, but a closer look at their letters to Taqī'zādah, as well as some of Ter Hacobian's writings, shows the extent to which these two Armenian social democrats helped shape the Democrat Party and its organ *Īrān-i naw*.

THE LETTERS OF PILOSSIAN TO TAQĪ'ZĀDAH : A NEW FORM OF ORGANIZATION IN IRAN

Pilossian, who signed his letters and articles under the pen names *Baḥr* (Sea) or *Dihātī* (Peasant), was active in forming committees of the Democrat Party in Tabriz.¹⁴ Seven letters from Pilossian to Taqī'zādah have survived and appear in *Awrāq*. In these letters, written between 19 August 1909/2 Sha'bān 1327 and 19 October 1910/14 Shawwāl 1328, Pilossian proposed new ways of developing the Party nationally and giving it specifically Iranian characteristics. He warned Taqī'zādah that membership should not be limited to Āzarbāyjanīs, adding "you must find members among the Persians as well, so that the Party will not have a provincial character."¹⁵ He also suggested that an appropriate Persian substitute for the word Democrat be found, asking "do you have a Persian or Arabic word that would mean 'democrat'? I am afraid this European word would keep away those who always have a repugnance for foreign words. Furthermore, they may equally confuse it with 'social democrats'. In any case, I do not give much weight to a name, as long as our compatriots do not find it inappropriate."¹⁶

When Taqī'zādah wrote to him of the growth of the Party in Tehran in January 1910/Dhū al-Ḥijjah 1327–Muḥarram 1328, Pilossian rejoiced at the development, replying that it was indeed a tremendous achievement "to have in an Oriental country 390 people under the flag of a democrat party,

⁸ It was difficult to remove Abū al-Ziyā' as editor after the paper became the official organ of the Democrat Party. There was much arguing over money before he agreed to relinquish his position, see Afshar 1980, 328–9.

⁹ Šadr Hāshimī [1948–53] 1984–5, 1:110–1.

¹⁰ After Resulzade was expelled from Iran by the government, his biography appeared in *Īrān-i naw* 3, no. 55, 30 May 1911. See also Bennigsen and Wimbush 1979, 204; and Ādamiyat 1975, 96–7.

¹¹ Browne [1914] 1983, 52.

¹² Ter Hacobian to Taqī'zādah, 1 November 1910, in Afshar 1980, 318. Most of the columns and editorials in *Īrān-i naw* do not have a signature. It is, therefore, difficult to determine which were written by Resulzade. Many of the more substantial essays, however, have Ter Hacobian's pen name.

¹³ Ter Hacobian to Taqī'zādah, 1 November 1910, in Afshar 1980, 317–8.

¹⁴ Pilossian to Taqī'zādah, 19 August 1909, in Afshar 1980, 240.

¹⁵ Pilossian to Taqī'zādah, 3 February 1910, in Afshar 1980, 260.

¹⁶ *Ibid.* The name *Āmiyūn*, roughly meaning "of the people" was suggested instead and was used intermittently in party documents, but the organization was primarily known to all as the *Firqah-i Dimūkrāt-i Īrān*. The name "Social Democrat" would presumably have discouraged liberal politicians (whom the the Democratic Party was courting) from joining.

especially when this party is organized on a European model."¹⁷ The letters indicate that the Armenian social democrats were involved not only in the organizational work of the Party, but also in establishing its ideological direction.¹⁸ Pilossian wrote the internal regulations of the Party in French and told Taqī'zādah that he was sending them to Tehran for adoption by the Central Committee.¹⁹

In his letter of 19 August 1909/2 Sha'bān 1327, Pilossian sent a list of possible candidates which the joint committee of Armenian and Muslim social democrats in Tabriz had drafted, and suggested that they be asked to run for elections to the Second Majlis: "We must strive to create within the second parliament an organized democratic majority. People are tired of the revolution and its upheavals. They want peace. If the Constitutionalists are not organized both inside and outside the Parliament, peace will never arrive."²⁰

A month later, Pilossian would anxiously inquire about the work of the Democrat Party and Majlis elections: "Internal disorders on the one hand, and the presence of foreign soldiers on the other hand, threaten the integrity and independence of the country. We must have energetic and truly patriotic men in the Second Majlis, because if the Second Majlis does not satisfy people, and does not put an end to the anarchy in the provinces, our very independence will be in danger."²¹ Seasoned Party members were not to be engaged in military campaigns in the provinces because they were needed in Tehran. When the famous Transcaucasian Muslim social democrat Ḥaydar Khān 'Amū Ughlū accepted an assignment to fight the Shāhsavan brigand Raḥīm Khān in the town of Karaj, north of Tehran, Pilossian wrote to Taqī'zādah that Ḥaydar Khān's "presence in Tehran is indispensable for the progress of the Democrat Party [and] we have begged him not to go. Please do everything necessary to keep him in Tehran because he is a good organizer and a good propagandist."²²

Despite their relatively moderate politics compared to other socialists of the time, Pilossian and his colleagues were concerned about the growing power of the anti-constitutionalist forces and felt that such challenges to the new order should be dealt with swiftly and severely. When a "reactionary" aristocrat,

¹⁷ Pilossian to Taqī'zādah, 26 January 1910, in Afshar 1980, 247–8.

¹⁸ Pilossian to Taqī'zādah, 19 August 1909, in Afshar 1980, 239–40.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 238–42, and Afshar 1980, appendix, 366 (11–23). The internal regulations reprinted in facsimile in *Awraq* appear to be in Ter Hacobian's handwriting and not Pilossian's. It is, of course, quite possible that the two collaborated on composing the document.

²⁰ Pilossian to Taqī'zādah, 19 August 1909, in Afshar 1980, 240.

²¹ Pilossian to Taqī'zādah, 19 September 1909, in Afshar 1980, 244.

²² Pilossian to Taqī'zādah, 26 January 1910, in Afshar 1980, 250.

Ḥabīb Allāh Muvaqqar al-Saltānah, who had been expelled from the country along with the former Shāh, Muḥammad 'Alī Mirzā, returned to foment trouble, he was executed in Muḥarram 1328/January 1910 and Pilossian wrote with Jacobin enthusiasm: "We read in the newspapers of the latest news in Tehran regarding the arrest of certain reactionaries and the hanging of Movakkeres-Saltāneh. Well done. If such measures had been taken a few months earlier the reactionaries and the mullahs would not have become so arrogant as they are now. One must be merciless towards these people. Without this [harshness] we shall never have peace."²³

Despite the growth of the Tabriz branch of the Democrat Party, Pilossian and his colleagues did not hesitate to abide by the decisions of the Central Committee in Tehran:

For a very long time we have been organizing a section of the Democrat Party in Tabriz and we will probably have the pleasure of including you in the Committee. We shall place ourselves under the internal disposition of the Central Committee and we shall conform to the instructions we receive for the Tabriz section of the organization. You have done very well in organizing the Tehran Central Committee. Because the people of Tehran are more educated than those of Tabriz, it is not logical to place the former under the orders of the latter.²⁴

The ideological solidarity between Armenian and Muslim social democrats was impressive. Taqī'zādah pointed out that the Dashnaks in Tehran provided jobs for members of their organization, and that Armenians such as Ter Hacobian, who were not affiliated with the Dashnak Party, often remained unemployed. Nevertheless, Ter Hacobian and Pilossian were committed to the Democrat Party and competed with the Dashnaks in recruiting young Armenian social democrats to their organization.²⁵ Pilossian and his Armenian colleagues in Tabriz also felt that the Democrat Party should consult with them before recruiting any Armenians or Georgians. "You should never enter into relations with either the Armenians or the Georgians without asking for our advice; just as we do not know the Persians very well, in the same way you do not know the Armenians."²⁶

Pilossian encouraged Taqī'zādah to maintain absolute secrecy in the work of the provisional Central Committee of the Party in Tehran. The Armenian

²³ Pilossian to Taqī'zādah, 3 February 1910, in Afshar 1980, 257.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 251–2.

²⁵ See the draft letter by Taqī'zādah dated 28 Ramaḍān 1328/3 October 1910 (Afshar 1980, 223) which shows that Ter Hacobian was not a Dashnak, certainly not by this time.

²⁶ Pilossian to Taqī'zādah, 3 February 1910, in Afshar 1980, 254.

social democrats also kept their connection to Taqī'zādah and the Democrat Party secret because the involvement of non-Muslims in the leadership of the Party could give the conservative Moderate Party, as well as the anti-constitutionalists, ample ammunition against the Democrats.²⁷

Despite their strong loyalty to Taqī'zādah and the Central Committee, the Armenian social democrats recognized the importance of their own contribution to the Democrat Party. When the Party began to expand in Tehran, Taqī'zādah did not keep regular contact with his Tabriz comrades, despite their urgings. Pilossian's anxiety is clear in his letters. He believed that this lack of communication would deprive the Muslim intellectuals in Tehran of the regular guidance and help of their Armenian colleagues in Tabriz and would ultimately hurt the Party irrevocably.²⁸

THE LETTERS AND ESSAYS OF TIGRAN TER HACOBIAN

A second set of four letters in *Awrāq* was written by Ter Hacobian to Taqī'zādah between 21 January 1910/9 Muḥarram 1328 and 1 November 1910/27 Shawwāl 1328. From Tabriz, Ter Hacobian reported to the Central Committee of the Democrat Party in Tehran on the progress of the Tabriz chapter and contributed articles to *Īrān-i naw*.²⁹ After Taqī'zādah was forced to leave Tehran in Rajab 1328/July 1910, Ter Hacobian moved from Tabriz to Tehran where he joined the editorial board and also became a consultant to the Central Committee.

Taqī'zādah's absence severely disrupted the work of the Democrat Party. Upon his arrival in Tehran, Ter Hacobian wrote of the complete chaos and disorganization in the Democrat Party, including the parliamentary faction. "Almost everything is lost," he wrote to Taqī'zādah, "your return to Tehran is absolutely necessary."³⁰ Contemporaneously, Ter Hacobian suggested a total reconstruction of the Party and began to recruit working-class members. He organized a labor union for telephone workers, recruited pharmacy workers, and worked within the Iranian-Armenian community. Had it not been for his insufficient knowledge of the Persian language, Ter Hacobian claimed in his letters, he could have easily recruited 400 to 500 new members into the Party. Meanwhile he continued to support the activities of the literary center where the meetings of the Party were taking place, and encouraged the formation of other cultural and political clubs among Persian intellectuals.³¹

²⁷ Ibid., 253.

²⁸ Pilossian to Taqī'zādah, 9 May 1910, in Afshar 1980, 267–8.

²⁹ Ter Hacobian to Taqī'zādah, 23 May 1910, in Afshar 1980, 321–2.

³⁰ Ter Hacobian to Taqī'zādah, 1 November 1910, in Afshar 1980, 319.

³¹ Ibid., 311–20.

In late Dhū al-Qa'dah 1328/November 1910, the Bakhtiyārī-Democrat coalition government was near collapse, and the nation was threatened with more aggressive political maneuvers from Britain and Russia. In the pages of *Īrān-i naw* Ter Hacobian called for the formation of a National Salvation Committee (*Kumītah-i Najāt-i Millī*). This was to be a coalition of the various left and liberal political parties and heads of tribes, one which Ter Hacobian had hoped would restrain the more conservative Moderate Party.³² A few months later, however, the new regent Abū al-Qāsim Khān Nāṣir al-Mulk successfully adopted a similar tactic, except that in his plan a broad conservative majority was created to oppose the Democrats and support the Moderate Party.

A New Concept Of Nationality for the Democrat Party

Two central themes appear in Ter Hacobian's writings: (1) His belief that a new concept of nationality transcending ethnic and religious affiliations should be developed; (2) his abhorrence of political terrorism and critique of social democrats who had succumbed to terrorism in their efforts to remove the conservative opposition.

The first theme, the construction of a new concept of nationality, was also a great concern of several other social democrats of this period such as Taqī'zādah and Resulzade, and would be reflected in the program of the Democrat Party. The subject of political rights for non-Muslims (Jews, Armenians, Zoroastrians), as well as Muslims who did not belong to the Shi'ite Ithnā 'Asharī branch of Islam, was a highly controversial one during both the First and Second Constitutional Periods. In the spring of 1325/1907, a heated debate developed over article 8 of the proposed Supplementary Constitutional Laws (*Mutammim-i Qānūn-i Asāsī*). This article, which was originally adopted from the Belgian Constitution of 1831, had been proposed by a seven-member commission which included Taqī'zādah.³³ It stated, "The people of the Persian Empire are to enjoy equal rights before the Law."³⁴ "The People" were defined as male and middle class members of society who were not religious dissidents such as Bahā'is or Azali-Bābīs. Partly in response to that article, Shaykh Faḍl Allāh Nūrī, the staunchly anti-constitutionalist *mujtahid*, who had referred to the Supplementary Laws as *Zalālat'nāmah* (Book of Deviance),³⁵ proposed article 2, which stated that no legal enactment of the

³² Ibid.; *Īrān-i naw*, 7 November 1910, 1.

³³ *Ādamiyat* 1976–[1992], 1:408, 417–8.

³⁴ Browne [1910] 1995, 374.

³⁵ Malik'zādah 1984, 4:873.

Majlis could "be at variance with the sacred principles of Islam."³⁶ He also called for the establishment of a committee of 'ulamā to monitor all deliberations in the Majlis.³⁷ After much heated debate and discussion, both article 2 and article 8 were ratified and incorporated into the Supplementary Constitutional Laws.

Taqī'zādah and his colleagues took pride in ratifying article 8 and felt that even in its modified form, the Supplementary Constitutional Laws had made a breakthrough by recognizing the equal rights of *dhimmi*s (recognized non-Muslims) in Iranian society. In his lecture to a British audience at the Central Asian Society in November 1908, Taqī'zādah, who was in London to appeal to the European community for the restoration of the constitutional order, began by speaking of article 8 as one of the most important achievements of the First Majlis, if not the most important one:

One thing established by the Constitution was religious equality . . . a real religious equality, and not a theoretical one. Before that non-Muslims had been treated as not on the same plane in the matter of liberty of observance as the followers of the Prophet . . . The clerical element in Persia was against the framing of a fundamental law of religious liberty, but the reformers succeeded in getting it through, and obtaining recognition of the great principle that in the eyes of the law and the Administration there should be no difference between Christian or Muhammadan, Zoroastrian or Jew.³⁸

After the restoration of the constitutional order in Tehran in Jumādā II 1327/ July 1909, Ter Hacobian, Rezulzade, and Taqī'zādah further developed this new concept of nationality in their writings, as well as in their activities. Ter Hacobian felt that the issue was not only a matter of equal protection for non-Muslims and Muslims before the law, but also implied a new concept of nationality in which ethnic and religious affiliations were altogether irrelevant:

We must create a new [concept] of nationality which will be Iranian. It would be the same to us if people speak different languages or worship different gods. In our view, there should be no differentiation among ethnic groups (*les nations*). We shall recognize only one nation—the Iranian nation, the Persian citizen.³⁹

³⁶ Browne [1910] 1995, 372–3.

³⁷ Ādamīyat 1976–[92], 1:412–6.

³⁸ Browne 1909, 10. Mansour Bonakdarian brought this article to my attention.

³⁹ Pilossian to Taqī'zādah, 21 January 1910, in Afshar 1980, 304.

Rezulzade continued this line of thought in his political treatise *Tanqīd-i Firqah-i I'tidāliyūn yā Ijtimā'iyūn-i I'tidāliyūn* (Critique of the Moderate Party or Social Moderates) in which he developed a scathing critique of the ethnic prejudices of the Moderate Party.⁴⁰ The most provocative section of the treatise was its commentary on the role of religion and on the attitudes of the Moderate Party toward members of non-Muslim ethnicities. The Moderates had called for the unity of all Iranians, claiming they were all "Muslims and followers of one religion and one ideology." This argument showed that the Moderate Party "did not recognize a single person other than Muslims as citizens of Iran." Their attitude was thus similar to that of the tsarist government which accused the revolutionaries of being "fooled by the Jews, sold out to the foreigners, and enemies of the nation." The truth, however, was that "the history of the Iranian revolution, which still continues, shows that [many] *Fidā'is* [who helped restore the constitutional order] came from among the ranks of these same non-Muslims."⁴¹

These views were also reflected in the program of the Democrat Party which was presented to the Majlis and published in *Īrān-i naw* on 19 Rabi' I 1329/20 March 1911. The program called for "equality of all people of the nation before the government and the law without distinction of race, religion, or nationality," as well as "complete separation of political power from religious power."⁴²

The Democrats' commitment to equal civil rights especially troubled the conservative Moderate Party and gave the opponents of Taqī'zādah the opportunity to remove him from the Majlis. In the spring of 1328/1910, a case was brought up in the Majlis which involved two Ismā'ili Iranian victims, men who were both Muslim and Shi'ite but did not belong to the dominant Ithnā 'Asharī branch of Shi'ism. When the two Ismā'ili men returned to their village near Nayshābūr from a pilgrimage to Mecca, they were killed as a result of a religious edict (*fatwā*) issued by a local cleric, Shaykh Bāqir, and upheld by the leading *mujtahid* of Mashhad. Taqī'zādah called attention to the matter in the Majlis and asked that the police arrest and prosecute Shaykh Bāqir who apparently had killed the men himself and confiscated their property. When Shaykh Bāqir was arrested by the Armenian chief of police Yephrem Khan, the 'ulamā were outraged. Those who had waited for an opportunity to force out the leader of the Democrat Party, including some of the

⁴⁰ Rezulzade 1982. The treatise was originally published in Tehran in 1328/1910.

⁴¹ Rezulzade 1982, 75–6.

⁴² *Īrān-i naw*, 20 March 1911, 1. For a more detailed discussion of the Democrat Party and its agenda, see Afary 1996.

Najaf 'ulamā, saw this as their chance. Taqī'zādah was accused of conduct that was "in conflict with the Muslim characteristics of the nation and the holy *shari'ah* laws."⁴³ The condemnation by the 'ulamā was not openly debated in the Majlis since this would have brought to surface the unconstitutional nature of their conduct. Instead, on 24 Jumādā II 1328/2 July 1910, Taqī'zādah was quietly asked to take a three-month leave of absence from the Majlis.⁴⁴

In Tabriz, Pilossian was outraged by this treatment of Taqī'zādah and the pressure by Sayyid 'Abd Allāh Bihbahāni and other members of the 'ulamā to force Taqī'zādah out of the Majlis. He complained to Taqī'zādah that had they been informed sooner and been kept abreast of the events in Tehran, they could have helped him by organizing demonstrations in his support. Through public protestations in Tabriz, Pilossian argued, they could have warned the Majlis that it had no right to expel a delegate of the province of Āzarbāyjān without the express approval of that community.⁴⁵ But Taqī'zādah had not informed his colleagues and no such demonstration in his support took place. Instead, some members of the Democrat Party, who were angry with the unconstitutional treatment of their leader, resorted to political terrorism, thereby further alienating the progressive community that had placed much of its hope in the Democrat Party.

Ter Hacobian's Critique of Political Terrorism

On 8 Rajab 1328/16 July 1910, Sayyid 'Abd Allāh Bihbahāni was gunned down in his home by four members of the *mujāhidin* who were associated with Haydar Khān and the Democrats. Bihbahāni, the leading constitutionalist *mujtahid*, who with his son led the Moderate Party, had been blamed for the censure of Taqī'zādah in the Majlis. The murder of the seventy-year-old cleric, one of the two ranking 'ulamā who had been the initial leaders of the Constitutional Revolution, created mass outrage. The bazaars closed in protest, and both Haydar Khān and Taqī'zādah, who was then still in Tehran, were implicated.⁴⁶ This incident led to the exile of Taqī'zādah from Iran and subsequent terrorist actions by supporters of the Moderate Party against members of the Democrat Party. The assassination of Bihbahāni and the subsequent killings of supporters of both the Democrat and the Moderate Parties seriously demoralized the public. It seemed that their many sacrifices for the reestablishment of the parliament and the constitution had proved futile. Rather

than solving conflicts in a democratic fashion, as all had hoped, the contending political parties now resorted to assassination and terrorism.

Of particular significance in this period are a series of eight essays in *Īrān-i naw* in which Ter Hacobian analyzed the question of political terrorism and declared it detrimental to the progressive cause. He tried to demonstrate why political terrorism was destructive and presented the contemporary social democratic analysis that progressive changes in social conditions of a society resulted only from fundamental changes in economic structures and not from the removal of individual leaders through terrorism.

Ter Hacobian began by explaining the point of view of the adherents of political terrorism. Those who tried to justify terrorism as a viable means for social change considered it a powerful tool through which the state machinery could be crushed. The proponents of this ideology argued that when the authorities faced individual acts of terrorism they became concerned for their personal safety. This, in turn, led the government to adopt a more moderate course of action and lessened the prevalent political oppression of the people. The advocates of political terrorism argued that their actions "awakened the populace," so that when citizens realized that the aim of the rebels was to help the poor and oppressed, they became politically conscious. They were further strengthened by the knowledge that the revolutionaries were not weak, but were strong and capable men who could hurt the regime.⁴⁷

Ter Hacobian then presented his rebuttal, and in the process gave a short synopsis of his social democratic views as well. He contended that socialism rejected political terrorism as a viable course of action. Individual leaders were not the cause of deteriorating social conditions, economic structures were. With the gradual development of means of production according to "scientific means," a new, freer, and more developed social formation came into being. Each new stage of production gave birth to new social classes which in turn determined the political character of society. With each progressive stage of culture, from the hunter gatherer society, to agriculture, and finally to capitalist society, the "influence of religion" on the people also diminished.

The Iranian Revolution was itself a result of growing capitalist relations of production which necessitated an end to the reign of the *khān*, the landlords, and the monarch, Ter Hacobian wrote. The revolution, however, had developed only half-way and unless there was a corresponding change in the means of production, it could proceed no further. Ultimately, once new social

⁴³ Afshar 1980, 230-1, 207-17; see also, Taqī'zādah 1993, 152-5, 348-9.

⁴⁴ Afshar 1980, 226. See also the report in the *Times* (London), 4 July 1910, 6.

⁴⁵ Pilossian to Taqī'zādah, 9 May 1910, in Afshar 1980, 267-8.

⁴⁶ Malik'zādah 1984, 6:1336-7; Kasravi 1971-2, 130-1.

⁴⁷ Ter Hacobian, "Terror," *Īrān-i naw*, 18 December 1910, 1-2.

classes began to grow stronger, and the new society gained an independent life of its own, the old government and the old ways of life would disappear.⁴⁸

The murder of an influential figure would not alter a system of government or challenge oppressed social forces to make a revolution. We cannot allow "revolution and terror" to become synonymous, he contended. Revolution was the act of a whole society which had acquired the necessary material, intellectual, and spiritual forces to take "the role of the midwife" in giving birth to a new society. Terrorism was a "futile one-shot act," which stemmed from the illusion that society could be transformed in one stroke and through an individual's will.⁴⁹

"Every dictator and every absolute monarch represents a certain class," Ter Hacobian argued. "Napoleon represented the French bourgeoisie, Pugachev represented the Russian peasantry, while Nādir Shāh represented the *khāns* of Iran." Just as no building could stand without proper foundations, so no government could remain in power without its class foundations. The supporters of political terrorism made a grave mistake when they compared the government to a machine, using the analogy that if one removed a few nuts and bolts the whole system would collapse. The political machinery of the government needed an internal social revolution before its life could be ended. If indeed terrorism had such magical powers, Ter Hacobian argued, then no system of government would exist for long. There were always many who were discontented, and if indeed the political terrorism of a few instigated the movement of the whole, then the continuing fight between the ruling classes and the forces of opposition would result in a series of unstable governments.⁵⁰

"History shows that the result of acts of terror is not revolution but an unleashing of counter-revolution."⁵¹ Drawing upon the example of the Russian Revolution, Ter Hacobian presented a chart which listed the number of imprisoned revolutionaries and acts of political terrorism carried out in the first decade of the 20th century in Russia. The chart showed that in the aftermath of the Russian Revolution, when many acts of terrorism were committed, there was a significant increase in the level of government repression as well. Thus in 1909 alone, 240,000 revolutionaries were imprisoned in addition to the thousands who were killed or sent to exile in Siberia. Terrorism neither disturbed the government nor succeeded in changing the foundations

⁴⁸ Ter Hacobian, "Terror: 3," *Īrān-i naw*, 21 December 1910, 1.

⁴⁹ Ter Hacobian, "Terror: 4," *Īrān-i naw*, 29 December 1910, 1-2.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

⁵¹ Ter Hacobian, "Terror: 6," *Īrān-i naw*, 31 December 1910, 2.

of power. Rather, as the case of Russia demonstrated, after each act of terrorism "repression gains more, the inhumane acts of the government increase."⁵²

In fact, terrorism had had yet another disastrous effect, Ter Hacobian warned. Revolutionaries, terrorist, and murderers became the same in the minds of people. Political terrorism resulted in the loss of respect for revolutionary ideas among the people and took away from revolutionary organizations the one foundation they could count on, namely, the people's support and sympathy which was of utmost significance for any revolution.⁵³

The political salvation and security of Iran depended upon its adherence to democracy. Terrorism not only did not improve the situation of the country, it created a further excuse for foreign enemies to enter the country on the pretext of ending internal disorder. The autocrats did not fear the hand grenades of a terrorist, but they trembled at the thought of an educated and orderly nation aware of its power and its rights.⁵⁴

The detailed discussion of terrorism in *Īrān-i naw* points to the significant political disagreements within the Democrat Party in the months following the assassination of Bihbahāni and others. Ter Hacobian's strong criticism of political terror and his emphasis on the way it alienated the masses from the revolutionaries was significant. Clearly Ḥaydar Khān 'Amū Ughlū was among the targets of this criticism. A new ideological rift had emerged within Iranian socialism and would continue to exist throughout the 20th century. This was not a division between those who opted for alliance with liberal politicians and those who wanted to push for a more radical agenda including workers' rights. It was an ideological division between those who saw political terrorism as a viable means towards reaching the end of a new social order, and others who rejected it, but nevertheless adhered to a quasi mechanical concept of Marxism in which economic structures determined ideological superstructures and modernization progressively eliminated the influences of cultural and religious beliefs.

CONCLUSION

The Democrat Party and its organ *Īrān-i naw* began a new era of social democratic politics and journalism in the 20th century Iran. As the writings of Pilossian and Ter Hacobian have demonstrated, Armenian social democrats were involved at every stage of the formation of the Party and made important

⁵² Ter Hacobian, "Terror: 7," *Īrān-i naw*, 3 January 1911, 2.

⁵³ Ter Hacobian, "Terror: 7 [8]," *Īrān-i naw*, 4 January 1910, 1-2.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

organizational and intellectual contributions to it. They oversaw the development of the Tabriz branch of the party and made many suggestions about the composition and activities of the Central Committee in Tehran. They proposed new delegates for the Second Majlis and contributed to the by-laws and program of the Democrat Party. They brought new recruits to the Party, especially from within the Armenian community, organized labor unions, and became involved in the political and cultural clubs of the Democrats. They also provided Taqī'zādah, Resulzade, and other Muslim social democrats with constant support and advice. Ter Hocobian was an outspoken critic of political terrorism and showed that it could lead to a strengthening of the conservative opposition and alienation of the ordinary people. The Armenian social democrats and their Muslim colleagues saw their intellectual cooperation as a possible model for a future Iranian society. They were committed to a new concept of nationality, one in which prejudicial attitudes towards non-Muslims were replaced by social integration and solidarity. They also envisioned a multiethnic social democratic Iranian society in which Muslims and non-Muslims lived in harmony and worked towards a secular progressive society.

Because nearly everyone in the Democrat Party kept the involvement of Armenian social democrats secret, fearing an outburst by the conservative opposition against the Party, this important dimension of the Constitutional Revolution was nearly lost to us. Taqī'zādah himself, as well as leading historians of the Constitutional Revolution such as Kasravī and Malikzādah who mentioned the role of Armenian social democrats, also downplayed its importance, sometimes in a misguided effort to legitimize the Revolution. With his effort to bring to light neglected or forgotten aspects of the Constitutional Revolution, Iraj Afshar has once again made us aware of the multidimensionality of that revolution, and its important contribution to the origins of democracy in Iran.

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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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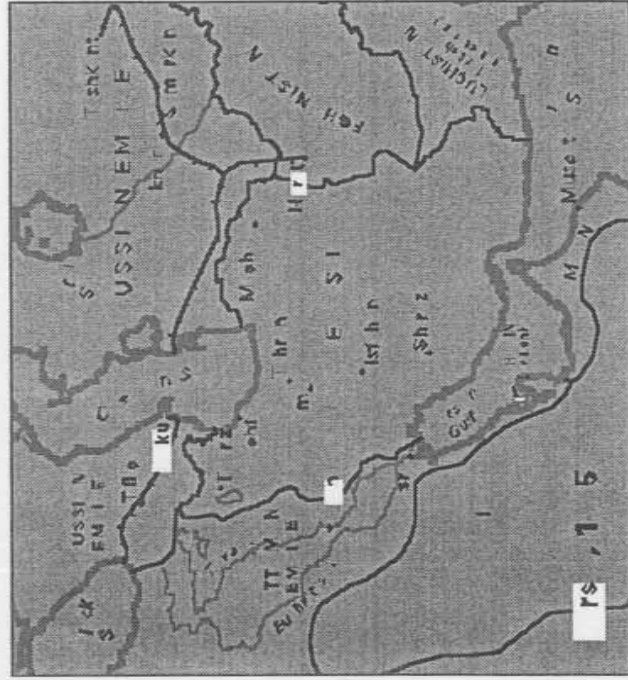
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IRANIAN CONSTITUTIONAL REVOLUTION (1906)

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.



Alex Taur/Equator Graphics, Inc.

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 Bibbahani, 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 Isrāfil* ("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 Bibbahani.

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

