CHAPTER: V

A BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF PERSIAN THEMES
AND THEIR IMPACT ON THE SOCIO-
POLITICAL CONDITION OF IRAN
Since the beginning of the movement for the constitution, the poets of Iran have dealt with themes that are widely different from those of the earlier poets. The modern poetry will, perhaps, fail to appeal much to those who are still devoted to such conventional forms as qasidas (panegyrics) and such subjects as sweethearts, the garden, the wine, the tavern and the like. The new urge calling forth the poetic activities of the age is the desire to bring about the national regeneration of Iran and restore her to her former power and glory. The glorification of her ancient king, the praise of Zoroaster and his religion, the liberation of women, the reformation of social institutions, manners and customs, the study of important economic problems, the consideration of various moral virtues of men and women are all reflections emanating from one and the same source of inspiration. Nevertheless, we must not think that this new urge has dealt a death-blow to the classical themes or has fully succeeded in dispensing with them. Qasidas, in the classical sense of the term, are rare owing to the dearth of patrons willing to change these products of imagination into solid 'tumans'. The modern didactic themes, full of moralizing spirit, draw inspiration from the classical poetry of previous epochs.

The various new themes engaging the modern poets may be classified under the following principal heads and subdivision.

1. Political: (a) Vituperation of the Qajar dynasty (b) Pan-Islamism (c) Communism (d) Anti-Russian (e) Pro-German (f) Pro-and anti-British (g) Pro-and anti-Turkis (h) Pro-and anti-Reza Shah

2. Patriotic: (a) Love for the ‘motherland’ (b) Recollection of past glories (c) Glorification of Zoroaster and his religion

3. National: (a) the speaking of Persian (b) the love of Azarbayjan (c) Anthems (d) Flag (e) Nawruz

4. Economic: (a) Capital and labour (b) Commerce (c) Railways (d) Agriculture (e) Speed and Transport
5. Social: (a) Position of women (b) Polygamy (c) Veil (d) Marriage (e) Formalities (f) Heath and Hygiene

6. Educational: (a) Training of children (b) Female education

7. Ethical: (a) Truthfulness (b) Perseverance (c) Kindness (d) Idleness (e) Gambling

The modern poets of Iran are far from satisfied with few conventional themes of the ancient poets, imitated for centuries without any distinct originality and freshness. According to Aqa Khan Kirmani, it was the flattering sung through the qasidas that made the kings and nobles worthless and arrogant, it was the mystic teachings that produced idleness and vagrancy and it was the erotic nature of the ghazal that corrupted the morals of Iranian youths. So they are striving to get rid of artificiality, insincerity, monotony and exaggeration. Themes like musky ringlets, dreamy eyes, rosy cheeks and ruby lips no longer charm them. They are keenly interested in such topics as may accelerate the development of the social, economic, educational and political conditions of their country.

The development of modern Persian fiction has not occurred in literary isolation; rather, it has been directly linked with and influenced by social and political trends. As Hassan Kamshad observes: Perhaps in no other country has the development of literature been as closely associated with social and political fluctuation as in Persia during the 20th century.

Social and political factors have indeed been of vital importance to virtually all modern Persian writers and have had substantial effects both on their work and the reception of their art in Iran. It follows, then, that to appreciate Chubak's work, considerations both literary and extra-literary must be taken into account. In this chapter, I will investigate three extra-literary areas. I will survey the development of modern Persian fiction in the context of political change in twentieth century Iran, I will provide a brief review of Sadeq Chubak's life and literary career, and finally, I will discuss the socio-political and literary factors influencing the reception of Chubak's work in Iran.
The Iranian socio-political events of concern to this discussion begin with the Constitutional Revolution of 1906-1911, a challenge to the autocratic reign of the Qajar dynasty that had ruled the country for more than a century. In 1921, Reza Khan, a general in the Iranian army, came to power with a coup d'état that overthrew the Qajars. The Pahlavi dynasty began with the election of Reza Khan as shah by the Iranian Parliament in 1925 and his subsequent coronation in 1926. With his accession to power, Reza Shah Pahlavi attempted to establish a strong central government by suppressing local and tribal rulers and decreasing the power of the clergy, previously strongly influential in the political arena. He also strove to "modernize" the country. Gradually, however, he established an authoritarian dictatorship that came to an end when he was forced by the Allied powers to abdicate in 1941 because of his sympathetic policies toward Nazi Germany. His son, Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, assumed the throne. With the resultant loosening of government controls mainly due to the Allied occupation of the country, many political parties came to the fore during the 1940s, some with communist and socialist ideologies. After a series of violent political events, in 1953, Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi was pressured by Prime Minister Mohammad Mosaddeq (1880-1967) and his nationalistic government to leave the country. However, one week later he returned to Iran, after his military supporters, with the backing of the British intelligence forces and the American CIA, had overpowered Mosaddeq. Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi then began to rule the country with increased consolidation of power, suppressing all opposition, until his eventual overthrow in 1979 by the supporters of the religious leader, Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeyni.

The codification of the Constitution is regarded as a great achievement of the 1906 Revolution. The debates, in- and outside the first Parliament, took place on the nature and the function of the Parliament, on the theme of some articles of the Constitution, and on the Supplement. These debates, in particular those of that had some relationship with the rights of religious minorities, brought about the first confrontations between representatives of modern thought and those of the traditional Islamic classes on the level of their theories. The main question in this chapter is as follows: “Was there any shift in the Constitution and other
laws, when compared with those legal opinions in Shiite fiqh concerning the
rights of religious minorities?" To answer this question we need to know
briefly, the process by which the first Parliament in 1906 was established,
then about the method by which the Constitution was drafted and codified,
and finally through textual analysis we will return to answer the question.

The chain of events was begun by the Declaration of Muzaffaruddin
Shah (August 1906) when he agreed to have a constitutional monarchy. It
led to the formation of a committee that was responsible for writing a draft
of the Electoral Law, and later on, the Constitution. In October of 1907, the
very committee, with the cooperation of some deputies of the first
Parliament, wrote a draft of the Supplementary Law as well which was
approved by the Parliament and ratified by the new Shah, Muhammad Ali
Shah. According to the Electoral Law, sixty persons from Tehran and
another sixty from other cities in total could be elected to seat in
Parliament for two years from each class of society.

A cursory look at the biography of the major members of the
committee will prove the idea that constitutionalism in 1906 was a solution
planned by the aristocratic elite to save the monarchy, maintain Iranian
prestige on the international political scene and being ahead of the
Ottoman Empire, its competitor in the region. At the same time, the people
and the clergy while they didn't know the meaning and the implications of
constitutionalism supported the Revolution in order to rescue themselves
from deplorable conditions. First of all, we should briefly familiar with the
authors of the draft of the Constitution and their methods. The committee
was made up of the members of the Foreign Ministry who belonged to the
class of the intelligentsia, which had been educated abroad or had
graduated from the Da-ul-funun and the School for Political and Legal
Sciences. It is pertinent to mention that the history of major personalities
and the codification of the Constitution in Persian literature have not been
investigated. What is written in the memoirs of various influential persons
is confused. There are no independent reports on the activity of the
commissions of the first Parliament, which discussed the articles. What has
been presented below, however, has been uncovered through reading and
evaluating extant documents including all the discussions of the deputies
and some related memoirs.
The above brief outline should clarify a number of references made in the following pages to socio-political events during the twentieth century in Iran as they relate to the present discussion of modern Persian fiction. Fiction in the form of short stories and novels as exists in the West is a relatively new art form in Persian literature, although stories and the telling of tales are probably as old as Iran itself. In the millennium of imaginative literature in the neo-Persian language, narrative tales, fables, anecdotal stories, and romances have been produced in prose and verse, verse having been the predominant mode until the 20th century. The birth of modern prose fiction and the modern Persian short story in Iran is commonly regarded as corresponding with the publication of Mohammad Ali Jamalzadeh's (1895-1997) collection of stories, Yeki Bud Yeki Nabud [Once Upon a Time] in 1921. The predominance of poetry in Persian literature at this time is evident in Jamalzadeh's emphasis on and defense of the writing of prose fiction in his preface to Once Upon a Time, which is considered a sort of manifesto for modern Persian literature. For Jamalzadeh, the function of prose fiction is two-fold: first, to educate the masses and second, to preserve the common expressions of the people. Influenced by his contact with Western culture and literature, he reacts to what may be called a sort of dictatorship in the literature of his time, and he calls for "literary democracy." He claims: The very substance of Iranian political despotism, which is well known throughout the world, can be detected in the matter of literature, that is, when a writer takes up his pen, his attention is solely directed to the small group of the learned and literati.

Jamalzadeh's call for "literary democracy" in 1921 was very much in tune with the political and social events of the time. The Iranian Constitutional Revolution of 1906-1911 was part of the recent past, and the post-revolutionary spirit was still much in the air. The year of the publication of Jamalzadeh's collection also coincided with the coup d'état of Reza Khan, later Reza Shah Pahlavi, which put an end to the weakened central government of the Qajar dynasty, challenged the open influence of foreign powers, and initiated a new era of self-conscious nationalism in Iran. Thus, from an Iranian literary-historical standpoint, Jamalzadeh's Once Upon a Time with its "manifesto" for Persian prose fiction was neither an unexpected nor, for that matter, a wholly unprecedented event.
Thematically, the stories of Once Upon a Time involve types of social criticism that were favorite subjects of both the newspapers and a few popular fictional works of the time. In 1902, for example, Siyahatnameh-ye Ebrahim Beyg (The Travel Diary of Ebrahim Beyg) was published anonymously in Cairo, telling the story of an Iranian born and brought up in Egypt who yearns for his "paradise" of a country only to find his dreams shattered when he actually visits his fatherland, where he records finding a country full of wretchedness, poverty, religious hypocrisy, and political oppression. Along with The Travel Diary of Ebrahim Beyg, the 1905 Persian translation of James Morier's The Adventures of Hajji Baba of Ispahan (1824) caused much apprehension in the country. This work tells the story of the son of a barber from Isfahan who learns his father's trade as well as many Persian tales and quotations which, along with his training in thievery and trickery, eventually prepare him for a career of diplomatic intrigue at the court of the shah. Through the adventures of this Persian picaro, Morier draws a grim picture of Iranian life, especially that of the corruption of its political and religious institutions. Not only thematically, but also to some extent stylistically, these two books paved the way for Jamalzadeh's Once Upon a Time stories, each in its own way parodying the pompous prose of conventional writers and attempting to introduce a prose style close to spoken Persian, a practice uncommon in traditional Persian literature. In a discussion of precedents for Jamalzadeh's Once Upon a Time, mention should also be made of a series of satirical articles called "Charand Parand" (Fiddle-Faddle) by Ali Akbar Dehkhoda (1879-1956), appearing in the newspaper Sur-e Esrafil in 1907. In addition to their importance as commentary on social and political issues, the "Fiddle-Faddle" articles contributed much to the development of fictional prose in their use of colloquial language and particularly of popular proverbs and expressions.

An important issue during the revolutionary period of the first two decades of the twentieth century, a period instrumental in giving birth to the writings discussed above, was patriotism. With the rise to power of Reza Khan in 1921 and his subsequent coronation as Reza Shah Pahlavi in 1926, this patriotism of the revolutionary years was channeled by the government into secular nationalism. In fact, it served as a key element for Reza Shah Pahlavi in creating a strong central government in a country
which was on the verge of disintegration as a result of the weakness of the Qajar dynasty in its final years and of the direct intervention of foreign powers in its internal affairs. Along with this spirit of secular nationalism, Reza Shah instigated a series of programs to "modernize" the country, and these two factors, nationalism and modernization, found their way into the literature of this period. Thus, pertinent social themes and interest in the historical heritage of Iran are reflected in the popular literature of the time: on the one hand, sentimental novels full of social commentary on such themes as conventional marriage customs or prostitution and its causes, including the novels Tehran-e Makhowf (The Horrible Tehran) (1922) by Moshfeq Kazemi, Ensan (Mankind) (1924) by Abbas Khalili, and Jenayat-e Bashar (The Crimes of Mankind) (1930) by Rabi' Ansari; on the other hand, historical novels written to foster a sense of national pride and identity, such as Damgostaran ya Enteqamkhahan-e Mazdak (The Plotters or Avengers of Mazdak) (1921) by Abdolhoseyn San'atizadeh, Dastan-e Bastan (The Story of Yore) (1921) by Hasan Badi'i, and Shah-e Iran va Banu-ye Arman (The Shah of Iran and the Armenian Lady) (1927) by Zabih Behruz. This era of nationalism and social self-awareness also produced Iran's most famous twentieth century author, Sadeq Hedayat (1903-1951), whose works do not conform to the popular trends mentioned above. However, his nonconformity, which appears to place him out of the mainstream, should not lead to the conclusion that he completely escaped the current trends of nationalism and sentimental social criticism found in contemporary fiction. These elements appear in Hedayat's works, but in a different light. While the historical novelists expended their efforts in transforming historical figures from the Iranian past into romantic, glorious heroes, Hedayat's interest was drawn to Iran's cultural heritage. And while those novelists interested in portraying the social ills of their time preached their way through sentimental fiction, Hedayat displayed the ills of his society with more realistic presentations of characters as seen by a more sympathetic, less aloof eye than his contemporaries had possessed. Like Jamalzadeh, Hedayat was stimulated by his contact with Western culture and literature. Having gone to France on a government scholarship in the mid 1920s, and after several aborted efforts at studying various sciences, Hedayat became interested in pre-Islamic Iranian languages and the ancient culture of his country. As he was an avid reader of both Western
and Eastern literatures, his interests then focused on creative writing, and he produced a number of fictional works that mark for Persian prose fiction a significant break from the anecdotal tales of Jamalzadeh. Hedayat's literary output can be considered a second phase in the development of modern Persian fiction following Jamalzadeh's contributions. Hedayat greatly influenced the following generation of writers and his work is said by some critics to have had a lasting effect on many new writers even today.

Some of the most influential aspects of Hedayat's fiction are his attempts to portray more true-to-life characters than had previously appeared in Persian fiction and his simplification of the language used both in his realistic short stories and in his psychological works, such as his most famous work Buf-e Kur (The Blind Owl) (1937). But perhaps even more pervasive was Hedayat's personal philosophical worldview, his subjective, fatalistic vision of humanity epitomized in his enigmatic novel The Blind Owl, which captures the imaginations of ensuing generations of writers, opening up new possibilities for experimentation in Iranian fiction. This novel, however, was first published in India in a limited edition, since during the latter part of Reza Shah's dictatorship strict government control and censorship were enforced, allowing publication only of those works that were considered by the censors not to clash with the interests and policies of the state. But as mentioned above the tight control came to an end with the occupation of Iran by the Allied forces and the abdication of Reza Shah in 1941.

During the first four decades of the twentieth century, Persian literature had undergone the early phases of what some literary historians regard as a "renaissance," with manifestations both in prose fiction, of which the foundation was laid in this period, and in poetry, revitalized into a creative rather than conventionally imitative medium as "new poetry." However, this so-called literary renaissance or literary revolution was not brought about in a state of literary isolation. The political atmosphere of the revolutionary years, indeed that of the early decades of the century, the zeal for modernization of the country first appearing in the nineteenth century and accelerating during the reign of Reza Shah, and the assimilation of European and later American values that began about 1800 with Iran's
involvement in European power politics all contributed to this change. Even more direct factors influencing this new era in literature include the European educations of many of the writers of this period, among them Jamalzadeh, Hedayat, and Bozorg Alavi, and their familiarity with the literature of the West in the original languages, as well as the availability to the Persian reader of many Western books in translation. In the era of relative political freedom of the 1940s, those writers who had not been tolerated during the Reza Shah Period found an opportunity to be heard. Jamalzadeh, for instance, who had kept silent for more than twenty years, emerged again with several new works in the span of a few years. And Hedayat's The Blind Owl was published for the first time in Iran in 1941. Perhaps most directly affected by this newfound freedom were those politically active writers who had previously been suppressed by the government. They are represented by Bozorg Alavi (1904-1997), who had been incarcerated for four years during Reza Shah's reign because of his Marxist views. Directly involved in politics especially that of the communist Tudeh Party founded in late 1941, Alavi advocated a "committed" literature in the service of political ideology dedicated to the service of the masses. It follows that for him the duty of the writer is to lead the people, since he is in the best position to point out what the masses cannot clearly express them. Illustrative of Alavi's "commitment" is his one novel, Cheshmhayash (Her Eyes) (1952), which tells the story of a young aristocratic woman involved with a famous painter, an organizer of a socialist anti-government movement during the reign of Reza Shah. The painter's life is saved when the woman consents to marry the chief of police, a man she claims to despise.

With the opportunity for free expression in the 1940s, new voices began to be heard, some of which became major voices in Persian fiction in the following decades. Most prominent among them were Jalal Al-e Ahmad and Sadeq Chubak. Al-e Ahmad (1923-1969), who published his first work Did-o Bazdid (Exchange of Visits), a collection of short stories, in 1946, was like Alavi at one time affiliated with the Tudeh Party. Later, however, he disassociated himself from organized political groups (except for a short involvement in politics in 1953), yet remained an engage writer to his death, consistently addressing political and social issues. Al-e Ahmad was a
leading spokesman in the 1960s for the Iranian non-establishment intelligentsia. His best-known novel in Iran, Modir-e Madreseh (The School Principal) (1958), typical of his work, deals mainly with social ills and bureaucratic corruption as they affect students and teachers in an Iranian elementary school. His most well known non-fictional work, Gharbزادegi (Plagued by the West), published in 1962, a polemical essay addressing the negative aspects of Western cultural influences and Western exploitation of Iran and other so-called Third World countries, had an impact on many educated Iranians. The social critical content of Al-e Ahmad's work has gained him a distinguished status among modern Iranian writers, even though from a literary viewpoint his short stories and novels suffer from technical shortcomings. These shortcomings in technique along with Al-e Ahmad's didactic tone have often been a deterrent to an appreciation of his unique prose style, characterized by direct, biting, short sentences, a style considered by some as unmatched in modern Persian literature.

Another new writer to appear during this period, Sadeq Chubak, made his literary debut with a collection of short stories, Kheymehshabbazi (Puppet Snow) (1945), which focuses mainly on various aspects of the lives of individuals from the lowest classes of society. With his choice of characters and his use of colloquial speech, he was recognized as an artist following in the traditions of Jamalzadeh and Hedayat. However, most critics did not fail to recognize in Chubak an original artist and a careful craftsman, specifically noting his carefully drawn sketches of Iranian life and his success at transliterating the colloquial language of his characters. In a broad sense, some of the traits mentioned above place Chubak in the mainstream of the fiction writing of the mid-1940s in Iran. One aspect, however, sets him clearly apart from his contemporaries, that is his comparatively impersonal and objective worldview, his ability to represent the emotional and mental aspects of each of his subjects in order to create a variety of vivid, believable characters. Unlike most of his contemporaries of this period who used literature as a vehicle for extra-literary purposes, such as Alavi's use of literature for the propagation of his socialist ideologies and Al-e Ahmad's social criticism, Chubak concerned himself primarily with the art of fiction writing itself. The limited perspective of these "committed" writers resulted in a limitation of time, space, and
subject matter in their stories, and their characters often remain confined to their specific social and cultural circumstances. On the other hand, although Chubak's characters are palpably Iranian, in an Iranian social milieu, his stories constitute a microcosmic reflection of the universe. In this respect, perhaps, he follows most faithfully Hedayat's legacy. Of the important literary voices of the 1940s, Jalal Al-e Ahmad and Sadeq Chubak alone retained leading positions as writers of fiction in the 1950s and 1960s, while a number of new faces began appearing on the scene, notably Ebrahim Golestan (b. 1922), Gholamhoseyn Sa'edi (1935-1985), and Hushang Golshiri (1937-2000). Golestan, perhaps best known in Iran as a cinematographer, with four collections of short stories and a novel, Asrar-e Ganj-e Darreh-ye Jenni [The Secrets of the Treasures of the Haunted Valley] (1974), is especially noteworthy for his experimental use of a rhythmic, even musical, prose style, attempting to create a harmony between thought, feeling, and mood and the aural aspects of language. By profession a psychiatrist, Gholamhoseyn Sa'edi, a prolific writer and perhaps the most important playwright in Iran, produced seven books of fiction as well as other works. His fiction can be characterized as basically psychological studies of lower classes, employing an abundant use of dialogue as opposed to straight narration. Hushang Golshiri, although the author of a number of short stories, gained recognition particularly for one work, Shazdeh Ehtejab [Prince Ehtejab] (1968/69), a story which deals with one of the descendents of an Iranian ruling family whose conscience is burdened with the guilt of his ancestors' tyranny. A stream of consciousness narrative, the book is noteworthy for its often illusive shifts in the presentations of the consciousnesses of various characters, much in the vein of Virginia Woolf's Mrs. Dalloway.

The most prominent fiction writers of the 1970s remain those appearing in the preceding two decades. Nevertheless, mention should also be made of Reza Baraheni, primarily a literary critic, whose monumental novel Ruzegar-e Duzakhi-ye Aqa-ye Ayaz [The Infernal Times of Aqa-ye Ayaz] (1972), a haunting tale of violence, bloodshed, and sex and a portrayal of Iran's history as a nation in which the Iranian people are raped symbolically and actually by their rulers, is in its sexual explicitness and
naturalistic, detailed descriptions reminiscent of Chubak’s work, especially The Patient Stone.

Of the generation of writers mentioned above who had become recognized literary figures in the first half of the twentieth century, Chubak alone remained a prominent figure of the 1970s, Hedayat and Al-e Ahmad having died, and Jamallzadeh and Alavi, though still alive at the time, neither having kept up direct contact with Iran (both lived outside the country for many years) nor remained influential fiction writers in ensuing decades. In effect, Chubak was able to link the previous generation of writers with the future generations and remained perhaps the most important short story writer and novelist of the 1970s.

To sum up, Persian fiction has undergone several phases since its beginning in the early 1920s with Jamalzadeh's anecdotal stories spiced with colloquial Persian expressions. The most notably influential figure in twentieth century Persian prose fiction, Hedayat, in the 1930s, follows Jamallzadeh in his interest in various aspects of Persian culture and language. However, his impact on the development of Persian prose fiction arises basically from his artistic sensitivities as well as his hauntingly personal, subjective worldview. Still another phase, in the 1940s, is marked by the works of writers with primarily socio-political concerns, and with only secondary interest in the artistic aspects of fiction, among who the most widely recognized were Alavi and Al-e Ahmad. From a literary, artistic viewpoint, however, the works of Chubak from the 1940s to the 1960s, with his particular attention to the formal aspects of fiction, his craftsmanship, and his objective, impersonal worldview, have greatly influenced the development of modern Persian fiction, as they have opened the way for experimentation. And the fiction of the last five decades reflects the impact of the earlier phases, both in its artistic development or form and in its social content, as exemplified in the works of such writers as Hushang Golshiri and an increasing number of talented new writers, including many women who have taken the lead, such as Moniru Ravanipur and Shahrnush Parsipur, with the publication of outstanding novels.
Muzaffaruddin Shah Qajar

Muzaffaruddin Shah Qajar, (23 March 1853 – 3 January 1907) was the fifth Qajar king of Persia. He reigned between the years 1896 and 1907. He is credited with the creation of the Persian constitution, and often wrongly credited with the rise of the Persian Constitutional Revolution which took place immediately after his death.

The son of the Qajar ruler Naseruddin Shah Qajar, Muzaffaruddin was named crown prince and sent as governor to the northern province of Azarbaijan in 1861. He spent his 35 years as crown prince in the pursuit of pleasure; his relations with his father were frequently strained, and he was not consulted in important matters of state. Thus, when he ascended the throne in May 1896, he was unprepared for the burdens of office.

At Muzaffaruddin's accession Persia faced a financial crisis, with annual governmental expenditures far in excess of revenues due to the policies of his father. During his reign, Muzzafaruddin attempted some reforms of the central treasury; however, the previous debt incurred by the Qajar court, owed to both England and Russia, and significantly undermined this effort. He had to make up the existing deficit by contracting more unpopular loans from Russia, which exacted political concessions in return.

Like his father he visited Europe three times. During these periods, on the encouragements of his chancellor Amin-os-Soltan, he borrowed money from Nicholas II of Russia to pay for his extravagant traveling expenses. During his first visit he was introduced to the "cinematographe" in Paris, France. Immediately falling in love with the silver screen the Shah ordered his personal photographer to acquire all the equipment and knowledge needed to bring the moving picture to Persia, thus starting Persian cinema. The following is a translated excerpt from the Shah's diary:

.... [At] 9:00 P.M. we went to the Exposition and the Festival Hall where they were showing cinematographe, which consists of still and motion pictures. Then we went to Illusion building ....In this Hall they were showing cinematographe. They erected a very large screen in the centre of the Hall, turned off all electric lights and projected the picture of cinematography on
that large screen. It was very interesting to watch. Among the pictures were Africans and Arabians traveling with camels in the African desert, which was very interesting. Other pictures were of the Exposition, the moving street, the Seine River and ships crossing the river, people swimming and playing in the water and many others that were all very interesting. We instructed Akkas Bashi to purchase all kinds of it [cinematographic equipment] and bring to Tehran so God willing he can make some there and show them to our servants.

Additionally, in order to manage the costs of the state and his extravagant personal lifestyle Mozzafar ad-din Shah was forced to sign many concessions, providing foreigners with monopolistic control of various Persian industries and markets. The Shah visited the United Kingdom in August 1902 on the promise of receiving the Order of the Garter as it had been previously given to his father, Nasseruddin Shah. King Edward VII refused to give this high honor to a non-Christian. Lord Lansdowne, the Foreign Secretary, had designs drawn up for a new version of the Order, without the Cross of St. George. The King was so enraged by the sight of the design, though, that he threw it out of his yacht's porthole. However, in 1903, the King had to back down and the Shah was appointed a member of the Order.

A nephew of his wife was Mohammed Mossadeq, the Prime Minister of Iran during the Pahlavi dynasty that was overthrown by a coup d'état staged by the United Kingdom and the United States in the 1950s.

Widespread fears amongst the aristocracy, educated elites, and religious leaders about the concessions and foreign control resulted in some protests in 1906. These resulted in the Shah accepting a suggestion to create a Majles (National Consultative Assembly) in October 1906, by which the monarch's power was curtailed as he granted a constitution and parliament to the people. He died of a heart attack 40 days after granting this constitution and was buried in Masumeh shrine in Qom.
The Persian Constitutional Revolution

The Persian Constitutional Revolution or Iranian Constitutional Revolution (also known as the Constitutional Revolution of Iran) took place between 1905 and 1907. The revolution led to the establishment of a parliament in Persia (Iran) during the Qajar Dynasty.

The Revolution opened the way for cataclysmic change in Persia, heralding the modern era. It saw a period of unprecedented debate in a burgeoning press. The revolution created new opportunities and opened up seemingly boundless possibilities for Persia’s future. Many different groups fought to shape the course of the Revolution, and all sections of society were ultimately to be in some way changed by it. The old order, which Nasser-al-Din Shah Qajar had struggled for so long to sustain, finally died, to be replaced by new institutions, new forms of expression, and a new social and political order.

The system of constitutional monarchy created by the decree of Mozaffar ad-Din Shah that was established in Persia as a result of the Revolution ultimately came to an end in 1925 with the dissolution of the Qajar dynasty and the ascension of Reza Shah Pahlavi to the throne. The movement did not end with the Revolution but was followed by the Constitutionalist movement of Gilan.

With the first provision (the fundamental law) signed by Muzzafir al-Din just days before his death, Iran saw legislative reform vital to their goal of independence from British and Russian imperialism. The three main groups of the coalition seeking a constitution were the bazaar merchants, ulama, and a small faction of radical reformers. These groups shared the goal of ending royal corruption and stopping the dominance of foreign powers. Revolutionaries argued that role of the shah were once again being used to keep the Shah, Qajar, and the other aristocrats wealthy at the expense of surrendering the country’s resources and economy. They argued that whilst Iran’s oil industry was sold to the British, tax advantages on import/export and manufactured textiles destroyed Iran's economy formerly supported by bazaar merchants. Muzzafir al-Din accumulated a fortune in foreign debt while selling off assets to repay the interest, instead
of investing in Iran. This rift founded Iran's constitutional revolt. The fundamental law gave the elected legislature a final approval over all loans, concession, and budget. Further power was diverted from the shah with the supplementary fundamental law passed a few days later giving power over appointing ministers, and later a committee of mujtahids was introduced to confirm new laws abide by the shari’ah. Despite the ulama's best efforts towards independence from external dominance, in 1907 Britain and Russia capitalized on Iran's weak government and signed the entente which divided Iran among the two leaving a neutral zone in the center of the country. The end of this constitutional period came when members of the Majlis in the remaining neutral zone of Tehran dissolved under the issue of equal rights for non-Muslims; Russia then invaded Tehran and captured the city. While Iran did gain a constitution, the goal of Iranian independence was not achieved by the revolts.

Weakness and extravagance continued during the brief reign of Mozaffar ad-Din Shah (1896–1907). He often relied on his chancellor to manage his decentralized state. His dire financial situation caused him to sign many concessions to foreign powers, on an expanding list of trade items ranging from weapons to tobacco. The established noble classes, religious authorities, and educated elite began to demand a curb on royal authority and the establishment of the rule of law as their concern over foreign, and especially Russian, influence grew.

He had also taken out several major loans from Russia and Britain to pay for his extravagant lifestyle and the costs of the central government. In 1900 the Shah financed a royal tour of Europe by borrowing 22 million rubles from Russia. Iranian customs receipts served as collateral.\[1\]

In 1905 protests broke out over the collection of Persia tariffs to pay back the Russian loan for Mozaffar ad-Din Shah's royal tour. In December 1905, two Persian merchants were punished in Tehran for charging exorbitant prices. They were bastinadoed (a humiliating and very painful punishment where the soles of one's feet are caned) in public. An uprising of the merchant class in Tehran ensued, with merchants closing the bazaar. The clergy following suit as a result of the alliance formed in the 1892 Tobacco Rebellion.
The two protesting groups sought sanctuary in a mosque in Tehran, but the government violated this sanctuary and entered the mosque and dispersed the group. This violation of the sanctity of the mosque created an even larger movement which sought refuge in a shrine outside Tehran. On January 12, 1906 the Shah capitulated to the demonstrators agreeing to dismiss his prime minister and to surrender power to a new "house of justice," (the forerunner to the parliament). The Basti (protesters who take sanctuary in mosques) returned from the mosque in triumph, riding royal carriages and being hailed by a jubilant crowd.

In a scuffle in early 1906 the Government killed a seyyed (descendant of the prophet Muhhamed). A more deadly skirmish followed a short time later when Cossacks killed 22 protesters and injured 100. Bazaar again closed and the Ulama went on strike, a large number of them taking sanctuary in the holy city Qom. Many merchants went to the British embassy which agreed to offer protection to Basti in the grounds of their legation.\[2\]

In the summer of 1906 approximately 12,000 men camped out in the gardens of the British Embassy. Many gave speeches, many more listened, in what has been called a `vast open-air school of political science` studying constitutionalism. It is here that the demand for a majles (parliament; also means gathering in Persian; pronounced "Madj-less") was born, the goal of which was to limit the power of the Shah. In August 1906, Mozaffar ad-Din Shah agreed to allow a parliament, and in the fall, the first elections were held. In all, 156 members were elected, with an overwhelming majority coming from Tehran and the merchant class.

October 1906 marked the first meeting of the majles, who immediately gave themselves the right to make a constitution, thereby becoming a Constitutional Assembly. The Shah was getting old and sick, and attending the inauguration of the parliament was one of his last acts as king. Mozaffar ad-Din Shah's son Muhammed Ali, however, was not privy to constitutionalism. Therefore they had to work fast, and by December 31, 1906 the Shah signed the constitution, modeled primarily from the Belgian Constitution. The Shah was from there on "under the rule of law, and the
crown became a divine gift given to the Shah by the people." Mozaffar ad-Din Shah died five days later.

Within the decade following the establishment of the new majles a number of critical events took place. Many of these events can be viewed as a continuation of the struggle between the constitutionalists and the Shahs of Persia, many of whom were backed by foreign powers against the majles.

The following January Shah Muhammad Ali, the 6th Qajar Shah, came to power. He moved to "exploit the divisions within the ranks of the reformers" and eliminate the Majles. In August 1907 an Anglo-Russian agreement divided Iran into a Russian zone in the North and a British zone in the South. The British switched their support to Shah, abandoning the Constitutionalists.
Mohammad Ali Shah Qajar

Mohammad Ali Shah Qajar (21 June 1872 – 5 April 1925, Sanremo, Italy) was the sixth king of Qajar Dynasty, Shah of Persia (Today's Iran) from 8 January 1907 to 16 July 1909.

He was against the constitution that was ratified during the reign of his father, Mozaffar ad-Din Shah Qajar. In 1907 Mohammad Ali dissolved the parliament and declared the Constitution abolished because it was contrary to Islamic law. He bombarded the Majles (Persian parliament) with the military and political support of Russia and Britain. In July 1909, pro-Constitution forces marched from Persia's provinces to Tehran led by Sardar As'ad, Sepehdar A'zam, Sattar Khan, Bagher Khan and Yeprem Khan, deposed the Shah, and re-established the constitution. On 16 July 1909, the parliament voted to place Mohammad Ali Shah's 11-year-old son, Ahmad Shah on the throne. Mohammad Ali Shah abdicated following the new Constitutional Revolution and he has since been remembered as a symbol of dictatorship.

Having fled to Odessa, Russia (present day Ukraine), and Mohammad Ali plotted his return to power. In 1911 he landed at Astarabad, Persia, but his forces were defeated. Mohammad Ali Shah returned to Russia, then in 1920 to Constantinople (present day Istanbul) and later to San Remo, Italy, where he died on 5 April 1925 (bur. Shrine of Imam Husain, Karbala, Iraq). Every Shah of Persia since Mohammad Ali has died in exile.

Mohammad Ali Shah Qajar had eight children from two marriages. From his first wife he had one son. From his second marriage to Princess Malekeh Jahan daughter of Prince Kamran Mirza Nayeb os-Saltaneh, he had seven children. The oldest child, Gholam Hossein Mirza, died in infancy.

His son and successor, Ahmad Shah Qajar was the last sovereign of the Qajar dynasty.
Reza Shah Pahlavi

Reza Shah Pahlavi (15 March 1878 – 26 July 1944), was the Shah of Iran (Persia) from 15 December 1925 until he was forced to abdicate by the Anglo-Soviet invasion of Iran on 16 September 1941.

Four years after a British-assisted coup, in 1925 Reza Shah deposed Ahmad Shah Qajar, the last Shah of the Qajar dynasty, and founded the Pahlavi dynasty. He established a constitutional monarchy that lasted until overthrown in 1979 during the Iranian Revolution. Reza Shah introduced many social, economic, and political reforms during his reign, ultimately laying the foundation of the modern Iranian state.

His inheritance remains controversial to this day: his defenders assert that he was an essential modernizing force for Iran (whose international prominence had sharply declined during Qajar rule), while his detractors assert that his reign was often despotic, with his failure to modernize Iran's large peasant population eventually sowing the seeds for the Iranian Revolution. Moreover, his insistence on ethnic nationalism and cultural unitarism along with forced detribalization and sedentarization resulted in suppression of several ethnic and communal groups.

Reza was born in the village of Alasht in Savadkuh County, Mazandaran Province, in 1878, to Major Abbas Ali Khan and Noushafarin Ayromlou. His mother was a Muslim Georgian immigrant, whose family had emigrated to mainland Persia after Persia was forced to cede all of its territories in the Caucasus following the Russo-Persian Wars several decades prior to Reza Shah's birth. His father was commissioned in the 7th Savadkuh Regiment, and served in the Anglo-Persian War in 1856.

Abbas Ali Khan died suddenly on 26 November 1878. Upon his father's death, Reza's mother moved with Reza to her brother's house in Tehran. She remarried in 1879 and left Reza to the care of his uncle. His uncle in turn sent Reza to a family friend, Amir Tuman Kazim Khan, an officer in the Persian army. When Rezā was sixteen years old, he joined the Persian Cossack Brigade. In 1903, he is reported to have been guard and servant to the Dutch consul general Frits Knobel. In 1925, Maurits
Wagenvoort, a friend of Knobel, wrote: “Was the present autocrat the same person as the one I once spoke to in the Babi-circle of Hadsji Achont when he was gholam of his Respected Presence the Netherlands' ambassador in Tehran? He appeared to me most eager to learn about the Western political situation. And I shall never forget the expression of disillusion on his face when, in answer to his question, 'What? Aren't the elected people's representatives the most intelligent men of the nation?' I replied, 'Not a bit of it! Perhaps they are just a trifle above your average, everyday folk'. He continued, 'And the ministers then?' 'They are somewhat brighter. But not always.'”

He also served in the Iranian Army, where he gained the rank of gunnery sergeant under Qajar Prince Abdol Hossein Mirza Farmanfarma's command. His record of military service eventually led him to a commission as a Brigadier General in the Persian Cossack Brigade. He was the last commanding officer of the Brigade, and the only Iranian commander in its history, succeeding to this position the Russian colonel Vsevolod Starosselsky, whom Reza Khan had helped, in 1918, take over the brigade. He was also one of the last individuals to become an officer of the Neshan-e Aqdas prior to the collapse of the Qajar dynasty in 1925.

In the aftermath of the Russian Revolution, Persia had become a battleground. In 1917, Britain used Iran as the springboard for an attack into Russia in an unsuccessful attempt to reverse the Revolution. The Soviet Union responded by annexing portions of northern Persia, creating the Persian Soviet Socialist Republic. The Soviets extracted ever more humiliating concessions from the Qajar government, whose ministers Ahmad Shah was often unable to control. By 1920, the government had lost virtually all power outside its capital: British and Soviet forces exercised control over most of the Iranian mainland.

In late 1920, the Soviets in Rasht prepared to march on Tehran with “a guerrilla force of 1,500 Jangalis, Kurds, Armenians, and Azerbaijanis”, reinforced by the Soviet Red Army. This, along with various other unrest in the country, created “an acute political crisis in the capital.”
On 14 January 1921, the British General Ironside chose to promote Reza Khan, who had been leading the Tabriz battalion, to lead the entire brigade. About a month later, under British direction, Reza Khan led his 3,000-4,000 strong detachment of the Cossack Brigade based in Niyarak, Qazvin and Hamadan to Tehran and seized the capital. He forced the dissolution of the previous government and demanded that Seyyed Zia'eddin Tabatabaee be appointed Prime Minister. Reza Khan's first role in the new government was as Commander of the Iranian Army, which he combined with the post of Minister of War. He took the title Sardar Sepah, or Commander-in-Chief of the Army, by which he was known until he became Shah. While Reza Khan and his Cossack brigade secured Tehran, the Persian envoy in Moscow negotiated a treaty with the Bolsheviks for the removal of Soviet troops from Persia. Article IV of the Russo-Persian Treaty of Friendship allowed the Soviets to invade and occupy Persia, should they believe foreign troops were using it as a staging area for an invasion of Soviet territory. As Soviets interpreted the treaty, they could invade should events in Persia prove threatening to Soviet national security. This treaty would cause enormous tension between the two nations until the Anglo-Soviet Invasion of Iran.

The coup d'état of 1921 was partially assisted by the British government, which wished to halt the Bolsheviks' penetration of Iran, particularly because of the threat it posed to the British possessions in India. It is thought that British provided "ammunition, supplies and pay" for Reza's troops. On 8 June 1932, a British Embassy report states that the British were interested in helping Reza Shah create a centralizing power. The commander of the British Forces in Iran, General Edmund Ironside, gave a situation report to the British War Office saying that a capable Persian officer was in command of the Cossacks and this “would solve many difficulties and enable us to depart in peace and honour.”[6]

Reza Khan spent the rest of 1921 securing Iran's interior, responding to a number of revolts that erupted against the new government. Among the greatest threats to the new administration were the Persian Soviet Socialist Republic, which had been established in Gilan, and the Kurds of Khorasan.
Reza Shah continued the modernization processes started by Naser al-Din Shah Qajar, but which had been halted because of difficulties arising after the First World War. During Reza Shah's sixteen years of rule, major developments, such as large road construction projects and the Trans-Iranian Railway were built, modern education was introduced and the University of Tehran was established. The government sponsored European educations for many Iranian students. The number of modern industrial plants increased 17-fold under Reza Shah (excluding oil installations), and the number of miles of highway increased from 2,000 to 14,000.

Another important area of modernization was public health. According to Pahlavi researcher Aban Tahmasebi, public health improved under Reza Shah, which contradicts political scientist and historian Ervand Abrahamian's earlier statement that public health was “one major area” in which the Shah failed. Abrahamian says that, aside from the oil company town of Abadan, cities in Iran “saw little of modern medicine and sanitation in terms of sewage, piped water, or medical facilities. Infant mortality remained high ... Even the capital had fewer than 40 registered doctors.”

Along with the modernization of the nation, Reza Shah was the ruler during the time of the Women's Awakening (1936–1941). This movement sought the elimination of the chador from Iranian working society. Supporters held that the veil impeded physical exercise and the ability of women to enter society and contribute to the progress of the nation. This move met opposition from the religious establishment. In one instance in 1935 Reza Shah ordered his soldiers to shoot at a crowd of unarmed demonstrators who were peacefully protesting against obligatory Western dress in Mashhad. The unveiling issue and the Women's Awakening are linked to the Marriage Law of 1931 and the Second Congress of Eastern Women in Tehran in 1932.

Reza Shah was the first Iranian Monarch in 1400 years who paid respect to the Jews by praying in the synagogue when visiting the Jewish community of Isfahan; an act that boosted the self-esteem of the Iranian Jews and made Reza Shah their second most respected Iranian leader after Cyrus the Great. Reza Shah's reforms opened new occupations to Jews and allowed them to leave the ghetto. This point of view, however, may be
refuted by the claims that the anti-Jewish incidents of September 1922 in parts of Tehran was indeed a well-planned plot by Reza Khan. He forbade photographing aspects of Iran he considered backwards such as camels, and he banned clerical dress and chadors in favor of Western dress. The conception of modernization in the epoch of Reza Shah has to be still researched and analyzed, because it was key to the process of Iran entering the free world, no longer being an almost lawless, third-world country. This epoch is considered a real re-awakening moment for Iran.

Parliamentary elections during the Shah's reign were not democratic. The general practice of was to “draw up, with the help of the police chief, a list of parliamentary candidates for the interior minister. The interior minister then passed the same names onto the provincial governor-general. ... [Who] handed down the list to the supervisory electoral councils that were packed by the Interior Ministry to oversee the ballots? Parliament ceased to be a meaningful institution, and instead became a decorative garb covering the nakedness of military rule.”

Reza Shah discredited and eliminated a number of his ministers. His minister of Imperial Court, Abdolhossein Teymourtash, was accused and convicted of corruption, bribery, misuse of foreign currency regulations, and plans to overthrow the Shah. He was removed as the minister of court in 1932 and died under suspicious circumstances while in prison in September 1933. The minister of finance, Prince Nosrat-od-Dowleh Firouz Mirza who played an important role in the first three years of his reign was convicted on similar charges in May 1930 and also died in prison in January 1938. Ali-Akbar Davar, his minister of justice, was suspected of similar charges and committed suicide in February 1937. The elimination of these ministers "deprived" Iran "of her most dynamic figures... and the burden of government fell heavily on Reza Shah" according to historian Cyrus Ghani.

After his death, his body was carried to Egypt, where it was embalmed and kept at the royal Al Rifai Mosque in Cairo, (also the future burial place of his son, the exiled Mohammad Reza Pahlavi). In May 1950, the remains were flown back to Iran, where the embalming was removed, and buried in a mausoleum built in his honor in the town of Ray, in the
southern suburbs of the capital, Tehran. Satellite map The Iranian parliament (Majlis) later designated the title "the Great" to be added to his name. On 14 January 1979, shortly before the Iranian Revolution, the remains were moved back to Egypt and buried in the Al Rifa'i Mosque in Cairo.

![Image of the original Parliament Building, built in the 1920s]

The original Parliament Building, built in the 1920s

**Human rights in the Imperial State of Iran**

The Imperial state of Iran, the government of Iran during the Pahlavi dynasty, lasted from 1925 to 1979. During that time two monarchs — Reza Shah Pahlavi and his son Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi — employed secret police, torture, and executions to stifle political dissent. The Pahlavi dynasty has sometimes been described as a royal dictatorship, or one man rule. According to one history of the use of torture by the state in Iran, abuse of prisoners varied at times during the Pahlavi supremacy.

Even as the shah’s violation of the foundation, ‘trampling on the fundamental laws’ and rights of Iranians, was one of the complaints of revolutionaries, some have suggested the Shah’s human rights record fares better than that of the revolutionaries who overthrew him. According to political historian Ervand Abrahamian,
“Whereas less than 100 political prisoners had been executed between 1971 and 1979, more than 7900 were executed between 1981 and 1985. ... the prison system was centralized and drastically expanded ... Prison life was drastically worse under the Islamic Republic than under the Pahlavis. One who survived both writes that four months under Warden Asadollah Lajevardi took the toll of four years under SAVAK. In the prison literature of the Pahlavi era, the recurring words had been "boredom" and "monotony." In that of the Islamic Republic, they were ‘fear,’ ‘death,’ ‘terror,’ ‘horror,’ and most frequent of all ‘nightmare’ (kabos).” [10]

The reign of Reza Shah was authoritarian and dictatorial at a time when authoritarian governments and dictatorships were common in the region and the world and Universal Declaration of Human Rights was some years in the future. Autonomy of the press, workers' rights, and political freedoms were restricted under Reza Shah. Independent newspapers were closed down, political parties—even the loyal Revival party was banned. The government banned all trade unions in 1927, and arrested 150 labor organizers between 1927 and 1932.

Objective force was used against some kinds of prisoners — common criminals, suspected spies, and those accused of plotting regicide. Burglars in particular were subjected to the bastinado (beating the soles of the feet), and the strappado (suspended in the air by means of a rope tied around the victims arms) to ‘reveal their hidden loot’. Suspected spies and assassins were ‘beaten, deprived of sleep, and subjected to the qapani’ (the binding of arms tightly behind the back) which sometimes caused a joint to crack. But for political prisoners — who were primarily Communists — there was a 'conspicuous absence of torture' under Reza Shah's rule. The main form of pressure was solitary confinement and the withholding of 'books, newspapers, visitors, food packages, and proper medical care'. While often threatened with the qapani, political prisoners “were rarely subjected to it.” [11]

Reza Shah has been accused of violating freedom of religion and suppression of pious Muslims with a number of decrees. After violating the sanctuary of Qom's Fatima al-Masumeh Shrine to beat a cleric who had attacked his wife for alleged immodesty, he passed a law requiring
everyone (except Shia jurisconsults who had passed a special qualifying examination) to wear Western clothes, and forbid women teachers to come to school with head coverings. Public mourning observances were restricted to one day, and mosques required using chairs for mourners to sit on during observances, instead of the mourners' traditional sitting on the floors of mosques.

By the mid-1930s, these decrees, confiscation of clerical land holdings, and other problems had caused intense dissatisfaction among the Shi’a clergy throughout Iran, and after a crowd gathered in support of a cleric at the Mashed shrine denouncing the Shah’s innovations, corruption and heavy consumer taxes, troops were called in. Dozens of protesting pious Muslim were killed and hundreds injured.

Following this incident, the Shah went further, banning the chador and ordering all citizens - rich and poor - to bring their wives to public functions without head coverings. Mohammad Reza became monarch after his father was deposed by Soviets and Americans in 1941. Political prisoners (mostly Communists) were released by the occupying powers, and the shah (crown prince at the time) no longer had control of the parliament. But after an attempted assassination of the Shah in 1949, the shah was able to declare martial law, imprison communists and other opponents, and restrict criticism of the royal family in the press.

Following the pro-Shah coup d'état that overthrew the Prime Minister Mohammad Mosaddegh in 1953, the Shah again cracked down on his opponents, and political freedom waned. He outlawed Mosaddegh's political group the National Front, and arrested most of its leaders. Over 4000 political activists of the Tudeh party were arrested, (including 477 in the armed forces), forty were executed, another 14 died under torture and over 200 were sentenced to life imprisonment.

Following this crackdown, conditions for political prisoners and opponents of the authoritarian government were relatively good for many years. ‘The bulk of Tudeh prisoners were released,’ and the remaining prisoners who refused to sign letters of regret were allowed to play ping pong, use a gymnasium, and watch television. In the 1960s, the Shah also
introduced electoral reforms expanding suffrage to women and ability to hold office to non-Muslims, as part of a broader series of reforms dubbed the White Revolution. One exception to this relative calm was three days of rioting starting 5 June 1963 after Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini—a leading opponent of the White Revolution—was arrested. Troops fired on demonstrators in Jaleh Square 'slaughtering not less than 15,000 people' according to Khomeini translator Hamid Algar.\[12\]

However, in 1971 a guerrilla attack a gendarmerie post (where three police were killed and two guerrillas freed, known as the 'Siahkal incident') sparked 'an intense guerrilla struggle' against the government, and harsh government countermeasures. Guerrillas embracing armed struggle to overthrow the Shah, and inspired by international Third World anti-imperialist revolutionaries (Mao Zedong, Ho Chi Minh, and Che Guevara), were quite active in the first half of the 1970s when hundreds of them died in clashes with government forces and dozens of Iranians were executed. According to Amnesty International, the Shah carried out at least 300 political executions.

According to a senior SAVAK officer, after the Siahkal attack interrogators were sent abroad for 'scientific training to prevent unwanted deaths from power. Methods of torture included sleep deprivation; extensive solitary confinement; glaring searchlights; standing in one place for hours on end; nail extractions; snakes (favored for use with women); electrical shocks with cattle prods, often into the rectum; cigarette burns; sitting on hot grills; acid dripped into nostrils; near-drownings; mock executions; and an electric chair with a large metal mask to muffle screams. Prisoners were also humiliated by being raped, urinated on, and forced to stand naked. However, the torture method of choice remained the traditional bastinado used to beat soles of the feet.

Torture was used to locate arms caches, safe houses and accomplices of the guerrillas, but another incident in 1971 led to the use of torture of political prisoners for another purpose. In 1971, a prisoner (Parviz Nikkah) serving a ten-year prison sense for communist subversion "experienced a genuine change of heart." He 'astounded' the public by coming out in full support of the regime, starting a career working for the government Radio-
Television Network" explaining how the Shah was a ‘true revolutionary’. So impressed was the regime with this conversion and its impact, it “did not take it long to go one step further and induce other conversions.”[13]

By the end of 1975, twenty-two prominent poets, novelist, professors, theater directors, and film makers were in jail for criticizing the regime. And many others had been physically attacked for refusing to cooperate with the authorities.

The nature of this torture was ‘infinitely worse’ than torture for information, which being time sensitive, lost its function and was discontinued after a short period of moment.

In 1975 the human rights group Amnesty International -whose membership and international influence grew greatly during the 1970s- issued a report on treatment of political prisoners in Iran that was extensively covered in the European and American journalists.

During the 1978-79 overthrow of the Pahlavi government, protestors were fired upon by troops and prisoners were executed. The real and imaginary human rights violations contributed directly to the Shah's demise, (although some have argued so did his scruples in not violating human rights more as urged by his generals).

The 1977 deaths of the popular and influential modernist Islamist leader Ali Shariati and the Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini's son Mostafa were believed to be assassinations perpetrated by SAVAK by many Iranians. On September 8, 1978, (Black Friday) troops fired on religious demonstrators in Zhaleh (or Jaleh) Square. The clerical leadership announced that 'thousands have been massacred by Zionist troops" (i.e. rumored Israel troops aiding the Shah), Michel Foucault reported 4000 had been killed, and another European journalist reported that the military left behind' carnage.

The revolutionary government's official figure for the total killed by the Shah's forces during his overthrow is 60,000. Historians evaluations of Shah's human rights record have been kinder than contemporary accounts.
An estimated 380, not 15,000 demonstrators were killed during the June 1963 demonstrations in Iran, some of them armed. A report commissioned (but not published) by the Martyrs Foundation found the total killed in clashes between demonstrators and the Shah’s army/security forces during the fourteen months from October 1977 to February 1979 to be not 60,000 but 2781. Instead of thousands killed by Israeli mercenaries in Jaleh Square on Black Friday, it now appears 84 were killed by troops who were Iranian but from a Kurdish region (speaking Kurdish not Hebrew).

After the revolution, domestic surveillance and espionage, the use of torture for public recantations was not abolished but expanded. SAVAK was replaced by a much larger SAVAMA, (later renamed the Ministry of Intelligence). Abrahamian puts the Islamic Republic of Iran in the same ‘league’ as ‘Stalinist Russia, Maoist China, and [the Inquisition of] early modern Europe’, in ‘their systematic use’ of torture to produce public recantations by political prisoners.

Others (such as journalist Hooman Majd) believe fear of the government and security services was much more pervasive under the late Shah’s regime, and that the Islamic Republic’s intelligence services, “although sometimes as brutal as the Shahs’, spend far less effort in policing free political expression”, inside private spaces. Whether this leniency is the result of lacking the ability to do what the Shah did is questioned. According to Akbar Ganji, “notions of democracy and human rights have taken root among the Iranian people” making it “much more difficult for the government to commit crimes.”[14] Writing about the reform period during the presidency of Mohammad Khatami Iranian-American academic Arzoo Osanloo notes that, ‘liberal notions of rights are almost hegemonic in Iran today.’[15] And Majd himself explains the Islamic Republic’s relative tolerance by claiming that if Iranian intelligence services “were to arrest anyone who speaks ill of the government in private, they simply couldn't build cells fast enough to hold their prisoners.”[16]
Mohammad Mosaddegh

Mohammad Mosaddegh or Mosaddiq (16 June 1882 – 5 March 1967), was an Iranian politician. He was the democratically elected Prime Minister of Iran from 1951 until 1953, when his government was overthrown in a coup d'état orchestrated by the American Central Intelligence Agency and the British Secret Intelligence Service.

Mosaddegh was born to a prominent family of high officials in Tehran on 16 June 1882; his father, Mirza Hideyatu'llah Ashtiani, was a finance minister under the Qajar dynasty, and his mother, Shahzadi Malika Taj Khanum, was the granddaughter of the reformist Qajar prince Abbas Mirza, and a great granddaughter of Fatih-Ali Shah Qajar. When Mosaddegh's father died in 1892, his uncle was appointed the tax collector of the Khorasan province and was bestowed with the title of Mosaddegh-os-Saltaneh by Nasser al-Din Shah. Mosaddegh himself later bore the same title, by which he was still known to some long after titles were abolished.

In 1901, Mosaddegh married Zahra Khanum (1879–1965), a granddaughter of Nasser al-Din Shah through her mother. The couple had five children, two sons (Ahmad and Ghulam Hussein) and three daughters (Mansura, Zia Ashraf and Khadija).

Mosaddegh started his political career with the Iranian Constitutional Revolution of 1905-07. At the age of 24, he was elected from Isfahan to the newly inaugurated Persian Parliament, the Majlis of Iran. During this period he also served as deputy leader of the Humanitarian Society, Jameeyate Ensaniat, under Mostowfi ol-Mamalek. In protest at the Anglo-Persian Treaty of 1919, he relocated to Switzerland, from where he returned the following year after being invited by the new Iranian Prime Minister, Hassan Pirnia (Moshir-ed-Dowleh), to become his minister of justice. While en route to Tehran, he was asked by the people of Shiraz to become the governor of the Fars Province. He was later appointed finance minister, in the government of Ahmad Qavam (Qavam os-Saltaneh) in 1921, and then foreign minister in the government of Moshir-ed-Dowleh in June 1923. He then became governor of the Azerbaijan Province. In 1923, he was re-elected to the Majlis.
In 1925, the supporters of Reza Khan in the Majlis proposed legislation to dissolve the Qajar dynasty and appoint Reza Khan the new Shah. Mossadegh voted against such a move, arguing that such an act was a subversion of the 1906 Iranian constitution. He gave a speech in the Majlis, praising Reza Khan's achievements as prime minister, while encouraging him to respect the constitution and stay as the prime minister. On 12 December 1925, the Majlis deposed the young Shah Ahmad Shah Qajar, and declared Reza Shah the new monarch of the Imperial State of Persia, and the first Shah of the Pahlavi dynasty. Mosaddegh then retired from politics, due to disagreements with the new regime.

In 1941, Reza Shah Pahlavi was forced by the British to abdicate in favor of his son Mohammad Reza Pahlavi. In 1944, Mosaddegh was once again elected to parliament. This time he took the lead of Jebhe Melli (National Front of Iran), an organization he had founded with nineteen others such as Hossein Fatemi, Ahmad Zirakzadeh, Ali Shayegan and Karim Sanjabi, aiming to establish democracy and end the foreign presence in Iranian politics, especially by nationalizing the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company's (AIOC) operations in Iran. In 1947 Mossadegh once again announced retirement, after an electoral-reform bill he had proposed failed to pass through Majlis.

On 28 April 1951, the Shah appointed Mossadegh as Prime Minister after the Majlis (Parliament of Iran) nominated Mosaddegh by a vote of 79–12. The Shah was aware of Mosaddegh's rising popularity and political power, after a period of assassinations and political unrest by the National Front.

The new administration introduced a wide range of social reforms: unemployment compensation was introduced, factory owners were ordered to pay benefits to sick and injured workers, and peasants were freed from forced labor in their landlords' estates. Twenty percent of the money landlords received in rent was placed in a fund to pay for development projects such as public baths, rural housing, and pest control.

On 1 May, Mosaddegh nationalized the AIOC, cancelling its oil concession (expired in 1993) and expropriating its assets. The next month, a
committee of five majlis deputies was sent to Khuzistan to enforce the nationalization. Mosaddegh explained his nationalization policy in a 21 June 1951 speech:

“Our long years of negotiations with foreign countries...have yielded no results thus far. With the oil revenues we could meet our entire budget and combat poverty, disease, and backwardness among our people. Another important consideration is that by the elimination of the power of the British company, we would also eliminate corruption and intrigue, by means of which the internal affairs of our country have been influenced. Once this tutelage has ceased, Iran will have achieved its economic and political independence. The Iranian state prefers to take over the production of petroleum itself. The company should do nothing else but return its property to the rightful owners. The nationalization law provide that 25% of the net profits on oil be set aside to meet all the legitimate claims of the company for compensation. It has been asserted abroad that Iran intends to expel the foreign oil experts from the country and then shut down oil installations. Not only is this allegation absurd; it is utter invention.”[17]

The confrontation between Iran and Britain escalated as Mosaddegh's government refused to allow the British any involvement in Iran's oil industry, and Britain made sure Iran could sell no oil. In July, Mosaddegh broke off negotiations with AIOC after it threatened to "pull out its employees", and told owners of oil tanker ships that 'receipts from the Iranian government would not be accepted on the world market.' Two months later the AIOC evacuated its technicians and closed down the oil installations. Under nationalized management many refineries lacked the trained technicians that were needed to continue production. The British government announced a de facto blockade, reinforced its naval force in the Persian Gulf and lodged complaints against Iran before the United Nations Security Council.

More popular than ever, a greatly strengthened Mosaddegh convinced parliament to grant him emergency powers for six months to “decree any law he felt necessary for obtaining not only financial solvency, but also
electoral, judicial, and educational reforms". Majlis deputies elected Ayatollah Abol-Ghasem Kashani as House Speaker. Kashani's Islamic scholars, as well as the Tudeh Party, proved to be two of Mosaddegh's key political allies, although relations with both were often strained.

With his emergency powers, Mosaddegh tried to strengthen the democratic political institutions by limiting the monarchy's powers, cutting the Shah's personal budget, forbidding him to communicate directly with foreign diplomats, transferring royal lands back to the state and expelling his politically active sister Ashraf Pahlavi.

In January 1953, Mosaddegh successfully pressed Parliament to extend his emergency powers for another 12 months. With these powers, he decreed a land reform law that established village councils and increased the peasants' share of production. This weakened the landed aristocracy, abolishing Iran's centuries-old feudal agriculture sector, replacing it with a system of collective farming and government land ownership. Mosaddegh saw these reforms as a means of checking the power of the Tudeh Party, which had been agitating for general land reform among the peasants.

However, during this time Iranians were 'becoming poorer and unhappier by the day' thanks to the British boycott. Mosaddegh's political coalition began to fray, his enemies increased in number.

Partly through the efforts of Iranians working as British agents, several former members of Mosaddegh's coalition turned against him. They included Mozzafar Baghai, head of the worker-based Toilers party; Hussein Makki, who had helped lead the takeover of the Abadan refinery and was at one point considered Mosadegh's heir apparent; and most outspokenly Ayatollah Kashani, who damned Mosaddegh with the "vitriol he had once reserved for the British".

The British government had grown increasingly distressed over Mosaddegh's policies and were especially bitter over the loss of their control of the Iranian oil industry. Repeated attempts to reach a settlement
had failed, and, in October 1952, Mosaddegh declared Britain an enemy and cut all diplomatic relations.

Engulfed in a variety of problems following World War II, Britain was unable to resolve the issue single-handedly and looked towards the United States to settle the matter. Initially, the USA had opposed British policies. After mediation had failed several times to bring about a settlement, American Secretary of State Dean Acheson concluded that the British were “destructive, and determined on a rule-or-ruin policy in Iran.”

The American position shifted in late 1952, when Dwight D. Eisenhower was elected U.S. President. In November and December, British intelligence officials suggested to American intelligence that the prime minister should be ousted. British prime minister Winston Churchill suggested to the incoming Eisenhower administration that Mossadegh, despite his open disgust with socialism, was, or would become, dependent on the pro-Soviet Tudeh Party, resulting in Iran "increasingly turning towards communism" and towards the Soviet sphere at a time of high Cold War fears. After the Eisenhower administration had entered office in early 1953, the United States and the United Kingdom agreed to work together toward Mosaddegh's removal and began to publicly denounce Mosaddegh's policies for Iran as harmful to the country. In the meantime, the already precarious alliance between Mosaddegh and Kashani was severed in January 1953, when Kashani opposed Mosaddegh's demand that his increased powers be extended for a period of one year.

On 21 December 1953, he was sentenced to three years' solitary confinement in a military prison, well short of the death sentence requested by prosecutors. Upon hearing of his sentence Mossadegh is reported to have said The verdict of this court has increased my historical glories. I am extremely grateful you convicted me. Truly tonight the Iranian nation understood the meaning of constitutionalism.

He was kept under house arrest at his Ahmadabad residence, until his death on 5 March 1967.
Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi

Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi (26 October 1919 – 27 July 1980) was the king of Iran (Shah of Iran) from 16 September 1941 until his overthrow by the Islamic Revolution on 11 February 1979. He took the title Shahanshah (Emperor or King of Kings) on 26 October 1967. He was the second and last monarch of the House of Pahlavi of the Iranian monarchy. Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi held several other titles, including that of Aryamehr (Light of the Aryans) and Bozorg Arteshtaran (Head of the Warriors).

Mohammad Reza Pahlavi came to power during World War II after an Anglo-Soviet invasion forced the abdication of his father, Reza Shah. During Mohammad Reza's reign, the Iranian oil industry was briefly nationalized, under the democratically elected Prime Minister Mohammad Mosaddegh, until a US and UK-backed coup d'état deposed Mosaddegh and brought back foreign oil firms. Iran marked the anniversary of 2,500 years of continuous monarchy since the founding of the Persian Empire by Cyrus the Great during his reign, at which time he also changed the benchmark of the Iranian calendar from the hegira to the beginning of the Persian Empire, measured from Cyrus the Great's coronation. As ruler, he introduced the White Revolution, a series of economic, social and political reforms with the proclaimed intention of transforming Iran into a global power and modernizing the nation by nationalizing certain industries and granting women suffrage.

Mohammad Reza Pahlavi was the target of at least two unsuccessful assassination attempts. On 4 February 1949, he attended an annual ceremony to commemorate the founding of Tehran University. At the ceremony, Fakhr-Arai fired five shots at him at a range of ten feet. Only one of the shots hit the king, grazing his cheek. Fakhr-Arai was instantly shot by nearby officers. After an investigation, it was thought that Fakhr-Arai was a member of the Tudeh Party, which was subsequently banned. However, there is evidence that the would-be assassin was not a Tudeh member but a religious fundamentalist member of Fada'iyan-e Islam. The Tudeh was nonetheless blamed and persecuted.
The second attempt on the Shah's life occurred on 10 April 1965. A soldier shot his way through the Marble Palace. The assassin was killed before he reached the royal quarters. Two civilian guards died protecting the Shah.

According to Vladimir Kuzichkin – a former KGB officer who defected to the SIS – the Shah was also allegedly targeted by the Soviet Union, who tried to use a TV remote control to detonate a bomb-laden Volkswagen Beetle. The TV remote failed to function. A high-ranking Romanian defector Ion Mihai Pacepa also supported this claim, asserting that he had been the target of various assassination attempts by Soviet agents for many years.

On 26 October 1967, twenty-six years into his reign as Shah (King), he took the ancient title Shahanshah (Emperor or King of Kings) in a lavish coronation ceremony held in Tehran. He said that he chose to wait until this moment to assume the title because in his own opinion he did not deserve it up until then; he is also recorded as saying that there was no honor in being Emperor of a poor country (which he viewed Iran as being until that time).

During the last years of his government, the Shah's government became more centralized. In the words of a US Embassy dispatch, "The Shah's picture is everywhere. The beginning of all film showings in public theaters presents the Shah in various regal poses accompanied by the strains of the National anthem...The monarch also actively extends his influence to all phases of social affairs...there is hardly any activity or vocation which the Shah or members of his family or his closest friends do not have a direct or at least a symbolic involvement. In the past, he had claimed to take a two-party system seriously and declared, "If I were a dictator rather than a constitutional monarch, then I might be tempted to sponsor a single dominant party such as Hitler organized". [21]

By 1975, he abolished the multi-party system of government in favor of a one-party state under the Rastakhiz (Resurrection) Party. Mohammad Reza Shah's own words on its justification was; “We must straighten out Iranians' ranks. To do so, we divide them into two categories: those who believe in Monarchy, the constitution and the Six Bahan Revolution and
those who don't...A person who does not enter the new political party and does not believe in the three cardinal principles will have only two choices. He is either an individual who belongs to an illegal organization, or is related to the outlawed Tudeh Party, or in other words a traitor. Such an individual belongs to an Iranian prison, or if he desires he can leave the country tomorrow, without even paying exit fees; he can go anywhere he likes, because he is not Iranian, he has no nation, and his activities are illegal and punishable according to the law.\footnote{22} In addition, the Shah had decreed that all Iranian citizens and the few remaining political parties become part of Rastakhiz.

In his ‘White Revolution’ starting in the 1960s, Mohammad Reza Pahlavi made major changes to modernize Iran. He curbed the power of certain ancient elite factions by expropriating large and medium-sized estates for the benefit of more than four million small farmers. He took a number of other major measures, including extending suffrage to women and the participation of workers in factories through shares and other measures. In the 1970s the governmental program of a free of charge nourishment for children at school (Taghzieh e Raigan) was implemented. Under the Shah's reign, the national Iranian income showed an unprecedented rise for an extended period.

Improvement of the educational system was made through new elementary schools and additionally literacy courses were set up in remote villages by the Imperial Iranian Armed Forces, this initiative being called ‘Sepah e Danesh’, ‘Army of Knowledge’. The Armed Forces were also engaged in infrastructural and other educational projects throughout the country (Sepah-e Tarvij va Abadani) as well as in health education and promotion (“Sepah-e Behdasht”). The Shah instituted exams for Islamic theologians to become established clerics. Many Iranian university students were sent to and supported in foreign, especially Western countries and the Indian subcontinent.

In the field of diplomacy, Iran realized and maintained friendly relations with Western and East European countries as well as the state of Israel and China and became, especially through the close friendship with the United States, more and more a hegemonial power in the Persian Gulf.
region and the Middle East. The suppression of the communist guerilla movement in the region of Dhofar in Oman with the help of the Iranian army after a formal request by Sultan Qaboos was widely regarded in this context.

As to infrastructural and technological progress, the Shah continued and developed further the policies introduced by his father. As part of his programs, projects in several technologies, such as steel, telecommunications, petrochemical facilities, power plants, dams and the automobile industry may be named. The Aryamehr University of Technology was established as a major new academic institution.

In terms of cultural activities, international cooperations were encouraged and organized, such as the Shiraz Arts Festival. As part of his various financial support programs in the fields of culture and arts, the Shah, along with King Hussein of Jordan donated an amount to the Chinese Muslim Association for the construction of the Taipei Grand Mosque.

At the Federation of American Scientists, John Pike writes:

“In 1978 the deepening opposition to the Shah erupted in widespread demonstrations and rioting. Recognizing that even this level of violence had failed to crush the rebellion, the Shah abdicated the Peacock Throne and fled Iran on 16 January 1979. Despite decades of pervasive surveillance by SAVAK, working closely with CIA, the extent of public opposition to the Shah, and his sudden departure, came as a considerable surprise to the US intelligence community and national leadership. As late as 28 September 1978 the US Defense Intelligence Agency reported that the Shah "is expected to remain actively in power over the next ten years."[23]

Explanations for why Mohammad Reza was overthrown include that he was a dictator put in place by a non-Muslim Western power, the United States, whose foreign culture was seen as influencing that of Iran. Additional contributing factors included reports of oppression, brutality, corruption, and extravagance. Basic functional failures of the regime have also been blamed – economic bottlenecks, shortages and inflation; the
regime's over-ambitious economic program; the failure of its security forces to deal with protest and demonstration; the overly centralized royal power structure. International policies pursued by the Shah in order to increase national income by remarkable increases of the price of oil through his leading role in the Organization of the Oil Producing Countries (OPEC) have been stressed as a major cause for a shift of Western interests and priorities and for an actual reduction of their support for him reflected in a critical position of Western politicians and media, especially of the administration of U.S. President Jimmy Carter, regarding the question of human rights in Iran, and in strengthened economic ties between the United States of America and Saudi Arabia in the 1970s.

In October 1971, Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi celebrated the twenty-five-hundredth anniversary of the Iranian monarchy. The New York Times reported that $100 million was spent. Next to the ancient ruins of Persepolis, the Shah gave orders to build a tent city covering 160 acres (0.65 km²), studded with three huge royal tents and fifty-nine lesser ones arranged in a star-shaped design. French chefs from Maxim's of Paris prepared breast of peacock for royalty and dignitaries around the world, the buildings were decorated by Maison Jansen (the same firm that helped Jacqueline Kennedy redecorate the White House), the guests ate off Limoges porcelain and drank from Baccarat crystal glasses. This became a major scandal as the contrast between the dazzling elegance of celebration and the misery of the nearby villages was so dramatic that no one could ignore it. Months before the festivities, university students went on strike in protest. Indeed, the cost was so sufficiently impressive that the Shah forbade his associates to discuss the actual figures. However he and his supporters argue that the celebrations opened new investments in Iran, improved relationships with the other leaders and nations of the world, and provided greater recognition of Iran.

Mohammad Reza Pahlavi published several books in the course of his kingship and two later works after his downfall. Among others, these include:

2. The White Revolution (1967)


5. The Shah's Story (1980)

The overthrow of the Shah came as a surprise to almost all observers. The first militant anti-Shah demonstrations of a few hundred started in October 1977, after the death of Khomeini's son Mostafa. A year later strikes were paralyzing the country, and in early December a "total of 6 to 9 million"—more than 10% of the country—marched against the Shah throughout Iran. On 2 October 1978, the Shah declared and granted an amnesty to dissidents living abroad, including Ayatollah Khomenei.

On 16 January 1979, he made a contract with Farboud and left Iran at the behest of Prime Minister Shapour Bakhtiar (a long time opposition leader himself), who sought to calm the situation. Spontaneous attacks by members of the public on statues of the Pahlavis followed, and 'within hours, almost every sign of the Pahlavi dynasty' was destroyed. Bakhtiar dissolved SAVAK, freed all political prisoners, and allowed Ayatollah Khomeini to return to Iran after years in exile. He asked Khomeini to create a Vatican-like state in Qom, promised free elections, and called upon the opposition to help preserve the constitution, proposing a 'national unity' government including Khomeini's followers. Khomeini rejected Bakhtiar's demands and appointed his own interim government, with Mehdi Bazargan as prime minister, stating that "I will appoint a state. I will act against this government. With the nation's support, I will appoint a state."[24] In February, pro-Khomeini revolutionary guerrilla and rebel soldiers gained the upper hand in street fighting, and the military announced its neutrality. On the evening of 11 February, the dissolution of the monarchy was complete.

During his second exile, Mohammad Reza Pahlavi traveled from country to country seeking what he hoped would be temporary residence.
First he flew to Assuan, Egypt, where he received a warm and gracious welcome from President Anwar El-Sadat. He later lived in Morocco as a guest of King Hassan II, as well as in the Bahamas, and in Cuernavaca, Mexico, near Mexico City, as a guest of José López Portillo. Richard Nixon, the former president, visited the Shah in summer 1979 in Mexico. The Shah suffered from gallstones that would require prompt surgery. He was offered treatment in Switzerland, but insisted on treatment in the United States.

On 22 October 1979, President Jimmy Carter reluctantly allowed the Shah into the United States to undergo surgical treatment at the New York–Weill Cornell Medical Hospital. While in Cornell Medical Center, Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi used the name "David D. Newsom", Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs that time, as his temporary code name, without Newsom's knowledge.

The Shah was taken later by U.S. Air Force jet to Kelly Air Force Base in Texas and from there to Wilford Hall Medical Center at Lackland Air Force Base. It was anticipated that his stay in the United States would be short; however, surgical complications ensued, which required six weeks of confinement in the hospital before he recovered. His prolonged stay in the United States was extremely unpopular with the revolutionary movement in Iran, which still resented the United States' overthrow of Prime Minister Mosaddegh and the years of support for the Shah's rule. The Iranian government demanded his return to Iran, but he stayed in the hospital.

There are claims that this resulted in the storming of the U.S. Embassy in Tehran and the kidnapping of American diplomats, military personnel, and intelligence officers, which soon became known as the Iran hostage crisis. In the Shah's memoir, Answer to History, he claimed that the United States never provided him any kind of health care and asked him to leave the country.

He left the United States on 15 December 1979 and lived for a short time in the Isla Contadora in Panama. This caused riots by Panamanians who objected to the Shah being in their country. The new government in
Iran still demanded his and his wife's immediate extradition to Tehran. A short time after Mohammad Reza Pahlavi's arrival in Panama, an Iranian ambassador was dispatched to the Central American nation carrying a 450-page extradition request. That official appeal alarmed both the Shah and his advisors. Whether the Panamanian government would have complied is a matter of speculation among historians.

After that event, the Shah again sought the support of Egyptian president Anwar El-Sadat, who renewed his offer of permanent asylum in Egypt to the ailing monarch. He returned to Egypt in March 1980, where he received urgent medical treatment, including a splenectomy performed by Michael DeBakey.

Mohammad Reza Pahlavi is buried in the Al Rifa'i Mosque in Cairo, a mosque of great symbolic importance. The last royal rulers of two monarchies are buried there, Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi of Iran and King Farouk of Egypt, his former brother-in-law. The tombs lie to the left of the entrance. Years earlier, his father and predecessor, Reza Shah had also initially been buried at the Al Rifa'i Mosque.

The White House, where the Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi and Shahbanou Farah Pahlavi lived

The Communist Party of Iran

The coming out of the communist movement and ideas in Iran, in its real sense, began in the Baku oil fields of Russia before, the 1917 Revolution. Thousands of Iranian immigrant workers had been employed by the tsarist regime in the oil fields where they worked shoulder to shoulder with Russian,
Azeri and Armenian workers and came into contact with Bolshevik propaganda and agitation. These workers played a significant role in the development of the Communist Party of Iran. Nearly 50 percent of the workers in the Baku oil fields were Iranians many of whom were in contact with the Bolsheviks who were working in the oil workers’ unions.\[25\] Official Figures show that 190,000 Iranians went to Russia in 1911, and 16,000 returned home in the same year.\[26\] But unofficial estimates show that no fewer than 300,000 Iranian workers migrated to Russia every year. These workers were mainly from Azerbaijan and Gilan, but were also drawn from other parts of Iran. Iranian workers were so influenced by the Bolsheviks that whenever they came back to Iran, they brought the tradition and ideas of the Russian Marxists with them.

Iranian revolutionaries were linked with the activities of the Russia Social Democratic Party from the very beginning. When Iskra (the “Spark”) began publication in December 1900, the Iranian revolutionaries used to transport copies to Baku through Persia. These revolutionaries came to be known as Social Democrats.\[27\] Regarding the affairs of Iskra Krupskaya once wrote to Torkhan, asking him whether she could send it to Russia through Tabriz. In a letter to L.Y.Galperin, Lenin also wrote of a further shipment to Persia via Vienna, which he said was only a recent experiment, so it was “premature to talk of failure; it may be successful.”\[28\] Galperin was in charge of sending Iskra to Baku (by Russian Social Democrats) in the spring of 1901. He organised the Baku Committee of the Russian Social Democratic Labour Party (RSDLP). The Committee’s function was to manage the secret printing and transportation of illegal literature from abroad, and its distribution inside Russia.

A lot of Bolsheviks even participated in the Mashrutiyyat (Constitutional) movement between 1905 and 1911 and lost their lives along with Iranian revolutionaries. Gartovk, the Tsar’s ambassador in Iran, wrote to the Russian government on 2 October 1908, that the artillery commander Sattar Khan (The leader of the Tabriz revolt) was a sailor of the famous Battleship Potemkin, who had fled to Romania but later returned to Iran, where he joined the revolutionaries. The ambassador further wrote that
revolutionary literature was being shipped from Tabriz by Russian revolutionaries.\[29\]

Concerning that time parts of the Communist Manifesto were translated into Persian when a group of Russian revolutionaries led by Sergo Orjonikidze came to Iran in 1909 in order to carry out revolutionary activities. His wife wrote about this in her book The Path of the Bolsheviks. Lenin himself was in touch with some of the Transcaucasian Bolsheviks, who were in Iran during the period of reaction after the defeat of the 1905 Revolution. The Transcaucasian Bolsheviks played an important role in spreading the ideas of Marxism in Iran during the Constitutional Movement beside the Qajar reign.\[30\]

Violence is mostly a petit-bourgeois affinity, completely alien to the working class tradition. That the movement should resort to such methods in the early days is merely a reflection of the underdeveloped phase of the struggle. It was the direct result of the low level of socio-economic development in Iran. The slow, sluggish development of the productive forces found its reflection in the undeveloped class structure of Iranian society at a time when the working class was still in its infancy. To the young progressive students and intellectuals, it seemed that society was in a state of complete stagnation. In their impatience they concluded that there was no way out of the crisis of society other than by means of the gun and the bomb. Although this was incorrect even at that time, it was at least understandable at a time when the capitalist mode of production was still in a primitive stage of development. The working class was still in an embryonic phase. So the students sought a base among the discontented peasantry.

The latter was really very oppressed in the clutches of feudal landlords and occasionally launched desperate attacks on the feudal landlords and nobility. But the prevailing backwardness of the village masses, their ignorance and illiteracy, and the scattered and unorganised nature of the peasantry, meant that, on their own, they could offer no way out. Only by finding a powerful revolutionary ally in the towns could the peasantry rise to the heights demanded for a real revolutionary transformation of society.
The 1917 October Revolution in Russia was an inspiration for Iran. The Iranian revolutionaries performed their proletarian international duty, fighting in the ranks of the world working class against the counter-revolutionary forces during the civil war in the Soviet Union. Between 1907 to 1915 two secret pacts were concluded between the Tsar and British imperialism which would have meant partitioning Iran into spheres of influence. The October revolution immediately published the secret treaties and abolished all the tsarist colonial expansionist policies. Iran was a prime example or the cruel colonial policy pursued by Russian tsarism in collaboration with the so-called western democracies in which the national rights of colonial peoples were treated like so much small change. The October revolution proved to be a practical bulwark against all sorts of national oppression. For the first time in modern history oppressed nationalities found a firm protector in the shape of the Workers' State under the leadership of Lenin and Trotsky. Inspired by the October revolution, the Iranian masses even used to sing revolutionary songs like khosh khabar badai nasim shomal keh bema mirasad zaman vesal (“A new of joy is being carried to us by the north wind, It reached us in to the form of mingling of two sweet hearts.”)\[31\]

SAVAK

SAVAK, Organization of Intelligence and National Security) was the secret police, domestic security and intelligence service established by Iran's Mohammad Reza Shah with the help of the United States' Central Intelligence Agency (the CIA) and Israel. SAVAK operated from 1957 to 1979, when the Pahlavi dynasty was overthrown. SAVAK has been described as Iran's "most hated and feared institution" prior to the revolution of 1979 because of its practice of torturing and executing opponents of the Pahlavi regime. At its peak, the organization had as many as 60,000 agents serving in its ranks according to one source, although Gholam Reza Afkhami estimates SAVAK staffing at between 4,000 and 6,000.\[32\]

After removing the populist regime of Mohammad Mosaddeq (which was originally focused on nationalizing Iran's oil industry but also set out to weaken the Shah's power) from power on 19 August 1953, in a coup, the
monarch, Mohammad Reza Shah, established an intelligence service with police powers. The Shah's goal was\[^{[33]}\] to strengthen his regime by placing political opponents under surveillance and repress dissident movements. According to Encyclopædia Iranica:

A U.S. Army colonel working for the CIA was sent to Persia in September 1953 to work with General Teymur Bakhtiar, who was appointed military governor of Tehran in December 1953 and immediately began to assemble the nucleus of a new intelligence organization. The U.S. Army colonel worked closely with Bakhtiar and his subordinates, commanding the new intelligence organization and training its members in basic intelligence techniques, such as surveillance and interrogation methods, the use of intelligence networks, and organizational security. This organization was the first modern, effective intelligence service to operate in Persia. Its main achievement occurred in September 1954, when it discovered and destroyed a large communist Tudeh Party network that had been established in the Persian armed forces.\[^{[34]}\]

In March 1955, the Army colonel was replaced with a more permanent team of five career CIA officers, including specialists in covert operations, intelligence analysis, and counterintelligence, including Major General Herbert Norman Schwarzkopf who “trained virtually all of the first generation of SAVAK personnel.” In 1956 this agency was reorganized and given the name Sazeman-e Ettela’at va Amniyat-e Keshvar (SAVAK). These in turn were replaced by SAVAK's own instructors in 1965.\[^{[35]}\]

SAVAK had the power to censor the media, screen applicants for government jobs, “and according to reliable Western source, use all means necessary, including torture, to hunt down dissidents.”\[^{[36]}\] After 1963, the Shah expanded his security organizations, including SAVAK, which grew to over 5,300 full-time agents and a large but unknown number of part-time informers.

In 1961 the Iranian authorities dismissed the agency's first director, General Teymur Bakhtiar; he later became a political dissident. In 1970 SAVAK agents assassinated him, disguising the deed as an accident.

General Hassan Pakravan, director of SAVAK from 1961 to 1966, had an almost benevolent reputation, for example dining with the Ayatollah Khomeini while Khomeini was under house arrest on a weekly basis, and later intervened to prevent Khomeini's execution on the grounds it would
anger the common people of Iran. After the Iranian Revolution, however, Pakravan was among the first of the Shah's officials to be executed by the Khomeini regime.

Pakravan was replaced in 1966 by General Nematollah Nassiri, a close associate of the Shah, and the service was reorganized and became increasingly active in the face of rising Shia and communist militancy and political unrest.

A turning point in SAVAK's reputation for ruthless brutality was reportedly an attack on a gendarmerie post in the Caspian village of Siahkal by a small band of armed Marxists in February 1971, although it is also reported to have tortured to death a Shia cleric, Ayatollah Muhammad Reza Sa‘idi, in 1970. According to Iranian political historian Ervand Abrahamian, after this attack SAVAK interrogators were sent abroad for scientific training to prevent unwanted deaths from 'brute force.' Brute force was supplemented with the bastinado; sleep deprivation; extensive solitary confinement; glaring searchlights; standing in one place for hours on end; nail extractions; snakes (favored for use with women); electrical shocks with cattle prods, often into the rectum; cigarette burns; sitting on hot grills; acid dripped into nostrils; near-drownings; mock executions; and an electric chair with a large metal mask to muffle screams while amplifying them for the victim. This latter contraption was dubbed the Apollo—an allusion to the American space capsules. Prisoners were also humiliated by being raped, urinated on, and forced to stand naked. Despite the new 'scientific' methods, the torture of choice remained the traditional bastinado used to beat soles of the feet. The primary goal of those using the bastinados “was to locate arms caches, safe houses and accomplices ...” [37]

Abrahamian estimates that SAVAK (and other police and military) killed 368 guerrillas including the leadership of the major urban guerrilla organizations (Organization of Iranian People's Fedai Guerrillas, People's Mujahedin of Iran) such as Hamid Ashraf between 1971–1977 and executed something less than 100 political prisoners between 1971 and 1979 – the most violent era of the SAVAK's existence.
One well known writer was arrested, tortured for months, and finally placed before television cameras to 'confess' that his works paid too much attention to social problems and not enough to the great achievements of the White Revolution. By the end of 1975, twenty-two prominent poets, novelist, professors, theater directors, and film makers were in jail for criticizing the regime. And many others had been physically attacked for refusing to cooperate with the authorities.

By 1976, this repression was softened considerably thanks to publicity and scrutiny by numerous international organizations and foreign newspapers. In 1976, Jimmy Carter was elected President of the United States and he raised the issue of human rights in Iran as well as in the Soviet Union. Overnight prison conditions changed. Inmates dubbed this the dawn of jimmykrasy.

SAVAK was closed down shortly before the overthrow of the monarchy and the coming to power of Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini in the February 1979 Iranian Revolution. Following the departure of the Shah in January 1979, SAVAK's 3,000+ central staff and its agents were targeted for reprisals; almost all of them that were in Iran at the time of the Iranian Revolution were hunted down and executed, only a few, those who were outside of Iran are believed to have survived.

SAVAK was replaced by the “much larger” [38] SAVAMA, Sazman-e Ettela’at va Amniat-e Melli-e Iran, also known as the Ministry of Intelligence and National Security of Iran.

According to author Charles Kurzman, SAVAK was never dismantled but rather changed its name and leadership and continued on with the same codes of operation, and a relatively unchanged staff.

Hossein Fardoust, a former classmate of the Shah, was a deputy director of SAVAK until he was appointed head of the Imperial Inspectorate, also known as the Special Intelligence Bureau, to watch over high-level government officials, including SAVAK directors. Fardoust later is rumoured to have become director of SAVAMA, the post-revolution incarnation of the original SAVAK organization.
After the victory of the Islamic revolution, a museum was opened in the former Towhid Prison in central Tehran called ‘Ebrat’. The museum displays and exhibits the documented atrocities of SAVAK.

**White Revolution**

The Iranian government restored diplomatic relations with Britain in December 1953, and a new oil agreement was concluded in the following year. The Shah, fearing both Soviet influence and internal opposition, sought to bolster his regime by edging closer to Britain and the United States. In the Cold War atmosphere, relations with the Soviet Union were correct but not cordial. Internally, a period of political repression followed the overthrow of Mohammad Mosaddeq, as the shah concentrated power in his own hands. He banned or suppressed the Tudeh, the National Front, and other parties, muzzled the press, and strengthened the secret police, SAVAK. The Shah appointed Hossein Ala to replace Zahedi as prime minister in April 1955 and thereafter named a succession of prime ministers who were willing to do his bidding.

When martial law, which had been instituted in August 1953 after the coup, ended in 1957, the Shah ordered two of his senior officials to form a majority party and a loyal opposition as the basis for a two-party system. These became known as the Melliyun and the Mardom parties. These officially sanctioned parties did not satisfy demands for wider political representation, however. During Majles elections in 1960, contested primarily by the Melliyun and the Mardom parties, charges of widespread fraud could not be suppressed, and the Shah was forced to cancel the elections. Jafar Sharif-Emami, a staunch loyalist, became prime minister. After renewed and more strictly controlled elections, the Majlis convened in February 1961. But as economic conditions worsened and political unrest grew, the Sharif-Emami government fell in May 1961.

The Shah named Ali Amini, a wealthy landlord and senior civil servant, as prime minister. Amini was known as an advocate of reform. He received a mandate from the Shah to dissolve parliament and rule for six months by cabinet decree. Amini loosened controls on the press, permitted
the National Front and other political parties to resume activity, and ordered the arrest of a number of former senior officials on charges of corruption.

The Amini government, however, was beset by numerous problems. In addition, the prime minister acted in an independent manner, and the Shah and senior military and civilian officials close to the court resented this challenge to royal authority. Amini was unable to meet a large budget deficit; the Shah refused to cut the military budget, and the United States, which had previously supported Amini, refused further aid. As a result, Amini resigned in July 1962.

He was replaced by Asadollah Alam, one of Shah’s close confidants. Building on the credit earned in the countryside and in urban areas by the land distribution program, the Shah in January 1963 submitted six measures to a national referendum. In addition to land reform, these measures included profit-sharing for industrial workers in private sector enterprises, nationalization of forests and pastureland, sale of government factories to finance land reform, amendment of the electoral law to give more representation on supervisory councils to workers and farmers, and establishment of a Literacy Corps to allow young men to satisfy their military service requirement by working as village literacy teachers. The Shah described the package as his White Revolution, and when the referendum votes were counted, the government announced a 99% majority in favour of the program. In addition to these other reforms, the Shah announced in February that he was extending the right to vote to women.

The White Revolution consisted of 19 elements that were introduced over a period of 15 years, with the first 6 introduced in 1962 and put to a national referendum on January 26, 1963.

1. **Land Reforms Program and Abolishing "Feudalism"**: The government bought the land from the feudal land lords at what was considered to be a fair price and sold it to the peasants at 30% below the market value, with the loan being payable over 25 years at very low interest rates. This made it possible for 1.5 million peasant families, who had once been little more than slaves, to own the lands that they had been cultivating all their lives. Given that the average size of
a peasant family was 5, the land reforms program brought freedom to approximately 9 million people, or 40% of Iran’s population.

2. **Nationalization of Forests and Pasturelands**: Many measures were introduced, not only to protect the national resources and stop the destruction of forests and pasturelands, but also to further develop and cultivate them. More than 9 million trees were planted in 26 regions, creating 70,000 acres (280 km²) of "green belts" around cities and on the borders of the major highways.

3. **Privatization of the Government Owned Enterprises**, selling shares in manufacturing plants and factories to the public and the old feudal lords, thus creating a whole new class of factory owners who could now help to industrialize the country.

4. **Profit Sharing** for industrial workers in private sector enterprises, giving the factory workers and employees 20% share of the net profits of the places where they worked and securing bonuses based on higher productivity or reductions in costs.

5. **Extending the Right to Vote to Women**, who previously did not enjoy suffrage. This measure was criticized by some of the clergy.

6. **Formation of the Literacy Corps**, so that those who had a high school diploma and were required to serve their country as soldiers could do so by fighting illiteracy in the villages. In 1963 approximately 2/3 of the population was illiterate, with 1/3 found mainly in the capital city of Tehran.

7. **Formation of the Health Corps** to extend public health care throughout the villages and rural regions of Iran. In 3 years, almost 4,500 medical groups were trained; nearly 10 million cases were treated by the Corps.

8. **Formation of the Reconstruction and Development Corps** to teach the villagers the modern methods and techniques of farming and keeping livestock. Agricultural production between 1964 and 1970 increased by 80% in tonnage and 67% in value.

9. **Formation of the Houses of Equity** where 5 village elders would be elected by the villagers, for a period of 3 years, to act as arbitrators in order to help settle minor offences and disputes. By 1977 there were 10,358 Houses of Equity serving over 10 million people living in over 19,000 villages across the country.

10. **Nationalization of all Water Resources**, introduction of projects and policies in order to conserve and benefit from Iran's limited water resources. Many dams were constructed and five more were under construction in 1978. It was as a result of these measures that the area of land under irrigation increased from 2 million acres (8,000 km²), in 1968, to 5.6 million in 1977.

11. **Urban and Rural Modernization and Reconstruction** with the help of the Reconstruction and Development Corps. Building of public baths, schools and libraries; installing water pumps and power generators for running water and electricity.
12. **Didactic Reforms** that improved the quality of education by diversifying the curriculum in order to adapt to the necessities of life in the modern world.

13. **Workers' Right to Own Shares in the Industrial Complexes** where they worked by turning industrial units, with 5 years history and over, into public companies, where up to 99% of the shares in the state-owned enterprises and 49% of the shares of the private companies would be offered for sale to the workers of the establishment at first and then to the general public.

14. **Price Stabilization** and campaign against unreasonable profiteering (1975). Owners of factories and large chain stores were heavily fined, with some being imprisoned and other's licenses being revoked. Sanctions were imposed on multi-national foreign companies and tons of merchandise stored for speculative purposes were confiscated and sold to consumers at fixed prices.

15. **Free and Compulsory Education** and a daily free meal for all children from kindergarten to 14 years of age. In 1978, 25% of Iranians were enrolled in public schools alone. In that same year there were 185,000 students of both sexes studying in Iran's universities. In addition to the above there were over 100,000 students pursuing their studies abroad, of which 50,000 were enrolled in colleges and universities in the United States.

16. **Free Food for Needy Mothers** and for all newborn babies up to the age of two.

17. **Introduction of Social Security and National Insurance** for all Iranians. The National Insurance system provided for up to 100% of the wages during retirement.

18. **Stable and Reasonable Cost of Renting or Buying of Residential Properties** (1977). Controls were placed on land prices and various forms of land speculation.

19. **Introduction of Measures to Fight against Corruption** within the bureaucracy. The Imperial Inspection Commission was founded, consisting of representatives from administrative bodies and people of proven integrity.

The White Revolution received most of its criticism from two main groups: the clergy, and the landlords. The landlords were angry about the land reforms because their land was bought by the government and then sold in smaller plots to the citizenry at a lower price. They also did not appreciate the government undercutting their authority when it came to dealing with peasants or land laborers.

The powerful Shi'ah clergy were also angered at the reforms that removed much of their traditional powers in the realms of education and family law, as well as lessening their previously strong influence in the rural areas. A "large percentage of the upper echelon of the clergy came from landowning families" deeply affected by the reform and much absentee
rent income went directly to the clergy and their institutions. The rents from an estimated 10,000 villages whose rents helped finance the clerical establishment were eligible for redistribution.

The group, or more appropriately, the man who most openly opposed the White Revolution and the Shah himself was Ruhollah Khomeini. Although the clergy in Iran were not happy about many aspects of the White Revolution, such as granting suffrage to women, and the secular local election bill as well as land reforms, the clergy as a whole were not actively protesting. Khomeini, on the other hand, seemed to undergo a serious change of thought from the traditional role and practices of Shi’i clergy, and actively spoke out against the new reforms and the Shah. Khomeini’s famous speech at Feyziyeh School in June 1963 spoke out against the Shah’s brutality towards student protests, and for the first time, it was a speech attacking the Shah as a person. This speech did lead to Khomeini’s exile, but being outside of Iran did not stop Khomeini’s protests, nor did it weaken his influence inside Iran. Khomeini also attacked provisions of the reforms that would allow members of Iran's non-Muslim minority to be elected or appointed to local offices:

I have repeatedly pointed out that the government has evil intentions and is opposed to the ordinances of Islam. ... The Ministry of Justice has made clear its opposition to the ordinances of Islam by various measures like the abolition of the requirement that judges is Muslim and male; henceforth, Jews, Christians, and the enemies of Islam and the Muslims are to decide on affairs concerning the honor and person of the Muslims.\textsuperscript{39}
Ruhollah Moosavi Khomeini

Ruhollah Moosavi Khomeini was an Iranian Ayatollah, revolutionary, politician, the founder of the Islamic Republic of Iran and the leader of the 1979 Iranian Revolution which saw the overthrow of the Pahlavi monarchy and Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, the Shah of Iran. Following the revolution, Khomeini became the country’s Supreme Leader, a position created in the constitution of the Islamic Republic as the highest-ranking political and religious authority of the nation, which he held until his death. He was succeeded by Ali Khamenei.

Khomeini was a Mujtahid or faqih (an expert in Islamic law) and author of more than 40 books, but he is primarily known for his political activities. He spent more than 15 years in exile for his opposition to the last Shah. In his writings and preachings he expanded the theory of velayat-e faqih, the guardianship of the jurisconsult (clerical authority), to include theocratic political rule by Islamic jurists. This principle was appended to the new Iranian constitution after being put to a referendum.

Khomeini was a prolific writer and speaker (200 of his books are online) who authored commentaries on the Qur'an, on Islamic jurisprudence, the roots of Islamic law, and Islamic traditions. He also released books about philosophy, Gnosticism, poetry, literature, government and politics. Some of his books:


2. *Forty Hadith* (Forty Traditions)

3. *Adab as Salat* (The Disciplines of Prayers)

4. *Jihade Akbar* (The Greater Struggle)

5. *Tahrir al-Wasilah*

In 1979, Ayatollah Khomeini created the *Basij Mostazafan*, a voluntary mass movement of mainly young people. When the Iran–Iraq war
started in 1980, Khomeini issued a Jihad fatwa and these were incorporated into the Iranian military. He was named Man of the Year in 1979 by American news magazine TIME for his international influence, and has been described as the “virtual face of Islam in Western popular culture” \[40\] where he remains a highly controversial figure. He was known for his support of those who took hostage in the Iranian hostage crisis, and for referring to the US government as the ‘Great Satan’. Khomeini also called the USSR the Lesser Satan” and said that Iran should support neither.

Khomeini held the title of Grand Ayatollah and is officially known as Imam Khomeini inside Iran and by his supporters internationally; he is generally referred to as Ayatollah Khomeini by others. From the beginning of his rule, Khomeini attempted to establish good relations between Sunnis and Shias.

Iran's course of economic development floundered under Khomeini's rule, and his pursuit of victory in the Iran-Iraq war ultimately proved futile. In 1982, there was an attempted military coup against Khomeini. Khomeini for a long time suffered from several kinds of cancer and had several heart attacks. He died of intestinal cancer and a heart attack in June 1989. Khomeini's gold-domed tomb in Tehran's Behesht-e Zahra' cemetery has since become a shrine for his supporters. In 2009, a suicide bomber attacked the Mausoleum of Khomeini. After the death of Ruhollah Khomeini, Ali Khamenei became the Supreme Leader of Iran in 1989. There have been rifts between Ali Khamenei and Ruhollah Khomeini's family.

While Khomeini has often been described as a traditional cleric, he was a major innovator in Iran due to both his political theory and his religious-oriented populist strategy. Ayatollah Khomeini said, “Those intellectuals who say that the clergy should leave politics and go back to the mosque speak on behalf of Satan.”\[41\] Ruhollah Khomeini is legally considered "inviolable" in Iran, and people are regularly punished for insulting him.

On 26 October 1964, Khomeini denounced both the Shah and the United States. This time it was in response to the capitulations or diplomatic immunity granted by the Shah to American military personnel in
Iran. The famous capitulation law (or status-of-forces agreement) would allow members of the U.S. armed forces in Iran to be tried in their own military courts. Khomeini was arrested in November 1964 and held for half a year. Upon his release, he was brought before Prime Minister Hasan Ali Mansur, who tried to convince Khomeini that he should apologize and drop his opposition to the government. Khomeini refused. In fury, Mansur slapped Khomeini’s face. Two weeks later, Mansur was assassinated on his way to parliament. Four members of the Fadayan-e Islam were later executed for the murder.

Khomeini was not allowed to return to Iran during the Shah’s reign (as he had been in exile). On 17 January 1979, the Shah left the country (ostensibly ‘on vacation’), never to return. Two weeks later, on Thursday, 1 February 1979, Khomeini returned in triumph to Iran, welcomed by a joyous crowd estimated (by BBC) to be of up to five million people. On his chartered flight back to Tehran 120 journalists accompanied him, including three women. One of the journalists, Peter Jennings, asked: “Ayatollah, would you be so kind as to tell us how you feel about being back in Iran?”[42] Khomeini answered via his aide Sadegh Ghotbzadeh: ‘Hichi’ (Nothing).[43] This statement—much discussed at the time and since—was considered by some reflective of his mystical beliefs and non-attachment to ego. Others considered it a warning to Iranians who hoped he would be a "mainstream nationalist leader" that they were in for disappointment. To others; it was a reflection of an unfeeling leader incapable or unconcerned with understanding the thoughts, beliefs, or the needs of the Iranian populace.

Although revolutionaries were now in charge and Khomeini was their leader, some opposition groups claim that several secular and religious groups were unaware of Khomeini’s plan for Islamic government by wilayat al-faqih, which involved rule by a marja' Islamic cleric. They claim that this provisional constitution for the Islamic Republic did not include the post of supreme Islamic clerical ruler. The Islamic government was clearly defined by Khomeini in his book Hokumat-e Islami: Velayat-e faqih (Islamic Government: Governance of the Jurist) this was published while Khomeini was in exile in 1970, smuggled into Iran, and distributed to Khomeini’s supporters. This book included Khomeini’s notion of wilayat al-faqih
(Governance of the Jurist) as well as the reasoning and in his view, the necessity of it in running an Islamic state.

Khomeini and his supporters worked to suppress some former allies and rewrote the proposed constitution. Some newspapers were closed, and those protesting the closings were attacked. Opposition groups such as the National Democratic Front and Muslim People's Republican Party were attacked and finally banned. Through popular support; Khomeini supporters gained an overwhelming majority of the seats of the Assembly of Experts which revised the proposed constitution. The newly proposed constitution included an Islamic jurist Supreme Leader of the country, and a Council of Guardians to veto un-Islamic legislation and screen candidates for office, disqualifying those found un-Islamic.

In November 1979, the new constitution of the Islamic Republic was adopted by national referendum. Khomeini himself became instituted as the Supreme Leader (supreme jurist ruler), and officially became known as the Leader of the Revolution. On 4 February 1980, Abolhassan Banisadr was elected as the first president of Iran. Critics complain that Khomeini had gone back on his word to advice, rather than rule the country.

According to at least one scholar, politics in the Islamic Republic of Iran "are largely defined by attempts to claim Khomeini's legacy" and that "staying faithful to his ideology has been the litmus test for all political activity" there. Throughout his many writings and speeches, Khomeini's views on governance evolved. Originally declaring rule by monarchs or others permissible so long as sharia law was followed Khomeini later adamantely opposed monarchy, arguing that only rule by a leading Islamic jurist (a marja'), would insure Sharia was properly followed (wilayat al- faqih),[44] before finally insisting the ruling jurist need not be a leading one and Sharia rule could be overruled by that jurist if necessary to serve the interests of Islam and the divine government of the Islamic state.

Khomeini's concept of Guardianship of the Islamic Jurists (velayat-e faqih) did not win the support of the leading Iranian Shi'i clergy of the time. Towards the 1979 Revolution, many clerics gradually became disillusioned
with the rule of the Shah, although none came around to supporting Khomeini’s vision of a theocratic Islamic Republic.

**Iranian Revolution**

The Iranian Revolution (also known as the Islamic Revolution or the 1979 Revolution; Persian *Enghelabe Eslami*) refers to events involving the overthrow of the Pahlavi dynasty under Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi, who was supported by the United States and its eventual replacement with an Islamic republic under the Grand Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, the leader of the revolution, supported by various leftist and Islamic organizations and Iranian student movements.

Demonstrations against the Shah commenced in October 1977, developing into a campaign of civil resistance that included both secular and religious elements and which intensified in January 1978. Between August and December 1978 strikes and demonstrations paralyzed the country. The Shah left Iran for exile on January 16, 1979, as the last Persian monarch, leaving his duties to a regency council and an opposition-based prime minister. Ayatollah Khomeini was invited back to Iran by the government, and returned to Tehran to a greeting by several million Iranians. The royal reign collapsed shortly after on February 11 when guerrillas and rebel troops overwhelmed troops loyal to the Shah in armed street fighting, bringing Khomeini to official power. Iran voted by national referendum to become an Islamic Republic on April 1, 1979, and to approve a new theocratic-republican constitution whereby Khomeini became Supreme Leader of the country, in December 1979.

The revolution was unusual for the surprise it created throughout the world: it lacked many of the customary causes of revolution (defeat at war, a financial crisis, peasant rebellion, or disgruntled military), occurred in a nation that was enjoying relatively good material wealth and prosperity, produced profound change at great speed, was massively popular, resulted in the exile of many Iranians, and replaced a pro-Western semi-absolute monarchy with an anti-Western authoritarian theocracy based on the concept of Guardianship of the Islamic Jurists (or *velayat-e faqih*). It was a relatively non-violent revolution, and helped to redefine the meaning and
practice of modern revolutions (although there was violence in its aftermath).

Its outcome – an Islamic Republic “under the guidance of a religious scholar from Qom” – was, as one scholar put it, “clearly an occurrence that had to be explained”. [45]

Reasons advanced for the occurrence of the revolution and its populist, nationalist and, later, Shi’a Islamic character include a conservative backlash against the Westernizing and secularizing efforts of the Western-backed Shah, a liberal backlash to social injustice, a rise in expectations created by the 1973 oil revenue windfall and an overly ambitious economic program, anger over a short, sharp economic contraction in 1977–78, and other shortcomings of the previous regime.

The Shah's regime became increasingly oppressive, brutal, corrupt, and extravagant. It also suffered from basic functional failures that brought economic bottlenecks, shortages, and inflation. The Shah was perceived by many as beholden to — if not a puppet of — a non-Muslim Western power (the United States) whose culture was affecting that of Iran. At the same time, support for the Shah may have waned among Western politicians and media – especially under the administration of U.S. President Jimmy Carter – as a result of the Shah's support for OPEC petroleum price increases earlier in the decade. When President Carter enacted a human-rights policy which said countries guilty of human-rights violations would be deprived of American arms or aid, this helped give some Iranians the courage to post open letters and petitions in the hope that the repression by the government might subside.

That the revolution replaced the monarchy of Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi with Islamism and Khomeini, rather than with another leader and ideology, is credited in part to the spread of the Shia version of the Islamic revival that opposed Westernization and saw Ayatollah Khomeini as following in the footsteps of the Shi’a Imam Husayn ibn Ali and the Shah in the role of Husayn’s foe, the hated tyrant Yazid I. Other factors include the underestimation of Khomeini’s Islamist movement by both the Shah’s reign – who considered them a minor threat compared to the Marxists and
Islamic socialists – and by the secularist, opponents of the government – who thought the Khomeinists could be sidelined.

Background and causes of the Iranian Revolution:

- Tobacco Protest
- Persian Constitutional Revolution
- 1953 Iranian coup d'état
- Rise of Ayatollah Khomeini
- Ideology of the Iranian Revolution
- Opposition groups and organizations

The most important bodies of the revolution were the Revolutionary Council, the Revolutionary Guards, Revolutionary Tribunals, Islamic Republican Party, and Revolutionary Committees (komitehs).

While the moderate Bazargan and his government (temporarily) reassured the middle class, it became apparent they did not have power over the Khomeinist revolutionary bodies, particularly the Revolutionary Council (the "real power" in the revolutionary state), and later the Islamic Republican Party. Inevitably, the overlapping authority of the Revolutionary Council (which had the power to pass laws) and Bazargan's government was a source of conflict, despite the fact that both had been approved by and/or put in place by Khomeini.

This conflict lasted only a few months however. The provisional government fell shortly after American Embassy officials were taken hostage on 4 November 1979. Bazargan's resignation was received by Khomeini without complaint, saying “Mr. Bazargan ... was a little tired and preferred to stay on the sidelines for a while.” Khomeini later described his appointment of Bazargan as a “mistake.”[46]
The Revolutionary Guard, or *Pasdaran-e Enqelab*, was established by Khomeini on May 5, 1979, as a counterweight both to the armed groups of the left, and to the Shah's military. The guard eventually grew into a full-scale military force, becoming “the strongest institution of the revolution.”[47]

![Flag of the Pahlavi dynasty before the 1979 Revolution](image)

**Islamic Republic of Iran**

One of the most dramatic changes in government in Iran's history was seen with the 1979 Iranian Revolution where Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi was overthrown and replaced by Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini. Autocratic monarchy was replaced by an Islamic Republic based on the principle of rule by Islamic jurists, (or "*Velayat-e faqih*"), where clerics serve as head of state and in many powerful governmental roles. A pro-Western, pro-American foreign policy was exchanged for one of "neither east nor west", said to rest on the three "pillars" of mandatory veil (*hijab*) for women, and opposition to the United States and Israel. A rapidly modernizing, capitalist economy was replaced by populist and Islamic economic and cultural policies.

The leader of the revolution and founder of the Islamic Republic, Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, was Iran's supreme leader until his death in 1989. He was followed by Ali Khamenei.

The Islamic Republic of Iran is an Islamic theocracy headed by a Supreme Leader. Its constitution was approved in 1979 and amended in 1989. Jaafari (Usuli) school of thought is the official religion. It has an elected president and elected governmental bodies at the national,
provincial and local levels for which all males and females from the age of 18 on up may vote, which are supervised by theocratic bodies, particularly the Council of Guardians which had veto power over who can run for parliament (or Islamic Consultative Assembly) and whether its bills can become law. Nonetheless the elected organs have more power than equivalent ones in the Shah's government.

Islamic Republic of Iran began with the Iranian Revolution. The first major demonstrations to overthrow Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi began in January 1978. The new theocratic Constitution — whereby Khomeini became Supreme Leader of the country — was approved in December 1979. In between, the Shah fled Iran in January 1979 after strikes and demonstrations paralyzed the country, and on February 1, 1979 Ayatollah Khomeini returned to Tehran to a greeting by several million Iranians. The final collapse of the Pahlavi dynasty occurred shortly after on February 11 when Iran's military declared itself "neutral" after guerrillas and rebel troops overwhelmed troops loyal to the Shah in armed street fighting. Iran officially became an Islamic Republic on April 1, 1979 when Iranians overwhelmingly approved a national referendum to make it so.

The first draft of the constitution for the Islamic Republic contained a conventional president and parliament but its only theocratic element was a Guardian Council to veto unIslamic legislation. However, in the summer of 1979 and Assembly of Experts for Constitution, dominated by Khomeini supporters, was elected. Their new draft gave the guardians much more power and added a powerful post of guardian jurist ruler intended for Khomeini. The new constitution was opposed by non-theocratic groups, both secular and Islamic, and set for approval by referendum in December 1979.

After the Iranian Revolution of 1979 and referendum to create the Islamic Republic on March 29 and 30, the new government needed to craft a new constitution. Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, ordered an election for the Assembly of Experts, the body tasked with writing the constitution. The assembly presented the constitution on October 24, 1979, and Supreme Leader Ruhollah Khomeini and Prime Minister Mehdi Bazargan approved it. This was also approved in December 1979 constitutional referendum.
The 1979 Constitution designated the Supreme Leader as the head of state and the President and Prime Minister as the heads of government. The post of Prime Minister was abolished in 1989.

The first Iranian presidential election was held on January 25, 1980 and resulted in the election of Abulhassan Banisadr with 76% of the votes. Banisadr was impeached on June 22, 1981 by Parliament. Until the early election on July 24, 1981, the duties of the President were undertaken by the Provisional Presidential Council. Mohammad-Ali Rajai was elected President on July 24, 1981 and took office on August 2. Rajai remained in office for less than one month, with both he and his prime minister being assassinated on August 30, 1981. Once again, a Provisional Presidential Council filled the office until October 13, 1981 when Ali Khamenei was elected president.

Ali Khamenei, Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, Mohammad Khatami and Mahmoud Ahmadinejad were each elected president for two terms. Hassan Rouhani is the current president, being elected in June 2013 presidential election.
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