

SOURCES OF POLITICAL INSTABILITY AND STABILITY

IN IRAN, 1779-1979

To the Graduate Council:

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December 1973

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A Thesis
Presented for the
Master of Arts
Degree
The University of Tennessee

Ahmad Pishva

December 1975

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The author is grateful to Dr. Gill C. Evans for his invaluable guidance and his very constructive suggestions in the preparation of this thesis.

The author expresses his appreciation to Dr. T. Alexander Smith and Dr. Harry M. Lindquist for the academic encouragement which they have provided throughout the author's undergraduate and graduate careers.

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to define and examine the main sources of political instability and stability which existed in Iran between 1779 and 1973. The magnitude of the political, social, and economic changes in Iran during this period fostered an atmosphere in which the elements of both instability and stability prevailed.

The study dealt with four distinct political periods. The first period examined was that of the Qajar Dynasty (1779-1925). The second period dealt with was the modernization of Iran under Reza Shah (1926-1941). The third period discussed was the early segment of the reign of Mohammad Reza Shah (1941-1953). The fourth period covered was the strengthened rule of Mohammad Reza Shah (1953-1973). The concluding segment of this study summarized the principal sources of political instability and stability in Iran which prevailed during the aforementioned periods. The conclusion also examined the theory of leadership in relation to the Shah of Iran.

It was found that all of the political periods examined in this study exhibited a combination of the elements of political instability and stability, with the exception of the period between 1963 and 1973, which was a truly stable period.

It was the conclusion of this thesis that the period between 1963 and 1973 was the only period in which signs of permanent political stability were exhibited. The stabilization of the political arena in this period was achieved as a result of the viable leadership of Mohammad Reza Shah, and his implementation of the reforms of the "White Revolution."

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INTRODUCTION

This thesis will define and analyze the principal sources of political instability and stability which prevailed during the various periods of Iranian political history from 1779 to 1973. In defining political stability, it is appropriate to examine the concept within each distinct political setting, for it would be impractical to give a general definition which would apply to all countries. In the case of Iran, the lack of one or more of the following characteristics resulted in a certain degree of political instability: viable leadership to which the majority of the population defers, economic solvency, internal security, and internationally respected sovereignty. On the other hand, the presence of a combination of these traits created a degree of stability.

The thesis will be divided into four main chapters and a concluding chapter. The first chapter will cover the period from 1779 to 1925, which encompasses the rise and fall of the Qajar Dynasty and the establishment of the Pahlavi Dynasty. The second chapter will deal with the period from 1926 to 1941, focusing on the modernization of the country under Reza Shah. The effects of World War II upon Iran and the events which led to the abdication of Reza Shah

will be discussed in the latter part of this chapter. The third chapter will concentrate on the post-World War II period from 1941 to 1953. This chapter will discuss the continued occupation of Iran by the Allied forces, the separatist movements in the country, the rise and fall of Prime Minister Mohammad Mossadegh, and the reassertion of the nation's support for Mohammad Reza Shah. The fourth chapter will focus on the rule of Mohammad Reza Shah from 1953 to 1973. The first part of this chapter will discuss the ways by which the Shah strengthened his rule between 1953 and 1962. The second part of the chapter will present the decade of the "White Revolution," 1963-1973, concentrating on the reforms referred to as the "White Revolution" or "The Revolution of the Shah and the People," and their effects upon the political, social, and economic structures of Iran. The concluding chapter will first summarize the sources of instability and those of stability which prevailed in Iran during the periods discussed in the thesis. The major part of the conclusion will be devoted to the discussion of leadership as applied to the present leader of Iran.

CHAPTER I

THE RISE AND FALL OF THE QAJAR DYNASTY, 1779-1925

The Qajars were a Turkish tribe whose campaigns of conquest emanated from the southeastern sector of the Caspian Sea, and culminated in the conquest of the Persian Empire. The Qajar Dynasty was established as the ruling family of Iran by Aga Mohammad Khan in 1779. The first Qajar rulers employed force and terror in establishing control over the country. Moreover, the founders of the Qajar Dynasty were determined to institute a strong central government based upon an absolute monarchy as a central force capable of maintaining control throughout Iran. The early Qajar rulers established the capital in the centrally located city of Tehran, for it provided access to the other regions of the country. Along with their initial determination to establish a strong central government and exercise effective control over the country, the founders of the Qajar Dynasty proposed other goals, among them defining the boundaries of Iran, requiring all regions of Iran to finance the central capital, employing more foreign advisors, and maintaining the clergy as intermediaries between the Qajar Throne and the

people, thereby gaining support for the Throne, because the people respected the advice and authority of the clergy.¹

In the early years of the Qajar period, the regime efficiently pursued these goals. With the passage of time the Qajar rulers weakened, for, by the beginning of the third regime, that of Mohammad Shah (who reigned 1834-1848), the rule of the Qajars had begun to decline. Following the initial reign of terror of the founders of the Qajar Dynasty, the strength of the central government ebbed, and the country reverted to autonomous regions ruled by regional chiefs.

Although the founders of the Qajar Dynasty had acted to establish a strong central government in Iran, subsequent Qajar regimes were unable to maintain an effective rule over Iran; thus, the Qajar Dynasty suffered a progressive deterioration. In this regard, an analysis of the factors contributing to the progressive decline of the Qajar Dynasty, particularly from the latter part of the nineteenth century onward, is appropriate, for such a review will explain the conditions which permitted the rise to power of Reza Khan and the establishment of the Pahlavi Dynasty.

The deterioration of the Qajar's ability to control and rule the country was related to the decay of the moral

¹Peter Avery, Modern Iran (London: Ernest Benn, 1965), pp. 26-27.

structure of the Throne, for the Qajar rulers became increasingly preoccupied with their own comfort and leisure. The financially depleted Throne began a practice of relying upon methods of acquiring personal revenue which were injurious to Iran, economically and politically. For example, the Qajar rulers sold concessions to foreign powers for unequal returns to Iran; that is, the Qajars sold the natural wealth of Iran, such as minerals and the fisheries of the Caspian Sea, to concessionaires for less than the value of the concession, and the royalties which Iran received were relatively small. The Qajars sold the concessions for unequal returns to Iran because they wanted funds for their own use and they were willing to make quick sales for ready payment by prospective concessionaires.²

While the deterioration of the Qajar administration was a continuing trend, by 1848 reforms were attempted by Mirza Taqi Khan, Amir-e Kabir (Great Amir), the Prime Minister under Naser al-Din Shah (the fourth Qajar king, who reigned 1848-1896). Mirza Taqi Khan attempted to suppress regional tribal revolts, to reorganize the armed forces, to restrain the influence of the clergy in politics, and to revive the strength of the Throne. In addition, Mirza Taqi Khan sought to reduce the interference by foreign legations,

²Ibid., p. 90.

particularly Britain and Russia.³ Due to his eagerness for reforms, and his prominence, Mirza Taqi Khan was envied by a number of the Shah's councilors who, in their envy, falsely reported that Mirza Taqi Khan intended to build up his own position and eventually eliminate the Shah. The suspicion aroused by the councilors caused Mirza Taqi Khan, Amir-e Kabir, to be dismissed in 1851, and in 1852 he was executed. Following the death of Mirza Taqi Khan reforms ceased. The strength of the Throne declined, while the Qajars increasingly relied upon foreign enterprise for revenue, thereby causing an increasing amount of damage to Iran, economically, because the natural wealth of Iran was being squandered in foreign concessions, and politically, because foreign interference in Iran weakened the country's independence.⁴

One of the factors contributing to the decline of the Qajar Dynasty was its inability to unify the nation, especially in terms of inspiring loyalty to the central government. The power of the central government waned, and as it did so, the various regions of the country ignored the authority of the central government and established their own rule under regional chiefs. During the declining era of the Qajars, the absence of an effective centralization of power increasingly injured the position of the Throne. While it

³Ibid., p. 51.

⁴Avery, Modern Iran, p. 67.

is true that the Qajars were unable to unify Iran, the apparent disunity of the country was characteristic of Iran, for Iran was composed of a plural society which lacked a true unifying force. The plural society of Iran consisted of a variety of ethnic and linguistic groups whose differences, in accord with regionalism and conflicting group interests, contributed to the disunity of the country. Thus, "disunity is a marked tendency in Iranian politics."⁵ Moreover, especially regarding Iran, "no national government can be regarded as stable in the absence of a reasonable degree of national unity."⁶ In the past, a sense of national unity arose in Iran only when there was an overwhelming issue which was felt throughout the entire country, or when a strong leader inspired a sense of national unity.

Another factor contributing to the decline of the Qajar administration was the expansive size of Iran, for this added to the disunity of the country and to the Qajar's difficulty in controlling the realm. The great size of the country as well as poor communications seriously limited the control which the central government was able to maintain over the provinces. Such conditions were conducive to tribal upheavals and raids, for the weakened central government was unable to control tribal activities.

⁵Ibid., p. 210.

⁶Joseph M. Upton, The History of Modern Iran (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1970), p. 35.

In essence, the Qajars were confronted with a realm in which a sense of unity would have been difficult to bring about due to the variety of ethnic and linguistic types, the expansive size of the country, and poor communications. Consequently, the sense of disunity prevailed throughout Iran. Moreover, the inability of the Qajar rulers to exert control over the various regions of the country, especially regions of tribal trouble, was a major factor contributing to internal insecurity.

Other factors contributing to the decline of the Qajar Dynasty were predominantly weaknesses related to the disorganization of the Qajar administration. The Qajars were not concerned with introducing proper administrative organization due to their own lack of knowledge of administrative matters and lack of interest in improving Iran. The Qajar administration was arbitrary, and administrative positions were occupied by Qajar family members who often flouted the authority of the Shah, at times by retaining revenue due to the Crown.⁷ Many of the Qajar family members regarded their positions as means of accumulating wealth, rather than as positions of responsibility to the central government and to the people. The Qajar administration was disorganized and functionally chaotic.

⁷Avery, Modern Iran, p. 24.

While administrative chaos was characteristic of the Qajar period, fear, suspicion, and secrecy prevailed in the Qajar Court and society. During the Qajar period the system of spy-police was instituted in the cities, and at times, village landlords and others were forced to act as informants.⁸ The people lived under conditions of oppression, and their economic and social conditions progressively worsened during the Qajar period.

The oppressed people turned to the clergy, who exerted influence over the people and political decisions. At times the clergy exerted influence upon the ruling class and the common people; for example, the 1820s was a period during which the clergy manipulated the emotions of the masses and influenced the decisions of the rulers.⁹ During the period 1848-1851, Mirza Taqi Khan, Amir-e Kabir, attempted to reduce the interference of the clergy in political matters; however, the execution of Mirza Taqi Khan allowed the clergy to resume their interference. While both the Qajar Court and the clergy were politically reactionary, from the 1850s onward there was a struggle for political influence between the two elements.

Another factor contributing to the weakness of the Qajar administration was the lack of a national unified

⁸Ibid., p. 112.

⁹Ibid., p. 44.

army. Considering the size of Iran and the inadequate communications, a national army was needed to control the provinces, especially to control the tribal groups. During the Qajar period there was no effective centralization of military power. The armed forces consisted of separate units: the regular army (Nizam), the Persian Cossack Brigade, the Gendarmerie, and the South Persian Rifles. In addition to being composed of separate entities, the armed units were also under different leadership; that is, the Persian Cossack Brigade was under Russian leadership, the Gendarmerie under Swedish officers, and the South Persian Rifles under British influence. Of the four units, only the Nizam, the regular army, was effectively an Iranian force. However, the Nizam unit was disorganized and ill-equipped, and the loyalty of its troops was unreliable.¹⁰ Mirza Taqi Khan, Amir-e Kabir, had attempted to reform the organization and supply of the armed forces, but the attempt was not successful, and little change was brought about in the organization and effectiveness of the armed forces. Moreover, despite attempted reforms in payment and supply of the armed units, during the Qajar period no attempts were made to organize a unified national army.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 79.

In view of the disunity prevalent during the Qajar period, the lack of a national army capable of maintaining nationwide control, intensified the internal insecurity in the country. In addition, the chaos resulting from the disorganized Qajar administration was an element of instability.

Of the various factors which contributed to the disintegration of the Qajar period, foreign intervention is often referred to as a major crippling element. In view of such an observation, the actual role of foreign powers in Qajar Iran must be analyzed in terms of the possible contribution of the foreign powers to instability and/or stability during the Qajar period.

Prior to the eighteenth century, Iran had been of interest to foreign states, mainly in terms of trade and travel. During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, Iran was of political interest primarily to France, Britain, and Russia. Western political interest in Iran had become apparent in 1807 with Napoleon's proposal that Iran join France against Britain in India.¹¹ With the reduction of France's political aspirations in Iran, Britain and Russia held prime interest in Iran. Britain's early interests in Iran lay in the use of Iran as a lifeline to India; however, Britain soon recognized the economic and political value of

¹¹William S. Hass, Iran (New York: Columbia University Press, 1946; rpt. New York: AMS Press, 1966), p. 144.

Iran itself. Russian interests toward Iran centered primarily around strategic concerns, economic interests, and warm water ports.¹² The interests of these two powers in Iran varied from time to time. Of major importance, however, is the fact that Britain and Russia were political and economic rivals vis-à-vis Iran, and the effects of this great power rivalry upon Iran ought to be considered.

In view of the fact that both Britain and Russia had interests in Iran, neither power could dare to establish overt control over Iran or to make Iran a colony without irritating the other power and chancing the outbreak of a war. Thus, it may be said that during the nineteenth century, a period of colonization in Asia and Africa, Iran's independence was maintained due to a balanced rivalry which existed between Britain and Russia. In this respect, at least, British and Russian operations in Iran may be viewed as beneficial to Iran's independent status.¹³

Britain and Russia competed for economic concessions as well as political privileges in Iran. The competition between them was possible because of the disorganization and

¹²Tareq Y. Ismael, Governments and Politics of the Contemporary Middle East (Homewood, Illinois: Dorsey Press, 1970), p. 155.

¹³Richard W. Cottam, Nationalism in Iran (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1964), p. 158.

decay of the Qajar administration. The Qajar rulers were concerned primarily with acquiring personal funds; therefore, borrowing from foreign powers and selling concessions provided ready funds for the Qajars to squander upon their personal pleasure and leisure. Indeed, it was not the British and Russian powers and concessionaires who brought about the deterioration of the conditions of Iran, politically and economically, during the Qajar period. On the contrary, the existing weakness and disintegrating conditions under the Qajar rulers allowed the foreign powers to step in and take advantage of Iran. During the Qajar period, the Qajar rulers proposed that allowing Europeans to explore Iran for prospective economic projects would bring wealth to the Iranians. The contracts granted for the concessions, however, exemplified the reckless shortsightedness of the Qajar rulers, for the concessions provided unequal returns for Iran. Moreover, the returns which Iran did receive were squandered by the Qajars.¹⁴ Unequal contract conditions were apparent in the oil concession granted to the British, the Caspian fishing concession granted to the Russians, and a tobacco concession granted to a British firm; indeed, the tobacco concession caused such riotous reactions from those

¹⁴T. Cuyler Young, "The Problem of Westernization in Modern Iran," Middle East Journal, II (January, 1948), 50.

in the Iranian tobacco industry, and from the Iranian public, that the concession was withdrawn.¹⁵

British and Russian interests involved various facets of Iran's economy, such as banks and trade, as well as the establishment of capitulation rights. Indeed, the system of capitulations, by which foreign nationals residing in Iran were immune from Iranian jurisdiction and were subject to the judiciary process of their respective nations through their consulates in Iran, gave the foreign powers an advantage, for they could easily acquit their nationals who had committed crimes in Iran. In addition, the practice slighted the integrity of Iran's sovereignty.¹⁶ The British and Russians were interested in controlling Iran's natural resources and the country's foreign trade. Indeed, as the Qajar rulers continued granting concessions, a greater portion of Iran's economic resources came under foreign control; however, the Qajars were unconcerned about the political and economic implications of their actions. The seriousness of the situation was exemplified by the fact that by 1906 Russia largely controlled, and received revenue from, Iran's customs administration, for this was granted to

¹⁵ Alessandro Bausani, The Persians, trans. J. B. Donne (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1971), p. 169.

¹⁶ Ismael, Governments and Politics of the Contemporary Middle East, p. 155.

Russia in return for a large loan which Russia had provided for Mozaffar al-Din Shah (fifth Qajar king, who reigned 1896-1907).¹⁷

In addition to dominating Iran's economic resources, the foreign powers possessed great influence in the political sphere, for Britain and Russia easily manipulated Iranians in strategic ministries, such that particular interests of the foreign powers were served. In this regard, Britons and Russians would offer compensation to ministers for assuring the adoption of policies which favored the respective interests of Britain and Russia. The nature of certain agreements also favored the interests of the foreign powers. For example, in the 1828 Treaty of Turkomanchai between Russia and Iran, Russia received all of the Caucasus; Iran surrendered its claim to Armenia, and the Araxes River was established as Iran's northwestern boundary with Russia; and the system of capitulations was forced upon Iran.¹⁸

Considering the preponderance of British and Russian influence in Iran by the end of the nineteenth century, it appeared that the sovereignty of Iran was weakening. Such a weakening of Iran's position, however, was the result of the

¹⁷Cottam, Nationalism in Iran, p. 161.

¹⁸Ismael, Governments and Politics of the Contemporary Middle East, p. 155.

internal decay of the Qajar administration. The foreign powers exerted pressure upon Iran and took advantage of the economic prospects in the country. The central issue, however, was that disorganization and disintegration in the Qajar administration, and the political chaos throughout Iran, allowed the foreign powers to exploit the economic resources and to accumulate concessions and privileges to the point that foreign influence predominated in the political and economic spheres during the late Qajar period.

The declining position of Qajar Iran disturbed groups of Iranian nationalists composed of intellectuals, merchants, and members of the clergy. These nationalists objected to the activities which were ruining Iran and enriching foreign powers. By the end of the nineteenth century, Iranian nationalism was on the rise. The nationalists were concerned about the unfavorable effects which the administrative disintegration and foreign intervention had upon the situation of their own group. For example, the clergy and merchants were adversely affected by the Qajar's granting concessions, such as that of granting state customs revenues to Russia, and the intellectuals were disturbed from an ideological viewpoint.¹⁹ More importantly, the intellectuals, merchants, and members of the clergy, as nationalists, also

¹⁹Cottam, Nationalism in Iran, p. 14.

held a common goal: the establishment of a constitutional monarchy by which they hoped to eliminate the absolutism and disorganization of the Qajar rulers. The nationalists reasoned that by curtailing the absolutism of the Qajar Throne, it would be possible to prohibit further foreign intervention.²⁰ This belief was held because it was the Qajar rulers who allowed the foreign powers to acquire such influence and interests in Iran. Furthermore, according to the nationalists, ridding the country of foreign intervention would allow the development of Iran for the benefit of Iranians.

By the beginning of the twentieth century, the constitutional movement was active. In their struggle for the granting of a constitution, the Iranian nationalists turned to Britain for support. Requesting such support from Britain did not conflict with the goals of the nationalists, for the request did not suggest that the nationalists were willing to approve of foreign intervention.²¹ Indeed, the Iranian nationalists sought British support because, to them, the British represented the personification of liberal democracy; therefore, it was logical to assume that the British would support the implementation of a liberal

²⁰J. C. Hurewitz, Middle East Politics (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1969), p. 268.

²¹Cottam, Nationalism in Iran, p. 162.

democratic ideology, along with the establishment of a constitutional monarchy in Iran.

The Iranian nationalists envisioned the British as being an "ideological messiah."²² Such a viewpoint was revealed in period propaganda, such as a statement made in 1901 in the liberal nationalist newspaper, Habl al-Matin:

Most of the statesmen of the world who have studied political science and have written books on the subject have concluded that the best form of government is one founded upon the same principles as is the government of England.²³

Just as the Iranian nationalists sought British support, they detested Russia, for Russia represented despotism. Furthermore, the nationalists believed that the Qajar Throne and Royal Court were under Russian influence. In essence, the distinction which the Iranian nationalists made between the British and Russian ideologies was an oversimplification, based upon the nationalists' naive belief that "liberal democracy was good and was personified by the British government; absolute monarchy was bad and was personified by Russia."²⁴

The oversimplified beliefs of the Iranian nationalists distorted their perception of British and Russian reactions

²²Cottam, Nationalism in Iran, pp. 162-63.

²³Habl al-Matin [n.p.], May 25, 1901, cited by Cottam, Nationalism in Iran, p. 162.

²⁴Cottam, Nationalism in Iran, p. 163.

to the constitutional movement in Iran. In this regard, it was naive of the Iranian nationalists to assume that Britain would support the constitutionalists simply on the basis of their mutual belief in the ideology of democracy. The British were not particularly concerned about the form of Iran's government; they were concerned, however, with Britain's national interests. During the period of the Iranian constitutional movement, the British regarded internal stability in Iran as important to Britain's national interest, for the British believed that internal stability in Iran was essential for safeguarding British political and economic interests in Iran. In this regard, as it appeared that the granting of a constitutional monarchy would foster internal stability in Iran, Britain favored the constitutional movement.

The Russians also favored the granting of a constitution in Iran. The Russians regarded such a move as one which would tend to bring about internal stability in Iran, and the Russians felt, as did the British, that internal stability in Iran was vital to the preservation of their political and economic interests in the country. Indeed, both the British and Russian legations recognized the danger which the disorganization of the Qajar Court presented to stability in Iran, and both legations favored the reforms promised by the implementation of a constitution. In this regard, the British and Russian Ministers urged the Shah to grant a

constitution.²⁵ Regarding the subject of the Iranian constitutional movement, the British and Russians may have differed in some respects, but they were "differences of degree and not of kind."²⁶

Despite obstacles which the nationalists had to overcome, a constitution was granted by Mozaffar al-Din Shah (fifth Qajar king, who reigned 1896-1907) on August 5, 1906. Among other provisions, the constitution provided for a national representative assembly (the Majlis), as well as a secular legal system and civil courts, under the Fundamental Law of 1906.²⁷

The mere granting of the constitution did not remedy the disintegrating conditions of the Qajar administration, however, as had been hoped by the Iranian nationalists, as well as the British and Russians. Indeed, opposition to the constitution continued on the part of the Qajar Court and other reactionaries. The Qajars did not support the constitution, nor did they intend to implement the promised reforms. Regarding Britain and Russia, their main concern was for internal stability to prevail in Iran, and the constant struggle between the Qajars and the nationalists

²⁵Ibid.

²⁶Ibid.

²⁷Amin Banani, The Modernization of Iran, 1921-1941 (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1961), p. 69.

perpetuated the unstable situation which Britain and Russia wished to settle in protecting their own interests in Iran.

At the same time, Britain and Russia were concerned with matters in Europe, especially Germany's activities during the first decade of the twentieth century. In order to attend to their European concerns, Britain and Russia decided to minimize their rivalry outside Europe. With this intention, Britain and Russia concluded an agreement in 1907, the Anglo-Russian Agreement, by which, without the consent of Iran, Iran was divided into spheres of influence. The northern section of Iran was to be under Russia's influence, the southern section under Britain's influence, and there was to be a buffer zone between the two sections.²⁸ An important aspect of the Anglo-Russian Agreement, one which limited Iran's autonomy, was that Britain and Russia were to maintain internal security in their respective spheres of influence, particularly in terms of tribal activities by suppressing tribal raids and revolts. In this regard, the two powers contributed to internal stability in their respective spheres of influence, which was important to the operation of their interests.²⁹

²⁸Bausani, The Persians, p. 171.

²⁹Cottam, Nationalism in Iran, p. 167.

The Anglo-Russian Agreement irritated the Iranian nationalists. The nationalists were not surprised by such an action by Russia, for they had always distrusted Russia. Britain's role in the Agreement, however, shattered the idealistic image which the Iranian nationalists had previously held toward Britain. The Iranian nationalists felt that, while democracy prevailed in Britain, the British acted hypocritically toward others. Moreover, the nationalists believed that Britain took part in the Agreement because the British were more concerned about relations with Russia than with the political structure of Iran. Thus, the Iranian nationalists replaced the myth of Britain as an "ideological messiah" with the belief that Britain was hypocritical.³⁰ Britain's purpose, however, had not been to support any given ideology, but to guard British interests and to contribute to stability in Iran. A representative of the British foreign office proclaimed to Iranians that the Anglo-Russian Agreement would help guarantee Iran's independence, for it would eliminate Anglo-Russian rivalry in Iran; however, the Iranian nationalists feared that Britain and Russia would actually move to partition Iran.³¹

During the aftermath of the constitutional movement, Britain and Russia maintained their hope that the

³⁰Ibid., p. 165.

³¹Ibid., p. 164.

implementation of the constitution would bring about stability in Iran. However, Mohammad Ali Shah (sixth Qajar king, who reigned 1907-1909) did not support the constitution and the nationalists' struggle continued. In 1908 Mohammad Ali Shah initiated an attack on the Majlis building, and at that point, with the aid of the Persian Cossacks led by a Russian Colonel, the nationalists were temporarily defeated.³² According to Iranian nationalists, such action represented Russian interference against the nationalists, despite Russian claims of noninvolvement.

While Britain and Russia both favored the implementation of the constitution as a means of instituting greater internal stability in Iran, in April, 1909 Britain rejected Russia's suggestion that both powers exert greater pressure upon Mohammad Ali Shah in convincing him to comply with the constitution. Apparently the British believed that in the event that the Shah disregarded British and Russian pressures, the two powers would need to depose the Shah in order to maintain their position, an action which would in all probability, have prolonged the instability and injured British interests in Iran.³³ At that point, Britain reversed its position to support Mohammad Ali Shah. First, Britain

³²Hurewitz, Middle East Politics, p. 268.

³³Cottam, Nationalism in Iran, p. 170.

recognized that the goals of the nationalists conflicted with the aims of the traditionalists, causing continued struggling and instability; thus, Britain decided to back the traditionalists, hoping that the traditional elements would be able to bring about internal stability in Iran. Second, Britain resented the hostile and antagonistic attitudes of the Iranian nationalists toward Britain following the 1907 Anglo-Russian Agreement. Indeed, Britain regarded the antagonistic nationalists as extremists, and decided not to back them.³⁴

In searching for a stabilizing element, the British decided to support the traditionalists. This prospect was not feasible, however, because the existing Qajar administration was ill-equipped to bring about stability. Almost immediately Britain's strategy was reversed, and Russia and Britain arranged the deposition of Mohammad Ali Shah in the Tripartite Protocol of September 7, 1909. Mohammad Ali was exiled to Odessa, and his twelve year old son Ahmad became Shah (last Qajar king, who reigned, 1909-1925). In his exile, Mohammad Ali was to receive a sizable yearly pension, as stated in the Tripartite Protocol, provided that the ex-Shah did not engage in any political

³⁴Ibid., p. 180.

activities against Iran.³⁵ The disintegrating administration under Mohammad Ali did not have the organization or ability to bring about internal security in Iran. With the deposition of Mohammad Ali and the organization of a new government, as well as British and Russian dominance in their respective spheres of influence, the two powers hoped that internal stability would be brought about. In this regard, the most suitable government for Iran, according to Britain and Russia, would have been a government strong enough to provide internal security, but not strong enough to "challenge the privileged Anglo-Russian position"³⁶ in Iran. In 1911 Mohammad Ali managed to attack Tehran in an attempt to regain his position; however, he was defeated. Although Britain and Russia disclaimed any involvement with Mohammad Ali's attack, the Iranian nationalists regarded the incident as connected with Russian interference. Consequently, the nationalists felt that by defeating Mohammad Ali, they had asserted their position before Russia.³⁷

The Iranian nationalists were disheartened with the unreformed conditions of the postconstitutional period, for the constitutional revolution did not remedy Iran's problems,

³⁵Avery, Modern Iran, p. 140.

³⁶Cottam, Nationalism in Iran, p. 168.

³⁷*Ibid.*, p. 172.

nor did it bring the material progress which the nationalists believed was inherent in constitutional systems. The disillusioned nationalists blamed the foreign powers and the traditionalists in Iran, for the failure of the constitutional movement to solve the country's political, economic, and social problems. The nationalists believed that no reforms were being made in Iran because the country was controlled by Britain and Russia, as was evidenced by the preponderance of the foreign powers in their spheres of influence, as well as the obvious foreign intervention in political and economic matters in Tehran. Interestingly, the Iranian nationalists blamed the unreformed situation upon the inadequacy of the Western concepts which were introduced by the constitutional revolution; however, the nationalists did not take into consideration their own inadequate implementation of the Western ways.³⁸ Indeed, following the granting of the constitution, there was little improvement in government, due not so much to foreign interference, but to the ineffectiveness of the central government.

The nationalists, bitter toward British and Russian interference, were only concerned about ridding their country of the foreign powers, rather than devoting themselves to developing the organization and ability needed

³⁸Young, "The Problem of Westernization in Modern Iran," p. 51.

for the proper administration of Iran. British and Russian influence remained in Iran, due to the predominance of the two powers in their spheres of influence, as well as the use of strategic Iranians to foster British/Russian interests. Thus, the Iranian nationalists maintained their belief that Britain and Russia actually intended to colonize Iran. Regarding Britain's intentions, Britain's main concern was the maintenance of internal stability in Iran, for the operation of British concessions and privileges in Iran depended upon a stable situation in the country. Russia's intentions were basically the same as those of Britain; however, Russia maintained that, due to turbulence in northern Iran, Russia needed to retain troops in its sphere of influence in order to ensure internal security.³⁹ This action made Iranians suspicious about Russia's intentions toward Iran.

With the outbreak of World War I, the Iranians exhibited their bitter attitude toward British and Russian interference, for in both the British and Russian spheres of influence, the Iranian nationalists revealed their pro-German attitudes. Among government members in Tehran there was considerable pro-German support, which irritated Russia. Russian troops marched into Tehran. The Iranian government resigned and

³⁹Cottam, Nationalism in Iran, pp. 178-79.

was succeeded by governments which were easily manipulated by Britain and Russia.⁴⁰ British and Russian positions in Iran were such that Iran's declaration of neutrality was ignored and foreign military bases were established in Iran during World War I.

Anglo-Russian interference in the political and economic matters of Iran continued, for the weak administration of Iran permitted it, and the privileges and interests of the two foreign powers were maintained. The turning point was reached, however, with two developments regarding Russia and Britain. First, Russian policy toward Iran was altered by the Bolshevik Revolution, for in 1918 Soviet Russia renounced the concessions and privileges held in Iran by Tsarist Russia. Indeed, the Soviets proposed to have a new relationship with Iran, and discussions toward a Soviet-Persian agreement began by 1920.

Meanwhile, Britain's influence in Iran increased, and culminated in the Anglo-Persian Agreement of 1919.⁴¹ The weak central government of Iran accepted the Anglo-Persian Agreement, an action which provided the impetus for the revival of the nationalist movement, for the terms of the Anglo-Persian Agreement infuriated the Iranian nationalists.

⁴⁰Ibid., p. 179.

⁴¹Banani, The Modernization of Iran, 1921-1941, p. 35.

The Agreement stipulated that Iran's government services would be reorganized by British specialists; the Iranian army would be trained by British officers, a loan would be provided for Iran, and roads and railroads would be built.⁴² As such, the implementation of the Anglo-Persian Agreement would have made Iran a type of British protectorate, for the political, military, and economic life of Iran would have been overseen by Britain. In view of the acceptance of the Anglo-Persian Agreement, the political weakness of the Qajar administration was exemplified, as was the preponderance of Britain's influence in Iran.

Regarding the role of foreign powers in Iran during the Qajar period, the contribution of Britain and Russia to instability/stability during that period may be viewed from two angles. First, the two powers were eager for the institution of internal stability in Iran in order to safeguard their own political privileges and the smooth operation of their concessions in the country. The preponderance of their political and economic position in Iran, however, was a basis for agitation between the Qajar Court (which allowed the foreign powers to take advantage of Iran's economic resources), and the Iranian nationalists (who wanted to develop Iran for Iranians). In

⁴²Cottam, Nationalism in Iran, p. 18.

this sense, the foreign powers contributed to the continual struggle in Iran, and consequently, to the prevalence of internal instability.

Secondly, the initial rivalry between Britain and Russia provided for the maintenance of Iran's independence, for, not wishing to chance a war with the other power, neither Britain nor Russia would dare to colonize Iran. In another sense, Russia and Britain contributed to internal stability in Iran, following the 1907 Anglo-Russian Agreement, for Britain and Russia maintained internal security within their respective spheres of influence, which was necessary as a stabilizing element.

Regarding the position of foreign influence in Iran, the 1919 Anglo-Persian Agreement may be viewed as the main factor in reviving the resentment of the nationalists toward British interference in Iran. Indeed, if Iran were to regain its integrity, decisive action was needed at that point. If the nationalists allowed the disintegrated Qajar Throne to turn Iran over to a foreign power, in effect, the opportunity to restore the sovereignty of Iran might never be present again.

While the sting of the Anglo-Persian Agreement was sharp enough to revive the nationalists, in order to successfully rid the country of the decayed administration and foreign dominance, the movement needed a strong leader.

The man capable of fulfilling this calling was Reza Khan, an officer in the Persian Cossack Brigade, who was ashamed of the situation of his once proud country, and who was decidedly opposed to the Anglo-Persian Agreement. Reza Khan was dissatisfied with the absence of law and order, the declining power, effectiveness, and independence of the central government, and, as a devoted soldier, he was concerned about the military weakness of the country due to the absence of a unified national army. Moreover, Reza Khan and the other Iranian officers of the Persian Cossack Brigade resented the foreign domination of their country.⁴³

In this regard, Reza Khan first planned to rid the Persian Cossack Brigade of the Russian officers who still commanded the force. By 1920, Reza Khan had accomplished his plan, thus making the Brigade a truly Iranian force, and Reza Khan gained the command of the Brigade. At that point, Sayyed Zia al-Din Tabatabai, a nationalist journalist, was planning a coup d'état to eliminate the ineffective government, and Reza Khan was willing to provide the Brigade as the necessary force for a successful coup d'état. On February 21, 1921, Reza Khan led the Cossack Brigade into Tehran, met little resistance, and occupied the capital. A new government was formed, with Sayyed Zia as Prime Minister

⁴³Ramesh Sanghvi, Aryamehr: The Shah of Iran (New York: Stein and Day, 1968), p. 21.

and Reza Khan as Commander of the Armed Forces. The new government asserted its position by quickly, and significantly, nullifying the 1919 Anglo-Persian Agreement. Next, the new government signed a Soviet-Persian Agreement in which Soviet Russia, among other provisions, confirmed its repudiation of the privileges which had been held in Iran by Tsarist Russia.⁴⁴ These decisive moves clarified that Iran intended to maintain a position of equality with the foreign powers. In addition, they revealed that, internally, the control of Iran would be under the new government, while the Qajar Throne, which was not removed by the coup d'état, would be accorded only a nominal position.

Within a short time, the ambitions of Sayyed Zia and Reza Khan clashed. Most notable among their differences was Sayyed Zia's apparent receptiveness to British influence, especially regarding British influence over Iran's armed forces. Reza Khan, on the other hand, was determined to eliminate foreign interference, to develop Iran, and to make the country truly independent. In April, 1921, Sayyed Zia was discharged from the position of Prime Minister and exiled to Baghdad. At that point Reza Khan could have assumed the position of Prime Minister; however, he decided to accept the position of Minister of War, and to concentrate his

⁴⁴Avery, Modern Iran, p. 246.

efforts on one of his main concerns, namely bringing the tribal raids and revolts under control. At that early time, Reza Khan was regarded by many as the one person capable of establishing internal security in Iran.⁴⁵

Understandably, the goals and achievements of Reza Khan during the early 1920s, aided in his rise to power. Moreover, the policies of Reza Khan were needed by Iran at that time. His son, Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi, wrote of his father:

It seems that the era, the people, and the necessities of a nation demand that at a certain time the right man be found in a particular position: such a man as will profoundly affect the fate of a country and modify the course of history.⁴⁶

Indeed, Reza Khan had begun to bring about changes in Iran.

One of Reza Khan's early achievements was the establishment of a national army, which was vital to the security of Iran; moreover, many of Reza Khan's accomplishments were closely related to the successful organization of a unified national army. For example, Reza Khan was able to bring about his early achievements by establishing martial law, which made the Minister of War the

⁴⁵Donald N. Wilber, Contemporary Iran (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1963), p. 70.

⁴⁶Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi, Mission for My Country (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1960), p. 38.

chief authority in the country. During Reza Khan's rise, his suppression of tribal revolts, and his revival of governmental authority caused the British to realize that Reza Khan was the person capable of bringing about internal stability in Iran.⁴⁷

During Reza Khan's term as Minister of War, it was apparent that the organizational changes which were brought about were the result of Reza Khan's planning and action. Ahmad Shah (the last Qajar king), who had always been a powerless king, realized that his reign as Shah might soon be ending; thus, in October, 1923 he appointed Reza Khan as Prime Minister, and made the Crown Prince regent, and Ahmad Shah went to Europe, where he remained.⁴⁸

About the same time, in Turkey Mustafa Kemal and the nationalist movement that he led had declared Turkey a republic. This development interested Reza Khan and a number of reformist intellectuals in Iran, who discussed the possibility of dissolving the Dynasty and making Iran a republic. As the rumor of making Iran a republic spread, favorable as well as unfavorable reactions were voiced. The most audible protests came from the clergy who were afraid that such a change would do away with their privileged role

⁴⁷Avery, Modern Iran, pp. 259-60.

⁴⁸Ibid., p. 264.

under the monarchy. The abolition of the Caliphate by the Turkish Republic frightened the clergy further, for they feared that Iran would follow Turkey's example and become a secularized republic. Meanwhile, the rise in Reza Khan's popularity was matched by the intense decline in the popularity of the Qajars. Thus, on October 31, 1925, the Majlis deposed Ahmad Shah, ended the Qajar Dynasty, and placed the control of the provisional government under Reza Khan.

Discussions concerning the form of government to be established in Iran continued. In consideration of the clergy's strong protests against the establishment of a republic, Reza Khan consulted the high religious dignitaries, who, in their fear of possible secularization under a republic, advised Reza Khan that a republic would be contrary to Islam. In view of this belief, as well as the fact that Reza Khan had concluded that Iran should retain the monarchy, the discussion of establishing a republic ended. In December, 1925, the Constituent Assembly revised article 36 of the Supplement to the Constitution, and designated Reza Khan as the Shah of Iran by stating:

The Constitutional Monarchy of Iran is vested by the Constituent Assembly, on behalf of the nation, in the person of his Majesty, the Shahanshah

Reza Shah Pahlavi, and shall remain in his male progeny generation after generation.⁴⁹

Thus ended the disintegrated reign of the Qajar Dynasty in Iran. More importantly, with the establishment of the new Dynasty, the Pahlavi, came the beginning of a new era in Iran.

In summarizing the situation of Iran in terms of instability/stability during the Qajar period, it is important to note that the Qajars were incapable of providing a stabilizing force in Iran. First, the country was disunified, for throughout the expansive realm, the people felt more aligned to their respective ethnic group, tribe, or region than to the nation as a whole or its central institutions. Indeed, the disunity overlapped into insecurity, for the various tribes raided one another and pillaged the villages. The Qajars were unable to inspire loyalty to the central government, particularly because the Qajars were regarded as Turkish conquerors by the Iranians, who felt no loyalty to such rulers. The Qajars were further handicapped because they did not have a unified national army capable of controlling troublesome activities and exerting governmental authority throughout the provinces. Thus, the prevalent insecurity contributed to the instability

⁴⁹Iran, The Constitution of 1906 and Its Supplement (Tehran: [n.n.], [n.d.], p. 29, cited by Banani, The Modernization of Iran, 1921-1941, p. 43.

of the period. The Qajars remained on the Throne because there was no other force able to take over, and, because of the initial reign of terror of the founding Qajars, the Iranians feared the atrocities which the Qajar Throne was capable of performing.

A progressive decline took place within the Qajar Dynasty, particularly due to the administrative ineptitude of the Qajars, for they were not concerned with establishing an efficient administrative organization in Iran. Indeed, administrative-wise, the country was in chaos during the Qajar reign. In view of the political and economic chaos, the Qajars looked for other sources of revenue for themselves, for they were unable to manage the development of Iran's resources as a means of establishing national financial security. Consequently, the Qajars sold concessions in Iran to foreign powers, and received in return funds which they used for their own pleasure. Indeed, the Qajars were willing to sell Iran's valuable resources for returns which were not favorable to Iran; however, the Qajars were satisfied with funds that were sufficient for their personal use.

The interference of foreign powers, primarily Britain and Russia, became a major source of controversy in Iran, for groups of nationalists opposed the Qajars' policy of allowing foreign powers to take advantage of Iran, politically and economically. Iran was being sold, piece by piece, to

Britain and Russia, and the preponderance of the two powers in the country was overriding. In essence, the sovereignty of Iran was weakened and the nationalists feared that Britain and Russia might even partition Iran. By 1918 the interference of Russia seemed to be subsiding, for Soviet Russia renounced the privileges in Iran held by Tsarist Russia. Britain's influence increased, however, culminating in the 1919 Anglo-Persian Agreement. This action was intolerable to Iranian nationalists, who refused to accept the Qajars' allowing Iran to become a British protectorate. The Qajar administration was too weak to maintain internal stability in Iran, and they were unable, or unwilling, to guard the sovereignty of Iran before foreign powers. The nationalists, however, were unwilling to allow the Qajars to destroy Iran; therefore, the nationalists mobilized a coup d'état in 1921, and effectively took control of the country. Even this action was not enough, for the Qajars, although impotent, remained on the Throne, and the Qajars represented the ills brought upon Iran, for the Qajars and their supporters had allowed Iran's situation to disintegrate politically and economically. The ending of the Qajar Dynasty in October, 1925, was the ending of a deteriorated and unstable period in Iran's history. The establishment of the Pahlavi Dynasty in December, 1925, was the beginning of a new and promising era for Iran's future.

CHAPTER II

THE MODERNIZATION OF IRAN UNDER REZA SHAH, 1926-1941

On April 25, 1926, the formal coronation of Reza Shah Pahlavi took place, during which Reza Shah crowned himself, and his young son, Mohammad Reza was proclaimed Crown Prince. From then onward, Reza Shah's philosophy and goals of reforming the country became more apparent and increasingly implemented in various aspects of government and society. The overriding goal of Reza Shah was the reform and modernization of his country, such that Iran would be developed from within, and would become independent of foreign powers. The most outstanding aspects of Reza Shah's philosophy which made the reforms possible were secularization and nationalism. Though the nationalist spirit had existed in Iran from earlier times, Reza Shah was the first leader to unify the facets of Iranian nationalism into a single force; furthermore, Reza Shah's nationalism was driven by his pride in the pre-Islamic glory of Iran, and his belief that the Iranian people would achieve such glory again.¹

¹Ramesh Sanghvi, Aryamehr: The Shah of Iran (New York: Stein and Day, 1968), p. 50.

Reza Shah's nationalist ideal set forth the goal of ending Iran's dependence upon foreign states, as well as ending foreign interference in Iran. In the modernization of his country, however, Reza Shah realized that Iran needed to adopt certain aspects of Western technology and material progress; therefore, he planned to incorporate those aspects.² However, in order to obtain Western technology and material progress, Iran needed to rely on foreign advisors and technicians, and their presence allowed for renewed foreign interference in Iran. Therefore, in his determination to make Iran truly independent of foreign powers, Reza Shah made it clear that the foreign advisors and technicians were only assistants in the country. Reza Shah decided to use the foreign assistants only until Iranians had acquired the technical and administrative abilities to maintain a modernized country.

Reza Shah sought to modernize Iran through a vast series of reforms which he initiated during his reign. The first major reform initiated by Reza Shah was the establishment of a unified national army, for he viewed this as a prerequisite to the achievement of his other main goals. Reza Shah had started to reform the army while he was Minister of War, and

²Amin Banani, The Modernization of Iran, 1921-1941 (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1961), p. 49.

the maintenance of the army remained a priority project throughout his reign as Shah. Reza Shah corrected the inadequacies of the former system of separate armed units by uniting the forces under one national system, and by regulating supply and payment of the troops which had formerly been unorganized. Reza Shah realized that a modern national army would be needed in modernizing Iran; in this regard, modern training was needed for the army; thus, Western professionals were employed to train an officer corps, and a number of officer trainees were sent to Western military academies.³ In 1925, Reza Shah initiated the Military Conscription Law, which required a set number of years of service to the state by all males over twenty-one. One major effect of universal military service was to introduce young men from the tribes and rural areas to urban ways and to the nationalist plans of Reza Shah.⁴ The reformed military became important in Reza Shah's program of centralizing and unifying the country. The military provided the security needed, for, as a political and military element, Reza Shah's army was able to maintain the central government's authority throughout the country.⁵ Thus, in

³John Marlowe, Iran (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1963), p. 60.

⁴Banani, The Modernization of Iran, 1921-1941, p. 56.

⁵Ibid., p. 57.

time, the military became a stabilizing element in the country. In creating the unified national army, Reza Shah had disbanded the separate armed units and thereby eliminated the influence which Russia and Britain had exerted over particular armed units, namely, the Persian Cossack Brigade and the South Persian Rifles. With the establishment of the national army, Reza Shah turned his attention to the reform and modernization of other facets of political, economic and social life in Iran.

Following the establishment of a national army, Reza Shah attended to the reform of the civil administration. The reorganization of the civil administration at the local, provincial, and central government levels, was vital to the management of the country, and to reviving the country from the administrative chaos of the Qajar regimes. Administrative reforms were first initiated in 1922 (while the Qajars were still nominally on the Throne, but the nationalists were in control of the government), with the reorganization of the Civil Service. The new Civil Service required an entrance examination and specific qualifications, and regulated promotions and salaries. The revised Civil Service was an improvement over the former arbitrarily run system, for the reforms helped to reduce the inefficiency of the Civil Service and favoritism in employment. Other administrative revisions included the 1930 reform of the functions and

sources of revenue for the administration and municipal governments, with the stipulation that city revenue was for use on local projects.⁶ In addition, the impractical geographic and administrative divisions of the country were reorganized in 1937, providing for more orderly management of the country. Traditionally, the country had been divided into four large sections (ayalat-ha), which were subdivided into many small sections (valayat-ha). The reform provided a more manageable division, for it created ten main sections (ostan-ha) of the country, which were each divided into several smaller sections (shahrestan-ha), and each shahrestan was divided into a number of small sections (bakhsh-ha).⁷

Another aspect of reform concerned the conditions of political parties, for at that time, there were no real political parties with defined programs. There were small groups of Majlis (national representative assembly) deputies who held a common interest, but these were short term interest groups, not actual political parties.⁸ Reza Shah realized that in order to reach the people with his nationalist ideas, an organized political party would be needed; thus, Reza Shah helped to establish political parties

⁶Ibid., pp. 59-60.

⁷Ibid., p. 60.

⁸Peter Avery, Modern Iran (London: Ernest Benn, 1965), p. 271.

and designated several high governmental officials to direct them.

By 1927, there were four active political parties; however, they survived only several months. In 1939, however, the Society to Guide Public Opinion (Sazoman Parvarish-i-Afkar) was founded as a means of informing the people about the government's plans, gaining support for the government, and promoting nationalism. The Society to Guide Public Opinion had committees throughout the country which distributed materials and talked to the people about the government's plans. The Society told the people to become involved with the interests of the country. The Society promoted favorable public opinion toward the government and was successful in reaching the people with the ideals of reform and modernization.⁹ Familiarizing the people with the goals of reform facilitated the implementation of modernization, for the plans were made understandable, and hence more acceptable to the people. In this regard, the Society served a stabilizing function, by helping to reduce misunderstandings during the modernization period.

One major aspect of Reza Shah's program was the reform of the judicial system, which replaced the traditional system with modern judicial concepts. In this regard, the

⁹Donald N. Wilber, Contemporary Iran (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1963), p. 76.

main areas dealt with were the secularization of the Law, the creation of civil courts, and the abolition of capitulations. The reform of the traditional system of jurisdiction was vital in the modernization of Iran, for Iran's system of Law was that of the Shiite sect of Islam; consequently, the traditional legal system was dominated by the clergy. The reactionary clergy hindered the progress of Iran due to their rigid interpretation of Islamic dogma, which conflicted with modern trends and practices. Thus, Reza Shah's judicial reforms were motivated by two goals: first, to institute a modern and efficient legal system organized according to modern standards, and second, to weaken the powerful influence of the clergy.

Reducing the influence of the clergy in the judicial system was a difficult task. The Islamic system of Law was based upon the code of Holy Law (Shariat) in the Koran, which dealt with personal and community matters. The Shariat was considered to be Divine Revelations; consequently, religious scholars were required to interpret the codes and make legal decisions, and the clergy were, therefore, the traditional legal authorities. During the constitutional movement in Iran, even those members of the clergy who favored the introduction of a constitution nevertheless protected the position of the Shariat, and their own legal authority, by using their influence to include in the constitution a

provision stating that all new laws were to be in accord with Islam, and to be approved by the ulema (respected theologians).¹⁰ The position of the clergy was further protected by the Fundamental Law of 1906, for it stipulated that the authority of the clergy in legal matters was to be maintained. Although the constitutionalists attempted to reform the judicial system by creating a civil code during the latter part of the Qajar period, they were not successful in practice, due to the ineffectiveness of the government, the strong opposition of the clergy, and the lack of persons qualified to tend a modernized legal system.¹¹

In view of the predominant legal authority of the clergy, an effective modernization of the legal system would have been possible only under a strong government capable of defeating the religious opposition. Reza Shah possessed the strength and determination to modernize Iran's judicial system, particularly by dislodging the clergy from the legal arena, and by abolishing the system of capitulations. Defeating the clergy was difficult, in view of their influence and the justification of their legal authority in the constitution. Thus, in order to reduce the legal influence of the clergy, the government modified the

¹⁰Banani, The Modernization of Iran, 1921-1941, p. 70.

¹¹Ibid.

constitution such that the government was given "greater freedom in the rotation and removal of judges."¹² This action enabled the government to exert greater control over the personnel of the legal system, and hence to limit the role of the clergy in the system.

Reza Shah was increasingly successful in affecting legal reforms. For example, state courts, not shariat courts, were given the dominant position in legal authority, and in 1926, a new Penal Code further decreased the legal role of the Shariat. In 1927, a new Ministry of Justice was established with a number of European educated officials assuming positions formerly held by the clergy.¹³

One of the most important enactments of the period was the new Civil Code, for it was established to effectively break the influence of the Shariat courts, and to abolish the system of capitulations, which Reza Shah regarded as insulting to the sovereignty of Iran. In preparing the new Civil Code of Iran, a translation of the Civil Code of France supplied a modern system of jurisprudence. However, in religious matters, or those concerning personal status, such as marriage, divorce, and family life, a secularized version of the principles of the Shariat was used.¹⁴ In May, 1928, the first volume of the new Civil Code was

¹²Ibid., p. 76.

¹³Ibid., p. 70.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 71.

enacted. The new Civil Code modernized and secularized the legal system of Iran, thereby serving two main functions: first, breaking the influence of the clergy and Shariat courts in legal matters, and second, abolishing the system of capitulations, thus rendering foreign nationals in Iran subject to Iranian jurisdiction. Indeed, this served to assert Iran's position before foreign states.

The remnants of clerical influence in Iran's judicial system were removed in 1936, for an enactment of the Majlis required judges to have a degree from Tehran Faculty of Law, or a foreign university with at least three years of legal study.¹⁵ Since most of the ulema (theologians) did not hold these qualifications, the clergy was effectively removed from the legal arena. It must be noted that Reza Shah was determined to terminate the clergy's control of the legal system because the clergy's reactionary interpretation of the Islamic system of beliefs prevented the introduction of a modern legal system. Moreover, Iran needed a modern secularized judicial system to provide for the legal needs of modern day Iranians and to provide a basis upon which the system of capitulations could be abolished, for foreign powers had insisted that their nationals in Iran could not be subject to Iran's traditional Islamic legal

¹⁵Ibid., p. 73.

system. Thus, Reza Shah and his reformists were not opposed to religion, as such, but they were opposed to the interference of religious authorities in legal and political matters.

In this respect, Reza Shah had been successful in overcoming the strong influence of the clergy by approaching the matter from different angles; that is, he weakened the position of the clergy in several areas. Reza Shah's dislodgement of the clergy from the legal arena has been described above. A second area in which Reza Shah effectively weakened the position of the clergy was their financial situation. Reza Shah secularized the religious endowments (waqfs) which traditionally had provided the clergy with a considerable amount of land and wealth. Thus, the clergy lost the wealth and power formerly provided by the waqfs, and many clerics needed to obtain lay positions, or state aid.¹⁶ Reza Shah used the wealth of the secularized waqfs for reforming the educational system of Iran. The position of the clergy was also weakened by the modernization of the educational system, for the clergy had controlled the traditional system of education in Iran, but they were not qualified to maintain a position in the reformed system.

¹⁶William S. Hass, Iran (New York: Columbia University Press, 1946; rpt. New York: AMS Press, 1966), p. 157.

The reform of Iran's educational system was a vital area of Reza Shah's modernization program. Reza Shah realized that in order for the efforts toward modernization to be appreciated by the Iranians, the Iranian masses would have to be educated. The people needed the fundamentals of education in order to function in the modernized society. The situation of education in Iran was an obstacle, for the illiteracy rate was high, and the traditional system of education in the country was rudimentary. Traditionally, basic education was controlled by the clergy, and was limited to bright boys, thus eliminating females and less talented boys. In order to receive a higher level of education students needed to go to a private tutor, and beyond this level there were only seminaries for those studying for the clergy.¹⁷ Modern systems of education were introduced to Iran in the nineteenth century by foreign religious missionaries and founders of military schools. The presence of these schools did inspire the establishment of such schools by Iranians. The country was in political and economic decline at that time, however, and major reforms in education did not take place during the Qajar period.¹⁸ As a result, the clergy, who protested the introduction of

¹⁷Banani, The Modernization of Iran, 1921-1941, p. 66.

¹⁸Ibid., p. 89.

Western educational methods, maintained their control over education, and the income which it provided for them.

With the accession of Reza Shah, the reform of the educational system, including the establishment of a state school system throughout the country, became a major project. Under Reza Shah a reorganized Ministry of Education brought about such reforms as the organization of the various school facilities into one educational system, increased educational funds, establishment of teachers' training colleges, and employment benefits for teachers.¹⁹ Organizing one educational system included bringing the foreign missionary schools and Iranian private schools under the supervision of the Ministry of Education. This action served to provide a uniform school program, as well as a unified educational system. In addition, it allowed Reza Shah to assert the sovereignty of Iran by regulating foreign schools in the country.²⁰

Another important aspect of educational reform during Reza Shah's reign was the introduction of adult education programs in 1936. Reza Shah recognized the importance of the education of the population to the modernization of the country, for education was a means of reaching the population

¹⁹Avery, Modern Iran, p. 275; and Banani, The Modernization of Iran, 1921-1941, p. 94.

²⁰Avery, Modern Iran, p. 278.

with the ideals of modernization and nationalism. The first year of the adult education program included courses in reading, writing, the history and geography of Iran, hygiene, and ethics, and the second year included arithmetic, poetry, and practical studies, such as agricultural machinery and electricity.²¹ By instituting adult education programs, Reza Shah was able to reach a substantial segment of the population.

Reza Shah's educational reforms also included the establishment of technical colleges, founded by the various ministries of the government, and the establishment of the provision that any foreign concessionaire must assist Iranian citizens in acquiring the education needed for the operation of that concession.²² In this manner, Reza Shah was assuring the preparation of Iranians for the independent development and maintenance of their country, which would progressively eliminate the reliance upon foreigners for technical and scientific innovations. In addition, a number of students were annually sent abroad to acquire Western training and concepts. Upon their return home, these students were helpful in spreading a knowledge of Western technology and

²¹Banani, The Modernization of Iran, 1921-1941, p. 104.

²²Avery, Modern Iran, p. 279; and Banani, The Modernization of Iran, 1921-1941, p. 98.

customs through their exposure to other Iranians who had not gone abroad. Another high point in the modernization of education was the establishment of the University of Tehran in 1935. The university provided a modern education for students within Iran, and these students further spread the ideas of modernization and nationalism among their fellow Iranians, often by speaking at community meetings.²³ The educational reforms were Reza Shah's method of providing the Iranian people with modern concepts; moreover, the expansion of education brought the ideas of nationalism to the population, thereby instilling a sense of unity in the Iranian people. In addition, the education of the people made them more capable of managing the various matters of the country, which reduced the dependence on foreign personnel and provided a stabilizing force against the interference of foreign states.

One of the areas which greatly benefited from the reforms of Reza Shah's reign was the condition of public health in Iran. Before Reza Shah, only the foreign missionaries tended to matters of public health. In their indifference toward concepts of public health, the Qajar authorities did not enforce laws dealing with it. Moreover, the lack of physicians and medical facilities, as well as

²³Banani, The Modernization of Iran, 1921-1941, p. 105.

superstitions instilled by the reactionary clergy, were obstacles to suitable public health conditions during the Qajar period. Under Reza Shah, decisive reforms in public health conditions were made and enforced. For example, the Pasteur Institute was established to carry out research and public health projects. In addition, meat and food production were regulated; also, standards for licensing physicians were enforced, and a medical school was established in Tehran. Moreover, by weakening the influence of the clergy, some of the superstitious obstacles to public health treatment were overcome; and programs for treating and controlling communicable diseases were established.²⁴

The reforms in public health were important in improving the standards of health and hygiene in the country. In addition, the people were reached with modern concepts on personal and community health care; the medical facilities were improved, and the quality and number of physicians increased. These reforms were important aspects of the modernization of Iran, for a chronically unhealthy population would have been unable to contribute to the overall operation of a modernized state.

Another vital area which was reformed during Reza Shah's reign was the economic situation of the country. Iran's

²⁴Ibid., pp. 62-64.

economy was one of the country's weakest points at the time of Reza Shah's accession, for the inefficient Qajar rulers had not developed the economic administration of Iran, and they had allowed the foreign powers to take advantage of Iran's economic resources. Reza Shah planned to revive the ailing economy. One of the first steps was employing the American team of financial experts led by Arthur Millspaugh, to reorganize Iran's economic situation by instituting a system for tax collection, centralizing the treasury, attracting foreign capital to Iran, and creating viable legislation dealing with the revival of Iran's economy. Millspaugh's programs raised the revenue which Reza Shah needed to carry out the reform of the military system and to establish internal security. Millspaugh's programs succeeded in nearly balancing Iran's budget for the year 1923-1924, by implementing an effective system of taxation, which was his most memorable achievement in Iran.²⁵ After Millspaugh's mission ended in 1927, other financial advisors from foreign states were employed by Iran; however, none held the influence of Millspaugh and his team.²⁶

One far reaching aspect of economic reform was the founding of the Bank Melli Iran (National Bank of Iran) in

²⁵ Avery, Modern Iran, p. 262.

²⁶ Banani, The Modernization of Iran, 1921-1941, p.117.

1927, for up to that time the banks in Iran had been British or Russian concessions. Thus, establishing the Bank Melli Iran was another means of decreasing foreign dominance in the country. Another achievement was the establishment of an Economic Committee which encouraged economic advancement through governmental and private projects in communications and transportation. In addition, attempts were made to reach the Iranian people with modern economic concepts concerning savings and investments, for most of the people tended to hoard any savings, rather than put their money into circulation. Some people, however, did put their money into buying land, the symbol of secure wealth. Taking this into consideration, the government began selling state lands to the people, and in this way, acquired revenue for the state.²⁷

The economic reforms concerning foreign trade, such as Iran's declaration of tariff autonomy and the introduction of state control on foreign trade and foreign exchange, favorably affected the economy of Iran, and also served to increase Iran's freedom from the economic interference of foreign powers. The declaration of tariff autonomy also served to assert Iran's position internationally. Formerly, Iran did not control its own tariff duties, for the 1828 Treaty of Turkomanchai had imposed upon Iran a near free

²⁷Avery, Modern Iran, pp. 307-09.

trade policy regarding Russian goods; that is, Iran could levy only a nominal customs tariff on Russian imports. In addition, in the early 1900s, the Qajar regime granted a concession to Russia in which the Russians received the revenue from Iran's customs. These arrangements prevented Iran from controlling its tariff policies and from receiving the customs revenue. In 1928, however, the declaration of tariff autonomy asserted Iran's independence of foreign domination and provided an important source of revenue for Iran.²⁸

Additional improvements in Iran's position in foreign trade were introduced in 1931. Formerly, Iran was disadvantaged by the fact that Britain exported a great deal to Iran but imported little from Iran, and from the fact that Iran depended upon the Soviet Union as the main importer of Iranian produce. Thus, the Soviet Union was able to dictate trade policies with which Iran was required to comply in order to avoid losing the Soviet market. In 1920, the Soviet Union had established a state foreign trade monopoly (the state acted as the controlling agent in foreign trade); however, countries bordering the Soviet Union from the Black Sea to Mongolia were exempt from this restriction. As a result, Iranian merchants had direct access to Soviet

²⁸ Banani, The Modernization of Iran, 1921-1941, p. 116.

markets. The Soviet Union, however, ended this privilege for Eastern merchants in 1930. In order to adjust to the new Soviet policy, and to initiate government management of trade, Iran established its own foreign trade monopoly in the form of governmental regulation through control of quantities and requiring import and export licenses. At the same time, Iran established foreign exchange controls.²⁹ It was hoped that state control of foreign exchange would foster economic independence and a favorable balance of trade for Iran.³⁰

Reforming Iran's economic situation was an integral part of the modernization program of Reza Shah's period. The economic solvency achieved by Millspaugh's financial reforms provided revenue for internal reforms. Moreover, Iran was able to eliminate British and Russian domination of the country through establishing governmental control over vital economic functions, such as tariff administration, foreign trade and foreign exchange.

One of the areas in which reforms were initiated during Reza Shah's reign was agriculture. Such reforms were primarily in the introduction of modern agricultural techniques, and the development of agricultural land. The agricultural reforms of the 1930s, however, affected only a

²⁹Ibid., pp. 129-31.

³⁰Ibid., pp. 130-31.

small percentage of the agricultural sector and mainly benefited the landowners. Agricultural improvements resulted from the use of modern machinery and modern methods of pest control, animal breeding, and soil conservation. Assistance in agricultural projects was provided by the Industrial and Agricultural Bank, founded in 1937. Agricultural and veterinary advancements were encouraged, from 1929 on, by the Agricultural College at Karaj, and the Veterinary Institute founded at Hisarak in 1939.³¹

Despite the introduction of modern agricultural methods, one important aspect of agriculture which was not reformed during Reza Shah's reign was the traditional land tenure system. The traditional land tenure system was a type of feudalism in which most of the peasants lived on the land which they cultivated for the landowner, and the peasants received a share of the crops from the land. Reza Shah proposed certain reforms in the structure of land tenure, in particular, with respect to landlord-tenant relationships and distribution of shares of crops. However, such proposals were opposed by the powerful influence of the landlords, especially those in the Majlis. Indeed, in view of their profitable position in the landlord-tenant relationship, the

³¹Avery, Modern Iran, p. 312.

landlords did not want to disrupt the status quo.³² While the introduction of modern agricultural methods provided a number of improvements, the basic problem in the agricultural system, the traditional land tenure system, remained unchanged. In their serf-like position, the peasant cultivators were the last to benefit materially from the agricultural reforms, while they were the group most in need of improved conditions. The main achievement of the agricultural improvements was to stimulate greater agricultural production, for domestic use as well as export, which aided Iran internally as well as in foreign trade. Regarding the agricultural population, the agricultural improvements had little effect upon the position of the landowners or the peasants. In view of the fact that the system of land tenure was not reformed, the landowners retained their power and influence in the country, and the peasants remained subservient to the landowners.

During the reign of Reza Shah, efforts were directed toward reforming and modernizing industry and construction. One of the major projects was the construction of the Trans-Iranian Railway. Reza Shah financed the railway without foreign funds by establishing, in 1925, a government tax on tea and sugar, and using the tax revenue to finance

³²Banani, The Modernization of Iran, 1921-1941, p. 21.

the construction of the railway. While Iran needed the technology of Western countries in the construction of the railway, Reza Shah designated that firms of several countries should be employed, thereby avoiding the preponderant influence of any one country in the project.³³ The Trans-Iranian Railway was completed in August, 1938, and was viewed with nationalistic pride by Reza Shah, for the completion of the railway was accomplished through the use of Iranian revenues, not foreign loans.

In terms of industrial improvements, the government encouraged industrialization and the establishment of private industry, primarily through industrial bank loans and low tariff rates for the importation of such capital goods as industrial machinery, as well as a five-year tax exemption for private factories. Despite such governmental encouragements, private industry did not greatly expand, mainly because the people did not want to invest in such projects. State involvement in industrialization, however, did promote industry, primarily in textiles, sugar refining, and food production, with the intention of developing the country and improving the welfare of the population. By 1936, light industry had been expanded in state and private factories, primarily through the organizational work of the

³³Avery, Modern Iran, p. 303.

Department of Industry and Mines. The goal was to decrease Iran's need for imports and to increase the country's exports, thereby, furthering Iran's independent and self-reliant position.³⁴

One area possessing great potential for development in Iran was the oil industry. During Reza Shah's reign, the oil resources remained under the control of the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company (AIOC), as it had been from Qajar times. The presence of the AIOC provided some benefits to Iran, such as the introduction of Western technology and training programs for Iranians in the technical and managerial aspects of the oil industry. However, the preponderance of a foreign power in the oil industry irritated a number of nationalists.³⁵ Reza Shah, although eager for freedom from the presence of foreign powers in Iran, concluded that Iranians needed more time to develop the operational expertise in the oil industry, and that the AIOC was adequately developing the oil industry in Iran. Therefore, he decided that the AIOC would remain until Iran was technologically and politically prepared to assume full control of the oil industry at some indefinite point in the future.

³⁴Banani, The Modernization of Iran, 1921-1941, pp. 138-39.

³⁵Ibid., p. 142.

In striving for the modernization of his country, Reza Shah instituted a number of reforms which were not oriented toward production, but served to modernize the social structure of Iranian society. One such reform was the abolition of traditional titles, in June, 1925. With the abolition of titles, the use of family names was initiated. Reza Shah, at that time Reza Khan, assumed the family name "Pahlavi" in recognition of the pre-Islamic glory of Iran, for "Pahlavi" refers to "Ancient Iranian."³⁶ Reza Shah abolished the use of titles as a means of fostering a sense of social equality in Iran. In following through with modernization and the theme of equality, in 1928, Reza Shah initiated reforms in dress, in which men were to wear Western style clothes. This reform ignored the protests of the clergy, who did not favor Western style clothing.

Another important social reform was the change in the status of women. In bringing his country into the modern world, Reza Shah realized that the women must be freed of the restrictions placed upon females by traditional Islamic standards. This was necessary because the traditional practices prevented one-half of the population from actively participating in the society, a situation which not only denied the women of their rights, but also robbed the

³⁶Alessandro Bausani, The Persians, trans., J. B. Donne (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1971), p. 176.

country of their contribution to the society. One of the first steps was banning the veil, for the veil represented the exclusion of women and their exclusion from the rights and responsibilities of society.³⁷ In 1934, female school teachers were required to abandon their veils. By 1935, most of the women, with the exception of the older women, were not wearing the veil, and Reza Shah instituted reforms which provided Iranian women with Western style clothing, education, and the rights and responsibilities of society. Reza Shah encouraged the socialization of women into society and reminded the women that along with their newly acquired rights, they must accept the responsibilities of society.³⁸ Reza Shah intended to bring about a feeling of equality and unity; therein lay his reasons for abolishing titles, introducing Western style clothing and reforming the status of women in Iran.

Of great importance in Reza Shah's modernization program were the changes in foreign relations, for they served to establish Iran's position internationally as well as internally. Reza Shah was determined to rid Iran of interference by foreign powers, which had weakened the

³⁷Hass, Iran, p. 105.

³⁸Wilber, Contemporary Iran, p. 75.

position of Iran over the decades. Early in his reign, Reza Shah declared that through technical education and specialization, Iranians would obtain freedom from the need for foreign advisors. One of the first actions taken to establish Iran's position vis-à-vis foreign powers, was the abolition of the capitulations; moreover, other changes revealed that the foreign powers would lose their special privileges in Iran. For example, foreign legations were limited in the display of their flags; restrictions were placed upon foreign businesses in Iran; and members of the Iranian foreign service were restricted from marrying foreigners. Another indication of Reza Shah's establishing Iran's position, was the required use of the ancient name "Iran" for the country, rather than Persia, as well as the required use of the Persian language on official correspondence.³⁹

In modernizing Iran, Reza Shah realized that the use of Western technical advisors would be necessary for a while. In this regard, Belgians were used in reforming the customs administration; French experts were used in reforming the legal system; Americans were used to reform the economy; Swedish and Italian officers were used in training the army and navy, respectively; and Germans were used in technical

³⁹ Ibid., pp. 72-73.

fields.⁴⁰ Reza Shah refused to employ British or Russian advisors, for these countries had exerted the type of dominance in Iran which Reza Shah was determined to end.

In reforming foreign relations, Reza Shah was concerned about existing foreign concessions in Iran, which he intended to do away with. In this sense, one of the major concerns was the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company (AIOC). The AIOC held a monopoly over Iran's oil industry, which deprived Iran of the control of the oil in the country, and provided Britain with privileges in Iran.⁴¹ Consequently, Reza Shah had two purposes in reforming the position of the AICO; first, to gain for Iran the country's rightful share of revenue from the oil industry; second, to reduce the influence of Britain in Iran.

By 1932, Iran's concern about the AIOC's control of the Iranian oil industry had peaked. At that point, Iran presented the problem to the League of Nations. Following Iran's presentation, which maintained that the AIOC did not give Iran a fair share of the oil revenue, Iran's royalties were increased somewhat; however, the increase was not sufficient.⁴² In order for Iran to establish its integrity, and to receive a fair revenue from the oil industry, the

⁴⁰Marlowe, Iran, p. 52.

⁴¹Ibid., p. 55.

⁴²Banani, The Modernization of Iran, 1921-1941, p. 142.

country's only recourse was to cancel the 1901 concession agreement of the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company, maintaining that the present Iranian government could not be held to an agreement made before the constitutional regime. The Iranian government proposed negotiating a new agreement with the AIOC, which would provide terms more favorable to Iran, as well as a greater share of the oil revenue.⁴³

Following the conclusion of the new agreement with the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company in 1933, Iranian nationalists resented the government's allowing the AIOC to remain in Iran. Reza Shah, however, had considered the needs of his country and he realized that in the operation of the oil industry, Iran needed the technology and expertise of the AIOC. Moreover, Reza Shah intended to assure the training and preparation of Iranians in the operation of the oil industry before considering the nationalization of the oil industry in Iran.⁴⁴ Disagreements concerning the oil industry continued, and in 1940, Iran presented to the AIOC grievances concerning payment of royalties, with an ultimatum threatening cancellation of the AIOC's oil concession. In 1941, the AIOC agreed to Iran's demands;

⁴³Marlowe, Iran, p. 57.

⁴⁴Wilber, Contemporary Iran, pp. 79-80.

however, the issue raised British resentment toward Iran at a crucial point in time, that is, during World War II.⁴⁵

Regarding the attitude toward the Soviet Union during Reza Shah's reign, Soviet Russia initially appeared to be a more favorable neighbor than Tsarist Russia had been, for Soviet Russia had renounced the concessions in Iran acquired by Tsarist Russia, and this had been confirmed in the Soviet-Persian Agreement of 1921. There were, however, a number of disquieting issues between Soviet Russia and Iran. For example, while the Soviets had renounced Russian concessions in Iran, the Soviet-Persian Agreement stated that those concessions should not be given to any other prospective concessionaire. Also, by the Soviet-Persian Agreement, Soviet Russia established the right to send troops into Iran in the event that another power emanating from within Iran, threatened Russia.⁴⁶

Another issue between Soviet Russia and Iran concerned the fisheries on the Caspian Sea, for these were important to both countries. In 1924, the Soviets suggested that a company should lease the fisheries, and that the Soviet and Iranian governments should receive equal shares in the shares in the company. Such a suggestion was initially

⁴⁵Ibid., p. 80.

⁴⁶Elgin Groseclose, Introduction to Iran (New York: Oxford University Press, 1947), p. 135.

rejected by Iran, upon the insistence of Arthur Millspaugh, the financial advisor of Iran. However, after the Soviets exerted pressure upon Iran, and following the resignation of Millspaugh in 1927, Iran accepted the Soviet proposal of leasing the fisheries.⁴⁷

The issue of trade was also a contested matter between Soviet Russia and Iran, for, as Iran depended upon the Soviet market to buy Iran's agricultural produce, the Soviet Union imposed trade policies which favored the Soviet Union, but Iran was unable to reject them without risking the loss of its main export market. Iran, however, released itself from the trade relationship, and by 1938, Germany became an important trade partner of Iran. During the major portion of Reza Shah's reign, Soviet Russia did not appear to be a political or military threat to Iran, for the Soviets were preoccupied with other political matters, including the rise of Germany, rather than with prospects of expansion in the Middle East.⁴⁸ Germany had become a major trade partner and technical advisor to Iran. Moreover, Reza Shah viewed such a relationship as a means of breaking Iran's connections with Britain and Russia.⁴⁹

⁴⁷Ibid., p. 137.

⁴⁸Marlowe, Iran, p. 57.

⁴⁹J. C. Hurewitz, Middle East Politics (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1969), p. 273.

With the outbreak of World War II, Reza Shah declared Iran's neutrality in a war that seemed to be remote from his country. The Iranians reacted with a general favor toward Germany, for the Iranians resented the decades of British and Russian preponderance in Iran, as well as the remaining position of Britain in southern Iran and the shadow of Russia on Iran's northern border. Indeed, the Iranians considered Germany to be their "enemy's enemy."⁵⁰

Iran's sense of remoteness from the war ended in May, 1945, with the occupation of Iraq by Britain, due to a revolt of Iraq's Prime Minister Rashid Ali, who was an anti-British nationalist. Reza Shah then became concerned about Iran's neutrality, for the war was close to Iran at that point. At the same time, Britain was concerned about German nationals in Iran who might collaborate with Iraqi rebels and sabotage British oil fields in Iraq. Indeed, Britain and Russia both asked Iran to reduce the number of German technicians and other German nationals in Iran.⁵¹

Iran's neutrality was further threatened by Germany's invasion of Russia on June 22, 1941, for at that point, the viability of using Iran as a supply route to the Soviet Union was recognized. Indeed, Prime Minister Churchill had declared that Britain would aid Russia, as President Roosevelt

⁵⁰ Sanghvi, Aryamehr: The Shah of Iran, p. 58.

⁵¹ Marlowe, Iran, p. 65.

had stated for the United States. Of three possible supply routes to the Soviet Union, only the route through Iran was feasible. The Murmansk route, passing through the North Atlantic and North Sea, was dangerous because Germans occupied the Norwegian coast. Passing through Turkey was unlikely, because Turkey, as a neutral state, had refused passage of supplies to Russia, and Turkey was able to maintain its neutrality. In addition, passing through the Bosphorous was dangerous because Germans were in the area.⁵²

Thus, Iran was chosen as the supply route, and despite the country's neutrality, Britain and Russia planned to invade Iran. During this period, Britain and Russia maintained that they were concerned about the presence of Germans in Iran, and the two powers sent several Notes to Iran requesting the expulsion of German nationals. However, the two powers did not mention their need of Iran as a supply route to Russia.⁵³ In this sense, Britain and Russia had not presented the full situation to Reza Shah. Therefore, it was difficult for him to evaluate the necessary course of action, but Reza Shah had decided to expel the German nationals from Iran.⁵⁴ Considering the Allies' need for the route over

⁵²Sanghvi, Aryamehr: The Shah of Iran, p. 61.

⁵³Ibid., p. 66.

⁵⁴Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi, Mission for My Country, (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1960), p. 72.

Iran, it appears that Britain and Russia would have carried out their planned invasion of Iran, even if the Iranian government had reacted more readily to the Allies' demand of expulsion of the German nationals, for the apparent reasoning behind the Allies' invasion was primarily to use Iran as a supply route, not as a reaction to the presence of German nationals. Thus, on August 25, 1941, Britain and Russia invaded Iran, with Russia coming from the north and Britain coming from the west and southwest. Iranian forces presented resistance; however, Reza Shah's army was prepared only for maintaining internal security, not for matching those of Britain and Russia.⁵⁵ Thus, Iran's resistance ceased on August 27, 1941.

During his reign, Reza Shah had been preparing his son, Crown Prince Mohammad Reza, for the time when he would assume the Throne. Thus, the Crown Prince was familiar with his father's political philosophy. Crown Prince Mohammad Reza felt that the invasion of his country was unjustified, and that the Allies should have presented their need for a route through Iran to Reza Shah. Moreover, the Crown Prince reasoned that if Reza Shah decided not to comply with the Allies' request, he probably would have resigned the Throne to his son and allowed Mohammad Reza to accept the Allies'

⁵⁵ Sanghvi, Aryamehr: The Shah of Iran, pp. 68-69.

plans, because as a strong central figure, Reza Shah could not compromise his position to the Allies' plans. However, in the interest of Iran, he could have allowed the young Mohammad Reza to assume the Throne and to comply with the Allies.⁵⁶

Iran signed an armistice agreement with the two powers by which the northern section of Iran came under Soviet supervision, and the southern section came under the British. Moreover, Iran was to expel the nationals of states at war with Britain and Russia, and Iran was to facilitate the transportation of supplies to Russia.⁵⁷ At the same time, the remaining German nationals in Iran were being rounded up. A number of the Germans escaped. Britain and Russia blamed this on the Iranian government, and the two powers sent troops into Tehran.

Britain and Russia assumed that sending troops into Tehran would force Reza Shah out of power. Indeed, Reza Shah decided to abdicate the Throne in favor of his son, Mohammad Reza, for, as he told his son, the people had always regarded Reza Shah as an independent and powerful king who

⁵⁶Pahlavi, Mission for My Country, pp. 72-73.

⁵⁷Sanghvi, Aryamehr: The Shah of Iran, p. 71.

would protect their interests. Therefore, he could not be the nominal leader of an occupied country.⁵⁸

Thus, Reza Shah abdicated the Throne on September 16, 1941, and went into exile, first to Mauritius. As the climate was not suitable for him, he was taken to Johannesburg, South Africa, where he corresponded with his son but did not advise him on political matters.⁵⁹ Reza Shah died in July, 1944, and in May, 1950, Iran honored him in a state funeral.

In accordance with Iran's constitution, Mohammad Reza had become Shah as soon as Reza Shah had abdicated. However, he was required to read and sign the oath of loyalty, which was accomplished in a simple ceremony.⁶⁰

In summarizing the situation of Iran during Reza Shah's reign, it may be said that Iran was coming of age in terms of modernization and stabilization under Reza Shah. Reza Shah's program of modernization included the elements necessary in modernizing a country, and these elements in combination served as a stabilizing force in Iran. Reza Shah built upon each accomplished reform to aid him in revising other aspects of the country. For example, Reza Shah acted

⁵⁸Pahlavi, Mission for My Country, p. 74.

⁵⁹Ibid., p. 75.

⁶⁰Sanghvi, Aryamehr: The Shah of Iran, p. 77.

upon the first problem of the country's unstable situation by establishing a unified national army. Next, Reza Shah used the national army to quell the tribal revolts and raids, which had contributed to internal insecurity. With the settling of the tribes, a major source of instability had been eliminated. Indeed, the national army aided in unifying and centralizing the country, by which the various regions of the country came to recognize the authority of the central government. This was a major stabilizing achievement of Reza Shah, for with the effective centralization of the country, Reza Shah was then able to spread his plans for modernization and his ideals of nationalism.

Reza Shah was also successful in reforming the civil administration of the country, which had been chaotic under the previous regime. Through the reorganization of the country into more manageable political divisions, and through the reorganization of the administrative branches of government, Reza Shah brought about a more orderly and efficient management of the country's affairs, which contributed further to the stabilization process. Reza Shah's reform of the Civil Code, the judicial system, the Civil Service, and municipal administration made these facets of the bureaucracy contribute to more efficient management of the civil administration. The bureaucracy became more important in the overall administration of the country.

Regarding the position of the Majlis during the period of Reza Shah's reforms, the Majlis complied with Reza Shah's wish for the adoption of legislation which would make the reforms possible. On the topic of land reform, however, the Majlis would not comply, for most of the Majlis deputies were either landowners or were under the influence of large landowners who did not want the system of land tenure to be changed. Thus, on this matter, the will of the Majlis prevailed during Reza Shah's reign. The format of the Majlis, that is, the practice of deputies forming unorganized political factions, remained basically unchanged, despite Reza Shah's attempts to introduce organized parties into the Majlis.

Another major reform which modernized Iran was the secularization of the judicial system, for this reform weakened the influence of the reactionary clergy, and provided Iran with a modern legal system, as well as a basis upon which to abolish the system of capitulations, thereby establishing the position of Iran before foreign states. Reza Shah also promoted the modernization and stabilization of his country by reaching the people with the ideals of the reform, and providing them with an understanding of the government's goals. Reza Shah reached the people with his plans through the Society to Guide Public Opinion, as well as the expansion and modernization of the educational system.

Through the introduction of technical education and specialization there were increased career opportunities for students returning from abroad, and Iranian students began to have the opportunity for technical education and training at home. Politically, this was an important step in freeing Iranians from the need for foreign advisors and from having to employ foreigners to operate Iranian industries. Reforms in the area of education and public health, served to improve and modernize the conditions of the people, thereby contributing to the stability of the country. The social improvements in the conditions of the people were particularly evident in the reformed status of women, which provided for a larger segment of the population participating in the modernizing functions of the country.

An important series of reforms which was essential to the stabilization of Iran, was the reorganization of the national economy, for during Reza Shah's reign, the economy and the financial situation of the country were developed and became productive. In this respect, the reforms in agriculture, industry, and banking, as well as foreign trade, revived the economy of Iran. Reza Shah had been determined to reform the conditions of Iran's foreign relations, and in this goal he succeeded in gaining international recognition for Iran's position.

Regarding the political aspects of Reza Shah's reforms, Reza Shah had emerged as the first strong central political figure for quite some time. Reza Shah's reign reorganized and centralized a country that had been administratively chaotic for decades. Reza Shah and his reformed army and administration brought internal security and modernization to Iran. Of great political significance was Reza Shah's having raised the position of Iran internationally. Reza Shah prepared Iran for independent development and eliminated foreign interference and domination of the country. Through such achievements as the abolition of capitulations, Reza Shah made it possible for Iran to deal on an equal basis with other countries.

In retrospect, the modernization and stabilization of Iran had been effective throughout Reza Shah's reign. However, the Second World War was a major destabilizing force in Iran, for Britain and Russia were determined to occupy Iran and to use the country for their own strategic needs. As a result, the stability achieved in the country by Reza Shah was interrupted by the British and Russian invasion and occupation of Iran in 1941.

CHAPTER III

THE EARLY YEARS OF THE REIGN OF MOHAMMAD REZA SHAH, 1941-1953

The invasion of Iran by the Allied Powers and the subsequent abdication of Reza Shah had thrust Mohammad Reza Pahlavi into the position of Shah of Iran. The dominant presence of the occupying powers, however, made it seem as though the Allied Powers were actually the center of authority.¹ Mohammad Reza Shah cooperated with the Allies, in the best interest of Iran. The legal basis for the Allied presence in Iran, as well as the expectations of both Iran and the Allied Powers, were negotiated, culminating in the Tripartite Treaty of 1942. The Treaty stated that the purpose of the Allied presence in Iran was for transporting troops and supplies into the Soviet Union, and the Treaty stipulated that Iran was to cooperate in every way to provide the necessary facilities and labor. Furthermore, the Treaty stipulated that the Allied forces were to be withdrawn within six months following the end of World War II.²

¹Ramesh Sanghvi, Aryamehr: The Shah of Iran (New York: Stein and Day, 1968), p. 91.

²Ibid., pp. 83-85.

Ironically, the Treaty stated that the presence of Allied forces in Iran was not an occupation; furthermore, it was declared that the "territorial integrity, the sovereignty and the political independence of Iran"³ would be respected by Great Britain and the Soviet Union. Moreover, the Treaty stated that the administration of and life in Iran would be disturbed as little as possible.⁴ The activities of the occupying powers, however, violated the provisions of the Treaty, for the Allied Powers overstepped the rights they had gained and treated Iran as a defeated enemy.⁵ Britain and the Soviet Union interfered in Iran's internal matters and dominated the workings of the country.

The Allied Powers were able to dominate internal matters such as legislation, communications, and transportation, primarily because of the absence of a strong indigenous leader or group, for initially, twenty-two year old Mohammad Reza Shah was yet inexperienced in maintaining control over the country. Although the young Shah gradually gained such expertise, the situation in occupied Iran was similar to that following the 1907 Anglo-Russian Agreement, for the Soviet Union occupied the northern provinces of Iran,

³Ibid., p. 83.

⁴Ibid., p. 85.

⁵Sepehr Zabih, The Communist Movement in Iran (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1966), p. 86.

and Britain occupied the southern area, while there was a neutral area containing Tehran between the two zones. The occupying powers carried on activities typical of wartime occupation, such as spreading propaganda, bribing officials and politicians, and interfering in internal matters in order to further their respective interests. These activities were carried on in the occupied zones as well as in the neutral area of Tehran. As Britain and the Soviet Union were traditional rivals in Iran, and each held traditional interests in the country, their interference and manipulation in Iranian matters were intense. Each of the Allied Powers sought to further its respective interests in Iran during the occupation.⁶

Considering the political and social instability which prevailed following the abdication of Reza Shah, the Allied Powers were concerned with the security of their interests. During the occupation, one of the primary interests of the Allied Powers in Iran was the security of the transportation of supplies to the Soviet Union. Britain and the Soviet Union, and later the United States, were anxious for the prevalence of enough internal stability in Iran to ensure the delivery of supplies to the Soviet Union. Beyond this

⁶John Marlowe, Iran (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1963), p. 68.

common cause, however, the Allied Powers held different concerns in Iran, and employed different methods to secure their interests.

Concerning Britain's interests and activities in Iran during the occupation, Britain was concerned about long-term stability for Iran. Although Britain and the Soviet Union were wartime allies, they were ideological rivals, and Britain wanted a stable postwar Iran capable of standing firm before the Soviet Union. Britain did interfere in Iran's internal matters, such as influencing the choice of parliamentary deputies, and censoring the mail and news in Iran, and Britain was concerned with political control in Iran. Britain, however, was not interested in permanently dividing Iran, as was the Soviet Union. Britain considered its presence as temporary, and envisioned postwar Iran as independent, but sympathetic to Western interests.⁷ Britain was concerned about the integrity and stability of Iran mainly in terms of preventing the growth of pro-Soviet communist forces, as well as Soviet designs, in Iran. For this reason, Britain tended to support the conservative elements in Iran, such as the Muslim clergy, for the British believed that strong conservative elements would forestall the growth of pro-Soviet communist forces. Britain also

⁷Ibid., p. 70.

sponsored the return of pro-British political exiles, the release of pro-British political prisoners, and the establishment of the anticommunist, pro-British, National Will (Eradeh Melli) Party, led by the returned political exile, Sayyed Zia al-Din Tabatabai.⁸ While the Soviet Union had designs on the northern section of Iran, Britain considered the strengthening of the Iranian government as a means to ward off the Soviet Union.

Regarding British propaganda releases in Iran, Britain maintained information services such as the Public Relations Bureau, as well as an information program on Radio Tehran, and an English newspaper. In these information services, Britain publicized achievements of the Allies, particularly Britain; however, despite the rivalry between Britain and the Soviet Union, British propaganda did not criticize the Soviet Union. On the contrary, British policy was aimed at convincing the Iranians that there was complete unity among the Allied Powers.⁹ Such a line of propaganda did not convince the politically aware Iranians that complete unity existed among the Allies, for Soviet propaganda was critical of Britain. As a result, the Iranians viewed Britain as

⁸Ibid., p. 74.

⁹George Lenczowski, Russia and the West in Iran, 1918-1948 (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1949), p. 258.

weaker and more defensive than the Soviet Union; therefore, the Iranians concluded that Britain was mainly interested in a smooth relationship with the Soviet Union, and that Britain might obtain such a relationship through political compromise with the Soviet Union.¹⁰ In essence, the Iranians feared the Soviet Union and tended to distrust Britain. The distrustful attitude toward Britain existed, despite the more open atmosphere which existed in the southern zone, compared to that in the Soviet occupied zone.

Regarding the differences between the respective British and Soviet zones, Britain considered its presence in Iran as temporary, necessary only for the conditions of war, while the Soviet Union revealed a tendency to remain in its zone. Britain did not control the local civil administration in the southern area as the Soviet Union did in the northern area. Within the British zone, people traveled freely, while in the Soviet zone travel was restricted. In addition, Britain, as well as the United States, shipped in supplies of grain which were needed in Iran to cope with a food shortage caused by war conditions. The food shortage was particularly severe in southern Iran, for the Soviets had placed a ban on transporting food, especially grain, from the northern provinces, where it was grown, to the south,

¹⁰ Ibid., pp. 260-61.

where it was needed. The British shipment was not well publicized, and the situation was twisted by the Soviets and the press, who labeled as a "gift," shipments of grain which the Soviets finally released to the southern area of Iran.¹¹

Britain was concerned that stability prevail in Iran, in order to ensure the delivery of military supplies to the Soviet Union. In addition, Britain was concerned about the security of British oil installations in the southern area. Tribal raids and rebellions were a major threat to the security of the supply lines and the British oil installations. Britain, therefore, aided the Iranian government in negotiating a settlement with the rebellious tribes who wanted land which they considered to be tribal property, to be restored to tribal ownership. The tribal rebellions in the southern area were quelled by 1943, which helped to bring about internal security.¹²

The presence of British forces in Iran was indeed motivated by military needs, as Britain claimed, and not by intentions to remain in Iran. This was evidenced by the willingness of Britain to withdraw its troops in May, 1945, following a favorable turn in the war. Britain's intentions to withdraw at that early date was dampened, however,

¹¹Ibid., pp. 194-95.

¹²Ibid., p. 248.

because of the Soviet Union's refusal to leave Iran earlier than six months after the end of the war, as designated in the 1942 Treaty. Britain did not wish to allow the Soviet Union the greater freedom in Iran which British withdrawal would have provided. Britain, however, did take the initial steps of terminating its censorship and information programs in Iran, and of gradually withdrawing British troops and completing the move before March, 1946, as designated in the Treaty, which was not the case with the Soviet Union.¹³

As has been stated, both Britain and the Soviet Union interfered in the Iranian political sphere during the occupation, and both exerted a degree of domination over their respective zones. The intentions and maneuvers of the Soviet Union, however, exhibited a much greater degree of domination and control by the Soviets in the northern zone, as compared to the British in the southern zone. The Soviet Union actually held plans for postwar interests in Iran. Such ambitious intentions were revealed in the 1940 Four Power Pact which was secretly concluded by the Soviet Union, Germany, Italy, and Japan. In the Four Power Pact, the Soviet Union declared that the area south of the Soviet Union, toward the Persian Gulf, was within the realm

¹³Elgin Groseclose, An Introduction to Iran (New York: Oxford University Press, 1947), p. 185.

of Soviet interests.¹⁴ Thus, Soviet intentions to cultivate its interests in Iran were facilitated by the wartime occupation of the country. The occupation of the northern zone of Iran provided the Soviet Union with the opportunity to exert political, military, and economic domination in the area. In this regard, the Soviets assumed full control in the area by ignoring the Iranian government's sovereignty (despite the 1942 Treaty), undermining the local Iranian authorities, and taking over the administration of the zone.¹⁵ Indeed, the control which the Soviets held in the northern zone of Iran indicated the Soviet Union's intention to influence changes in the social, political, and economic modes in the area, and eventually to absorb the northern zone of Iran into the Soviet system.

In addition to Soviet plans for future interests in Iran, the Soviets, like the British, wanted a degree of internal stability in Iran sufficient for the security of the military supply lines to the Soviet Union. Unlike the British, however, the Soviets wished for an Iranian government which was weak enough to be dissolved for the future fulfillment of Soviet plans in Iran.¹⁶ In this

¹⁴Lenczowski, Russia and the West in Iran, 1918-1948, p. 193.

¹⁵Marlowe, Iran, p. 70.

¹⁶Peter Avery, Modern Iran (London: Ernest Benn, 1965), p. 34.

regard, the Soviets were adept at undermining the solvency and authority of the Iranian government, and they employed a variety of methods in doing so. For example, the Soviets disregarded Iranian customs duties at the northern border; the Soviets required the Iranian government to provide the Soviets with materials and facilities at a reduced cost; in addition, the Soviets made the Iranian government pay for any materials provided by the Soviets in the name of protecting Iran's security. Moreover, the Soviets abused a number of Iran's economic resources, such as copper mines, the Caspian fisheries, and the grains, foodstuffs, and livestock of the northern provinces.¹⁷

Regarding the food situation, the occupation of Iran had brought about a food shortage in the country; however, grains and foodstuffs were grown and available in the northern provinces. The Soviets, however, had confiscated the grains and food supplies for the use of Soviet soldiers and would not allow foodstuffs to be sent to the southern area, where it was needed. This action aggravated the food shortage in Iran, which led to bread riots and heightened the general sense of instability. The Soviets eventually allowed shipments of grain to the southern area, thereby

¹⁷Groseclose, An Introduction to Iran, p. 185.

creating a favorable image of the Soviets before the Iranian people.¹⁸

Another method used by the Soviets to increase their influence in Iran, and to weaken the authority of the central government, was to support the return of political exiles and the release of political prisoners who would be useful in Soviet plans. In this regard, in September, 1941 a group of Marxist sympathizers who had been imprisoned in 1937 on the basis of the 1931 anticommunist act, was released. Although this group, led by Taghi Erani and referred to as "the 53" because of the number arrested, did not openly refer to Communism in its program, the group initiated the growth of a well organized party, later identified as a communist party, called the Party of the Iranian Masses (Hizb-i Tudah-i Iran), and commonly referred to as the Tudah Party.¹⁹ By early 1945, the Tudah Party had effectively organized its leadership, membership, secret meetings, and clandestine publications. By that point, the Soviets were using the Tudah Party to organize demonstrations and riots against the Iranian government, and to infiltrate the Majlis. Such tactics stimulated a degree of chaos and instability.

¹⁸Avery, Modern Iran, p. 354.

¹⁹Ervand Abrahamian, "Communism and Communalism in Iran: the Tudah and the Firgah-i Dimokrat," International Journal of Middle East Studies, I, No. 4 (1970), 299.

Soviet antagonism toward Iran was intensified in September, 1944, for the Soviet Union wanted to obtain an oil concession in northern Iran. Except for Tudah members, the Iranians were against such a concession, and the Majlis declared that no concessions would be given to any country during the wartime occupation. In addition, a Majlis leader, Mohammad Mossadegh, encouraged the Majlis to prohibit any government official or minister from negotiating oil concessions with any foreign country, without Majlis approval.²⁰ Although official discussions about oil concessions were quieted for a while, the issue had irritated the Soviets. As a result, the Soviets initiated further antigovernment demonstrations through the Tudah Party. In addition, the Soviets criticized Britain and the United States for having influenced Iran's decision on the oil concession. Such criticism may have resulted because Britain did not openly oppose Iran's negative decision on the concession, and the American Ambassador to Tehran stated that Iran had the right to refuse to grant such a concession.²¹ Indeed, the Soviets certainly disproved the myth of Allied unity, through the Soviets' anti-British

²⁰Yahya Armanjani, Iran (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1972), p. 156.

²¹Marlowe, Iran, p. 76.

and anti-American propaganda. The issue of the oil concession did not disappear, and it became important immediately following World War II.

Indeed, the Soviets wielded great power in their occupied zone through political and military control. The Iranians of the northern area feared the strength of the Soviet occupiers. Consequently, the Soviets attempted to win some degree of approval through propaganda. For example, in Tehran, the Soviet Embassy utilized press conferences to promote a favorable image of the Soviet Union. In addition, the Soviets sponsored radio broadcasts, theatrical performances, literature, and a hospital. Furthermore, the Soviets enforced good behavior and performance of good deeds on the part of Soviet soldiers in Iran. Such tactics were in the interest of enhancing the image of the Soviet Union in Iran. Alert Iranians were aware, however, that such ploys were elements of Soviet propaganda, and fear of the Soviet power prevailed.²²

Despite Soviet attempts to elicit a favorable response from the Iranians toward the Soviet Union, anti-Soviet feelings surfaced in the Iranian government, the Royal Court, the Army, the Muslim clergy, and the anticommunist National Will Party. Under the 1931 anticommunist act, the Tudah

²²Lenczowski, Russia and the West in Iran, 1918-1948, p. 204.

Party activities were illegal. Thus, the government had the right to suppress Tudah activities. In Tehran and the southern region the Iranian government was able to dampen communist activities through military or police action against the Tudah Party, such as dispersing their demonstrations, raiding Tudah headquarters, or suspending their press. In the northern zone, the authority of the central government was ignored, however, and the local police had no power, for the Soviets controlled the northern provinces and supported the growth of Tudah activities.²³

In addition to the Soviet and British occupation of Iran, the United States also sent forces, supplies, and food to Iran, after the initial Anglo-Soviet occupation of the country. Although the Soviet Union and Britain formalized their presence in Iran through the Tripartite Treaty of 1942, the United States did not sign the Treaty, perhaps because the United States preferred to be disassociated with Britain and the Soviet Union, for these two countries were disliked and distrusted by Iranians.²⁴ In May, 1942, the United States sent supplies to Iran under the Lend Lease Act, and by 1943, basically noncombatant American troops were sent to Iran as the Persian Gulf Command, and those troops

²³Ibid., p. 235.

²⁴Avery, Modern Iran, p. 352.

were to aid in the transportation of supplies to the Soviet Union. Although the United States was not party to the 1942 Treaty, the presence of the American forces in Iran was justified, for they were under the "overall British command."²⁵

The United States was concerned that internal stability prevail in Iran, in order to ensure the supply line to the Soviet Union. Moreover, the United States was concerned about the postwar independence of Iran, in terms of the country's ability to withstand communist maneuvers. This concern became increasingly apparent after the 1944 oil concession decision, for the United States then became more involved in Iran's internal affairs, in order to counter the intense pressure of the Soviet Union. Indeed, the United States felt that Britain was not doing enough to bolster Iran's resistance to Soviet pressure.²⁶ For example, while Britain did not openly oppose Iran's refusal to grant the Soviet Union an oil concession, Britain did not campaign strongly against the Soviet request, for Britain felt that if Iran felt strong enough to refuse a Soviet concession, Iran might one day cancel the British oil concession in southern Iran.

²⁵Joseph M. Upton, The History of Modern Iran (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1970), p. 82.

²⁶Marlowe, Iran, p. 76.

American interest in Iran prompted Iranians to feel that the introduction of a third power in Iran would break the traditional Anglo-Soviet rivalry for control in Iran. The Iranians also saw the United States as a source of economic and military aid. For its part, the United States provided financial aid as well as expert advisors to help Iran stabilize its economy and society. The presence of American troops and advisors was more palatable to Iranians than was the presence of the other two powers. Although the American Office of War Information did provide some American propaganda in the form of an American newspaper and general information, such devices were on a smaller scale than those of Britain or the Soviet Union.²⁷

Indeed, the receptive attitude of Iranians toward American operations and personnel provided a basis for favorable relations between the United States and Iran. Further, the United States seemed to have no long term designs on Iran, which made Iranians more comfortable with America's wartime presence in their country. Indeed, the main concerns of the United States in Iran were maintaining Iran's security and stability and thwarting communist encroachment.

²⁷Lenczowski, Russia and the West in Iran, 1918-1948, pp. 278-79.

Concerning the interference of the occupying powers in domestic Iranian matters, one of the important methods by which they wielded control was through influencing the Majlis (the national representative assembly). Such a practice included influencing the selection of candidates and officials who suited the respective interests of the occupying powers, and the dismissal of some other officials. For example, in the election of the Fourteenth Majlis in 1944, the Soviet Union exerted great influence in the choice of candidates from the north. Although nine Tudah candidates were elected to the Majlis, the Majlis was composed mainly of conservative elements of society. The Majlis, in fact, rejected the credentials of a major Tudah figure, Jaafar Pishevari, who had been elected to the Majlis from Tabriz. The remaining eight Tudah members resented this action; consequently, the Tudah deputies exhibited their discontent by opposing every cabinet until the spring of 1945, when the Soviets approved of the proposed cabinet.²⁸ With the added irritation of the 1944 oil concession dispute, the Tudah members, and the Soviets, exerted troublesome pressure in the Majlis and the country.

The Majlis was typically made up of many factions rather than true political parties. However, as the Tudah

²⁸Zabih, The Communist Movement in Iran, pp. 87-88.

Party became more well organized, the other members of the Majlis realized that the communist movement was growing in strength, and that the only way to counter the communist movement would be organization. Thus, the pro-British National Will Party became more cohesive in its policies. As it were, the political parties actually identified with one of the occupying powers. The British and Soviets had influence over members of the Majlis mainly because such deputies traditionally offered their allegiance to the center of power, and while in Reza Shah's time they had been "loyal" to Reza Shah, during the occupation, the Allied Powers were the apparent sources of power.²⁹

In essence, the Majlis was not a strong or cohesive body during the wartime occupation. The selection of candidates was influenced by the Allied Powers, as was the action taken by certain deputies as members of the Majlis. The Majlis, as well as the ministries, were characterized by frequent turnovers, which reflected the instability of the political arena in Iran.

In view of the interference and domination on the part of the Allied Powers, the Allied Powers clearly acted as though they had occupied a defeated country, despite the terms of the Tripartite Treaty of 1942. Furthermore, such attitudes and actions prevailed despite the promises made

²⁹ Sanghvi, Aryamehr: The Shah of Iran, p. 91.

by the Allied Powers at the Tehran Conference in November, 1943, at which Churchill, Stalin, and Roosevelt reiterated their acknowledgment of Iran's sovereignty, integrity, and independence. Moreover, Britain, the Soviet Union, and the United States acknowledged Iran's contribution to the war effort against the enemy. The Allied Powers also promised to compensate Iran for the economic problems caused by the occupation. These promises encouraged Mohammad Reza Shah's belief that Iran's effective independence would be restored.³⁰ Furthermore, Mohammad Reza Shah was emphatic in his stand that the Allied Powers withdraw within six months after the war.

Despite the conditions of occupation, Mohammad Reza Shah maintained his position as constitutional Monarch. In the best interest of the independence of his country, however, the Shah cooperated with the Allied Powers. In addition, the experience gained by Mohammad Reza Shah during the wartime occupation brought a deeper understanding to the young Shah. In particular, he came to the conclusion that the traditional neutrality was not a viable policy for maintaining Iran's independence. Furthermore, the attitudes and actions of the Allied Powers during the occupation reinforced Mohammed Reza Shah's awareness that the

³⁰ Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, Mission for My Country (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1960), pp. 80-81.

Soviet Union harbored ambitious plans toward Iran, and that positive alliance with the other powers was perhaps one of Iran's best barriers against Soviet aggression.³¹

The effects of the Allied Occupation in Iran were basically destabilizing. Initially, the absence of Reza Shah left a gap in the central authority of the country, for there was no strong figure or cohesive group capable of maintaining control. Many of the people reverted to practices which were common before the reforms of Reza Shah took place, such as wearing traditional clothing and the veil, and engaging in superstitious practices.³² More importantly, the administration and legislation reverted to the weak and disorganized conditions typical in pre-Reza Shah times, such as the prevalence of clerical influence in political matters and the decline in the effective authority of the government.³³ As in other occupied countries, bribery and corrupt activities spread. The majority of Iranians, however, resented the occupation of their country by Britain and the Soviet Union, particularly because of the traditional Anglo-Soviet rivalry for control in Iran. From such resentment grew the strong, though unorganized,

³¹Donald N. Wilber, Contemporary Iran (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1963), p. 109.

³²Armanjani, Iran, p. 151.

³³Wilber, Contemporary Iran, p. 107.

nationalistic feelings of the Iranians, which were to prevail after the war. In addition, the unstable atmosphere in Iran was heightened by the anti-West and antigovernment demonstrations incited by the Tudah Party.

In addition to the degeneration of political life as a result of the occupation, the economy also deteriorated, as evidenced by the great decline in industrial output and the high rate of inflation. Elements contributing to the economic decline were the monopoly of the transportation system by the Allied Powers, the printing of excess paper currency, great rise in prices, and expenses imposed upon Iran by the occupation.³⁴ In addition, the needs of the Allied troops and the Soviet ban on sending food to the southern provinces aggravated the food shortage and led to bread riots, which further reflected the instability of the period. In essence, the occupation was characterized by Anglo-Soviet domination of the country, with the indigenous officials lacking coherent organization and leadership. Moreover, the frequent turnover of officials reflected the prevalent instability in the land.

Thus, in terms of stability and instability, the occupation of Iran by Britain and the Soviet Union marked a period of political, economic, and social instability in the

³⁴Groseclose, Introduction to Iran, pp. 174, 180.

country. Internally, there was little organized leadership in the Majlis or the ministries. The collapse of the economy intensified the unstable situation, in which the people resented the violation of their land by the occupying powers. Regarding the attitudes of the latter, the Soviet Union held ambitions toward Iran, which were apparent in the far-reaching control which the Soviets wielded in the northern zone, having ignored Iranian authority. With such intentions, the Soviets sought to weaken the Iranian government, and the Tudah Party served as the domestic agent of the Soviet government. Although the Soviets realized that a degree of internal stability was necessary in Iran, in order for supplies to reach the Soviet Union, the Soviets felt that such stability could be limited, thereby making Iran a potentially easy target for Soviet plans.

Regarding such Soviet plans, Britain recognized Soviet intentions. Therefore, Britain was mainly concerned about maintaining stability in Iran as a barrier against Soviet moves in the country. Britain did not want Iran to become a Soviet satellite. In addition, Britain was concerned about the security of the supply line to the Soviet Union, as well as the security of British oil installations in southern Iran. Britain was concerned about internal stability for these two reasons. Britain attempted to support internal stability in Iran by supporting the conservative and nationalist elements, and the National Will Party.

Regarding the position of the United States as a third ally present in Iran, the United States was also concerned about the security of the supply line to the Soviet Union. Moreover, the United States wanted the stability of Iran to be firm enough to withstand Soviet ambitions toward the country. In time, the United States came to replace Britain as the Western power most actively involved in maintaining Iran's stability through economic, military, and advisory aid.

With the ending of World War II in August, 1945, the Allied troops were, according to the Tripartite Treaty of 1942, to be withdrawn from Iran by March, 1946. The British and Americans readily complied with the Treaty; in fact, those two powers had begun gradually withdrawing their troops at a much earlier date. The Soviet Union, however, refused to withdraw its troops by the designated date, and this action was entangled with a significant occurrence in Iran, namely, the uprising of separatist movements in the northern province of Azarbayjan. The uprising reflected the political instability in Iran, as well as the Soviet Union's role in promoting that instability.

In August, 1945, armed Tudah supporters backed by Soviet troops occupied governmental buildings in Tabriz, the capital of Azarbayjan. The Tudah rebels, intending to control Tabriz and the area, then issued a manifesto

demanding provincial autonomy and recognition of Azari-Turki as the official language of the province. The revolutionaries demanded such recognition on the ground that the people of Azarbayjan formed a separate "nationality" with a distinct heritage, language, and lifestyle, and, as such, the Azarbayjanies had the right to local self-determination. Although the rebellion was quelled within several weeks, and the local Iranian governor officially regained control, this incident was a preview of the intensified revolution to come.³⁵

The leader of the Azarbayjan separatist movement was Jaafar Pishevari, a communist who had formerly lived in the Soviet Union for a number of years.³⁶ It was more than coincidental that the leader of this movement was a Soviet inspired communist, for the Soviet Union was the force which agitated the Azarbayjani revolutionaries to rebel against the central Iranian government for the autonomy of the province of Azarbayjan. The Soviets incited the separatist movement because they believed that an autonomous Azarbayjan, under a Soviet supported regime, would provide a base for Soviet interests in Iran. Moreover, the Soviets believed

³⁵ Lenczowski, Russia and the West in Iran, 1918-1948, pp. 286-87.

³⁶ Pahlavi, Mission for My Country, p. 115.

that, eventually, an autonomous Azarbayjan could be absorbed into the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, as part of the Azarbayjan Soviet Socialist Republic.

In September, 1945, Pischevari dissolved the local Tudah Party in Azarbayjan and reorganized the members into the newly formed Democratic Party of Azarbayjan (Firqah-i Dimukrat-i Azarbayjan). Pischevari explained that he dissolved the local Tudah Party because he felt that the Tudah Party did not represent the needs of Azarbayjan.³⁷ A more probable explanation is that the Soviet Union directed Pischevari to dissolve the local Tudah Party and to organize the Democratic Party of Azarbayjan, because the connections of the Tudah Party with Soviet interests were well known, and, since the Soviet Union did not want to be openly associated with the Azarbayjan insurrection, the Tudah Party could not have directed the separatist movement.

The revolutionary leadership in Tabriz presented its program to the central Iranian government, and negotiated for provincial autonomy within the state of Iran, as well as the use of Azari-Turki as the official language. In addition, the Democratic Party of Azarbayjan called for additional representatives in the Tehran Majlis, and for the

³⁷ Abrahamian, "Communism and Communalism in Iran: the Tudah and the Firqah-i Dimukrat," p. 291.

formation of a Provincial Council.³⁸ The central Iranian government would not agree to the demand of autonomy, nor the recognition of Azari-Turki as the official language, on the basis that such a move would make a multinational system in Iran, which contrasted the unitary system in the Iranian Constitution.³⁹ With the rejection of their demands, the revolutionaries rebelled and gained control of Azarbayjan. On December 12, 1945, the rebels proclaimed the "Autonomous Republic of Azarbayjan," with a legislative assembly and Pishavari as Prime Minister.

The apparent success of the rebellion in Tabriz encouraged an uprising among separatist Kurds of western Azarbayjan. The Kurds regarded themselves as distinct from Azarbayjanies of Turkish heritage. Consequently, the Kurdish separatists felt no loyalty to the revolutionary government in Tabriz. Thus, on December 15, 1945, the independence of a Kurdish peoples' republic was declared, with the town of Mahabad as its center.⁴⁰ In January, 1946, a Mahabad Chief, Qazi Mohammad, was elected president.

³⁸L. P. Elwell-Sutton, "Political Parties in Iran, 1941-1948," Middle East Journal, III, No. 1 (1949), 56.

³⁹Zabih, The Communist Movement in Iran, p. 102.

⁴⁰Archie Roosevelt, Jr., "The Kurdish Republic of Mahabad," Middle East Journal, I, No. 3 (1947), 257.

The separatist movements were initially successful in declaring autonomy for the Azarbayjan and Kurdish regions. While it is true that there was a small amount of support for autonomy within the province, apparently, the success of the rebellion could not have been achieved by the militant separatists alone, for the level of indigenous support for the move was not great enough, nor was the supply of arms. The rebellion initially achieved its goal of autonomy because the Soviet Union supported the move and protected the rebels. The Soviet Union intended to eventually absorb Iranian Azarbayjan into the U.S.S.R., and, had there been other indications of Iranian Azarbayjan's willingness to join the U.S.S.R., the linguistic ties between the Iranian Province of Azarbayjan and the Azarbayjan Soviet Socialist Republic would have been an additional element facilitating the absorption of Iranian Azarbayjan. The Soviet Union was further encouraged in its plan by the spark of separatist feelings and the communist groups in the province of Azarbayjan.⁴¹ The Soviet troops backed the insurrection by preventing Iranian troops from entering Azarbayjan, and the Soviet Union protected the puppet regime in Azarbayjan by maintaining the Soviet troops in the province. The presence

⁴¹Richard W. Cottam, Nationalism in Iran (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1964), pp. 118, 125.

of the Soviet troops aided the rebel regime in instilling a reign of fear over the province.⁴²

Soviet interference in the province of Azarbayjan was protested by the Iranian government, for such actions on the part of the Soviet Union were clearly contrary to the terms of the Tripartite Treaty of 1942. Britain and the United States joined Iran in protesting the Soviet Union's action of preventing Iranian troops from entering Tabriz in order to quell the December, 1945, rebellion. The two Western powers and Iran also protested the Soviet support of the rebel regimes of Azarbayjan and the Kurdish "republic." In January, 1946, the Iranian government protested before the Security Council of the United Nations, where an intense debate followed.

While the debate continued in the United Nations the Iranian Prime Minister, Ahmad Qavam, went to Moscow to negotiate with the Soviet leaders, Stalin and Molotov. The goal of Iran was to make the Soviet Union terminate its support of the rebellious regimes and to make the Soviet Union abide by the date set for evacuation of troops (March 2, 1946). Through heated negotiations, an agreement was finally reached on April 4, 1946, in which the Soviet Union agreed that the situation in Azarbayjan was an internal

⁴²Sanghvi, Aryamehr: The Shah of Iran, p. 129.

Iranian matter, and that the Soviet troops would be evacuated from Iran by May 9, 1946. Iran, through Prime Minister Qavam, agreed to discuss an oil concession in the north, to be formed as an Iranian-Soviet company; however, this agreement was tentative, and was to be finalized by action of the Fifteenth Majlis (which at that point had not been elected). Iran also agreed to consider the program of the Democratic Party of Azarbayjan.⁴³ Thus, the Soviet Union promised before the Security Council that Soviet troops would be withdrawn, and, indeed, by May 9, 1946, Soviet troops had been evacuated. Consequently, the Pischevari regime and the Kurdish "republic" were abandoned by their Soviet sponsors.

Such a conclusion to an initially enthusiastic Soviet intervention implies that the Soviets realized that they had little to gain by continued support of the regimes, or by maintaining Soviet troops in Iran. On the other hand, the Soviets felt that the situation could be used in pressuring Iran into agreeing to the long awaited oil concession in the northern area of Iran.

Another major factor which prompted the Soviets to withdraw their support from Azarbayjan was that the Pischevari regime had lost its initial popularity, for many of those who originally backed the separatist movement had become

⁴³ Washington Post, April 6, 1946, p. 2, col. 2.

dissatisfied with the rebel regime, for they realized that the Pishavari regime did not fulfill the early promises, such as introducing social and land reforms.⁴⁴ The Soviets then realized that maintaining an autonomous region sympathetic to Soviet interests, would be difficult, due to the lack of any real indigenous support for the rebel regimes. Thus, the Soviets withdrew, realizing that they had more to gain in the promised oil concession than in maintaining Soviet troops and a precarious autonomous region in Iran.

With the Soviet withdrawal, the way was clear for the Iranian government to regain control of the Azarbayjan region. In preparing for the recovery of Azarbayjan, the Iranian government announced that the upcoming elections would be held throughout Iran, including Azarbayjan Province, and the Mahabad region, and that in order to supervise the elections and maintain order, Iranian troops would be sent to Azarbayjan. On December 10, 1946, Iranian troops entered Azarbayjan. Pishavari and his followers attempted to resist, but without Soviet backing the Pishavari regime was totally weakened. Moreover, the people of Azarbayjan welcomed the Iranian troops and actually attacked the leaders and members of the Democratic Party of Azarbayjan.⁴⁵ In the incident,

⁴⁴Cottam, Nationalism in Iran, p. 128.

⁴⁵Ibid.,

some of the Party leaders, including Pischevari, escaped to the Soviet Union. Following the recovery of Azarbayjan, the Iranian Army regained control of the Mahabad region. In this case, the three main Kurdish leaders were hanged by Iranian authorities and others were arrested. The Kurdish tribes did not resist the Iranian Army, for they had not been enthusiastic about the Soviet supported puppet regime. Nor were the tribes particularly loyal to the central Iranian government, for they preferred to be left to their own tribal governing, unhampered by any centralized government.

The Democratic Party of Azarbayjan explained that it had retreated, resulting in the collapse of the regime, because it seemed that engaging in armed resistance would arouse Anglo-American intervention on the Soviet border. The Party said that it would be more reasonable to retreat and to return when conditions were more suitable, that is, when the peasants and laborers could be organized into a revolutionary force.⁴⁶ The Democratic Party of Azarbayjan, in effect, admitted that the majority of the population of Azarbayjan had not been behind the separatist movement. The lack of indigenous support for the Pischevari regime was related to the fact that the interests and goals of the majority of the population of Azarbayjan conflicted with the

⁴⁶ Zabih, The Communist Movement in Iran, pp. 117-18.

policies and goals of the Soviet inspired separatist movement. Although the people of Azarbayjan were proud of their cultural heritage, and had always wanted recognition of their distinct background and dialect, as opposed to blending with all other Persians, the majority of the population of Azarbayjan did not support the movement for autonomy. While initially a segment of the population of Azarbayjan was impressed with Pischevari's promises of social and land reforms, and had backed him, many of his original supporters soon became aware of the superficiality of his promises, withdrew their support, and joined the majority of Azarbayjanies in welcoming the troops of the central Iranian government.

Thus, with the collapse of the Democratic Party of Azarbayjan, the Tudah Party was the only effective communist party in Iran. Following the Soviet defeat in Azarbayjan however, the Soviet Union had temporarily stopped using the Tudah Party as an active Soviet agent; that is, for a while, the Tudah Party did not actively sponsor Soviet interests in Iran. In addition, an ideological split in the Tudah Party developed.⁴⁷

The Azarbayjan insurrection reflects the political instability prevalent in Iran at the end of World War II.

⁴⁷ Elwell-Sutton, "Political Parties in Iran, 1941-1948," p. 60.

Support for establishing regional autonomy existed among Azarbayjan activists who, above all, wanted recognition of their distinct heritage and culture. This movement was fanned without difficulty by Soviet agitation and the reorganization of the local Tudah Party into the Democratic Party of Azarbayjan. The relative ease with which a region of a country could be agitated and led into a rebellion in the name of autonomy was an indication of the prevailing political instability. Furthermore, the fact that the Soviet Union was able, at least in the short run, to prevent the central Iranian government from quelling the rebellion, and that the Soviet Union blatantly interfered and maintained puppet regimes in Tabriz and Mahabad, reflected the preponderance of the Soviet Union and the apparent lack of authoritative power on the part of the Iranian government. The situation did alter, however, for, despite the fact that the Soviet Union was the dominant power in the north, and that Iran was a small, occupied country, Iran did manage to maintain sufficient internal stability and rally support from the West to secure Soviet withdrawal from northern Iran. Thus, the ability of Iran to prompt the withdrawal of Soviet support from the rebel regimes, and the evacuation of Soviet troops from Iran, reflected sources of stability and strength in Iran.

One of Iran's sources of strength was British and American support of Mohammad Reza Shah in his protest against the Soviets. Second, Iran exhibited a degree of internal strength with its bargaining power, for the tentative promise of an oil agreement by Prime Minister Qavam, to be finalized by the Majlis, gave an advantage to Iran. This advantage resulted from the Fifteenth Majlis' refusal to ratify the oil agreement made by Prime Minister Qavam, for the Majlis maintained that the Prime Minister had no legal right to conclude any such agreement. Furthermore, the American Ambassador to Tehran, George V. Allen, had said that the American people would support Iran's right to sell or to refuse to sell Iranian resources. The Majlis, encouraged by apparent American support, confidently rejected the oil agreement.⁴⁸ The Soviets had wanted the oil concession enough to abandon their puppet regimes, yet, the Iranians had managed to insert a condition that the concession would be final only upon ratification by the Majlis. Thus, Iran's ability to prompt the Soviets to withdraw revealed that Iran had a degree of strength and stability enabling it to deal with a power such as the Soviet Union. Those elements of strength were Iran's Western allies and its bargaining power.

⁴⁸Marlowe, Iran, p. 83.

Another pocket of stability, which was to prove of great value in the future, was the loyalty of the Iranian Army to Mohammad Reza Shah. Mohammad Reza Shah was able to recover Azarbayjan through the use of the Army, which followed the Shah's directions, entered Tabriz, fought the resisting separatists, and regained control of the province of Azarbayjan for the central Iranian government. Thus, Iran in the post World War II years exhibited instability; however, the country had elements of stability which could be relied upon.

Of great significance to the matter of stability in Iran was the situation of the communist movement in the country. The movement dated back to 1918. With the rise of Reza Shah the communist movement went underground, and in 1931 communist activities were banned by law. Many communist party members were imprisoned, and others went into exile.⁴⁹ Important were the arrest and imprisonment in 1937 of Taghi Erani and his followers, for when his group was released from prison in 1941 (minus Erani, who had died in prison), it was they who formed the Tudah Party. Indeed, the record of the Tudah activities between 1941 and 1946, revealed the trend of the communist movement in Iran. Although the party initially disclaimed any connection with the Soviet Union,

⁴⁹Wilber, Contemporary Iran, pp. 135-36.

and avoided mentioning Communism in party policies, the true nature of the Tudah Party was gradually revealed, and the identity with Soviet interests became more apparent by 1943-44. Moreover, the connection between Soviet interests and the Tudah Party (and its offshoot the Democratic Party of Azarbayjan) was openly apparent in the Azarbayjan insurrection of 1945, which was a high point in the communist movement in Iran, despite the 1931 ban on communist activities which was legally in effect at that period. The Azarbayjan insurrection was due to Soviet agitation, for the Soviets wanted an autonomous Azarbayjan to be the Soviet foothold in postwar Iran; moreover, the Soviets were planning to absorb the Azarbayjan region into the U.S.S.R. Thus, during that period, the communist movement was "a serious threat to the political stability"⁵⁰ of Iran.

While the Soviet occupation of northern Iran had revived communist activity in Iran, the withdrawal of Soviet support from the Azarbayjan regime and the evacuation of Soviet troops from Iran had the reverse effect. The Tudah Party declined. The Tudah Party's active campaign of supporting Soviet interests in Iran temporarily ceased, and this coincided with an ideological factioning within the party, which was mainly over the degree to which the Tudah

⁵⁰ Ibid., p. 140.

Party should be involved with Soviet interests. The Democratic Party of Azarbayjan was still in existence, but for all practical purposes, the party had collapsed. The Tudah Party managed to stay alive, despite the defeat, and in one respect, the withdrawal of Soviet troops had aided the Tudah Party, for anticommunists could not continue to proclaim that the Tudah Party was merely a tool of the Soviet Union, surviving only by the protection of Soviet troops. Indeed, this situation prompted the Tudah Party to attempt to convince the Iranian people that the Tudah Party was purely an indigenous Iranian organization and was not connected with the Soviet Union.⁵¹ This policy became an important element in the post 1946 revival of the Tudah Party. The Tudah Party made great efforts to revise its organization, in terms of its leaders, members, and activities, in order to remedy the decline it had experienced, and to solve the party factioning.

The revived Tudah Party became more active. The postoccupation period was ripe for Tudah activities, because the party preached social reforms and appealed to the working class, weary of the economic and social burdens with which they were burdened. Iran's political and economic instability, which followed the withdrawal of the Allied

⁵¹Zabih, The Communist Movement in Iran, pp. 123-24.

forces, was used by the Tudah to promote support for the party, for the Tudah Party called for the nationalization of Iran's industries and the division of large agricultural holdings in its appeal for followers.⁵² Such methods gained the support of workers and students for the Tudah Party until 1949.

In February, 1949, an unsuccessful attempt was made to assassinate Mohammad Reza Shah. This incident prompted the government to prohibit communist and other antimonarchical activities. Thus, the Tudah Party, and its organ, the United Central Council of Unified Trade Unions of Iranian Workers (the United Council), were banned. Such a move was justified because the would-be assassin was a member of a union affiliated with the United Council. Martial law was proclaimed, and Tudah members were arrested; however, the main party leaders fled to communist countries.⁵³ The government was concerned with suppressing the extremists and strengthening the stability of Iran. Thus, an era of underground activities by the communist movement began. The Tudah Party and its publications were clandestine until 1951, when restraints were somewhat relaxed.

⁵²Marlowe, Iran, p. 87.

⁵³Zabih, The Communist Movement in Iran, pp. 164-65.

The relationship of the communist movement in Iran to the situation of stability in the country is significant. One of the most destabilizing actions inspired by the communist movement in Iran was the Azarbayjan separatist movement of 1945. The ties of the Tudah Party to the Soviet Union were a great threat, for the success of the insurrection would have provided the Soviet Union with a permanent foothold in Iran. While the communist movement was defeated by the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Azarbayjan and the recovery of the province by the central Iranian government, the Tudah Party revived its activities by 1948.

Indeed, the revival of the Tudah at that time was a special threat to Iran's stability, for the Tudah Party attempted to promote itself as an indigenous force, unaligned with the Soviet Union, and as a proponent of prosperity and social equality for the Iranian masses. The Tudah Party became well organized and was gaining strength in the unstable postwar period. In 1949, the renewed ban on communist activities effectively dispersed the Tudah Party, sending the party underground, while the leaders were arrested or went into exile. The Tudah Party rose again, however, because during the period of Prime Minister Mohammad Mossadegh, the communist party took advantage of the relaxation of restraints on communist activities. During the Mossadegh period, the Tudah Party used a number of

front organizations on the surface, and continued its involvement in demonstrations and riots with the intention of undermining Iran's stability and the Monarch's authority.

The period of Prime Minister Mossadegh, the early 1950s, was the most trying period for Iran in terms of stability and instability. The issues and political figures who arose during that period led to the climax of a 1953 coup d'état, which marked the turning point in Iran. An analysis of the issues which led to the 1953 coup d'état reveals that there were a number of interwoven issues involved.

Firstly, in the aftermath of World War II, Iran was an economically and politically exhausted country. Despite the problems brought to Iran by the Allied occupation, the withdrawal of the troops also brought economic problems, such as unemployment, and consequently frustration. The situation was ripe for the growth of extremist groups of the left and the right. The most notable leftist group was the Tudah Party, and the most notable rightist group was the Devotees of Islam (Fidayan-i-Islam).⁵⁴

In the deteriorated economic conditions of postwar Iran, definite economic planning was necessary. Mohammad Reza Shah

⁵⁴Armanjani, Iran, p. 160.

felt that increased oil revenues would provide funds for economic development. American advisors drafted a national development program for Iran designed to promote the development of industry, oil production, agriculture, and other fields. This program was adopted by the Iranian government in July, 1949, as the First Seven Year Plan, to be directed by the Seven Year Plan Organization, and to be financed by government revenues from the oil industry.⁵⁵ In addition, Mohammad Reza Shah hoped to receive increased financial assistance from the United States. At that time, however, the United States would not increase the financial aid it was already supplying under the Truman Doctrine. Such a rejection initiated anti-American feelings, and strengthened the position of the Majlis coalition of noncommunist nationalists known as the "National Front." In addition, the rejection prompted agitation for an increase in oil revenues, since this would be the source of finance for the Seven Year Plan.

By 1948, there began negotiations to revise the 1933 oil agreement, between the Iranian government and the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company (AIOC). There arose great controversy over the oil situation with both leftists and rightists exerting pressure on the Majlis. Even

⁵⁵Pahlavi, Mission for My Country, p. 138.

Mohammad Reza Shah, whose concern was for the development of his country, was criticized by extremists. Emotions were heightened throughout the country. In February, 1949, an attempt was made on the life of Mohammad Reza Shah. This shocked the people into realizing that, had Mohammad Reza Shah been assassinated, Iran would have plunged into a state of anarchy.⁵⁶ Because extremists were connected with the attempted assassination, the Tudah Party and all antimonarchist activities were banned. In consideration of the political conditions, the Majlis voted to strengthen Mohammad Reza Shah's constitutional powers. In this regard, a Senate was established, to which Mohammad Reza Shah appointed one-half of the members. In addition, Mohammad Reza Shah gained the right to dissolve the Majlis and order new elections.

The main controversy of the period was the revision of the oil agreement with the AIOC, and most visible in the controversy were the member groups of the National Front, whose articulate leader was Mohammad Mossadegh. Mossadegh himself was of a wealthy landowning family, and he had been involved in political life from his early adult years. The nationalists within the National Front were from many

⁵⁶Hassan Arfa, Under Five Shahs (New York: William Morrow, 1965), p. 388.

different segments of Iranian society, and they included religious clerics, merchants, professionals, and students, who were of various political and economic backgrounds, such as noncommunist leftists of the intelligentsia, members of the working class and of the upper class. The National Front was a conglomeration of various groups loosely labeled as a coalition because of their avowed hatred for the foreign influence in Iran. The coalition, however, lacked any real cohesion. There was no well defined policy, aside from ousting the foreigners, especially the British. Although there was no formal organization within the National Front, there were political groupings which made up a Left Wing, center groups, and a conservative Right Wing, as well as Nationalist extremists. The center and conservative Right Wing was the focal point of the National Front, because Mossadegh was identified with this segment.⁵⁷

Related to the National Front's hatred of foreign influence was Mossadegh's proposal that Iran neither grant concessions to any country, nor allow the influence of any country in Iran. This would have created a situation in which all foreign countries would have been excluded from Iran. Therefore, this policy was referred to as "Negative

⁵⁷Cottam, Nationalism in Iran, pp. 265-66.

Equilibrium" or "Negative Neutrality."⁵⁸ As a force attempting to eliminate foreign influence in Iran, the format of the National Front was that of negative objectives. In this regard, the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company became the target of the National Front, for, as the Soviet request for a northern oil concession had been rejected in 1947, a balance would exist only if the oil of Iran were nationalized and the British company expropriated. The time was ripe for the National Front's objectives, for Iranians were dissatisfied with the unequal treatment, and the unequal oil returns, imposed upon Iran by the AIOC. Indeed, the National Front grasped the opportunity to agitate against the AIOC, and to champion Iranian nationalism through the call for the nationalization of Iran's oil.

Aside from the National Front's aversion to foreign influence, the National Front groups had other reasons for initiating agitation against the AIOC. For example, groups of conservative landlords and clerics who maintained religious endowments (waqfs) were opposed to Mohammad Reza Shah's plan to distribute the Royal Estates to the peasants, and such groups, interested in maintaining the feudal system, turned the attention of the people from land reform to the emotional issue of the nationalization of oil.⁵⁹ In

⁵⁸Pahlavi, Mission for My Country, p. 84.

⁵⁹Sanghvi, Aryamehr: The Shah of Iran, p. 172.

addition, members of the Majlis managed to escape an anticorruption inquiry, which was being waged by Prime Minister Ali Razmara, by focusing attention on oil discussions.⁶⁰

Moreover, it has been stated that Mossadegh used the emotional issue of the nationalization of oil and the ousting of the British as a means of propelling himself into a position of popularity and power.⁶¹ Mossadegh and the National Front easily directed the attention of the Iranian people toward the oil issue because the Iranians disliked the British. The Iranian people were willing to back a leader or group who would rid Iran of the British company, and secure for Iran its rightful oil revenues. Indeed, such feelings explain the support which the Iranian population initially gave to Mossadegh, for he promised them a more prosperous life, free of the British overseers.

Negotiations between the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company and Iran were carried out in order to revise the 1933 oil agreement. A Supplemental Agreement, which proposed a fifty-fifty sharing of the oil profits, was drawn up by the AIOC, and was submitted to the Majlis in February, 1951. The Majlis Oil Commission, of which Mossadegh was the

⁶⁰Avery, Modern Iran, p. 417.

⁶¹Marlowe, Iran, p. 92.

chairman, was to consider the Supplemental Agreement and offer its recommendations to the Majlis. Mossadegh could not argue for the nationalization of oil on the basis of the benefits that might be derived from such a move, for nationalization would not have been an economic asset at that time, due to Iran's inability to operate the oil industry at that time. Indeed, Mohammad Reza Shah, who did not oppose the principle of nationalization as such, realized that Iran did not then have the financial or technical ability to operate the oil industry.⁶² The views of Mohammad Reza Shah on the situation revealed the Shah's concern about the economic development of Iran. Mossadegh, on the other hand, championed the nationalization of oil on an emotional basis, for he wanted to expropriate the British and to gain personal popularity.

Due to the emotions of the time, the Supplemental Agreement was rejected, and the Majlis Oil Commission proposed the nationalization of the oil industry. Prime Minister Razmara opposed the move, for he realized that Iran was not then capable of operating the oil industry. On March 7, 1951, Razmara was murdered by a member of the religious fanatical group, the Devotees of Islam. Shocked by the action, the Majlis quickly approved the nationalization

⁶²Sanghvi, Aryamehr: The Shah of Iran, p. 179.

proposal, which a number of Majlis deputies actually opposed.⁶³ The deputies had been intimidated, however, by rioting mobs which had been incited by Mossadegh, and, in order to appease the extremists, the deputies approved the nationalization.

The Nationalization Law was not recognized as legitimate by Britain. In an attempt to ensure the continued production of the oil industry, the new Prime Minister, Hossein Ala, suggested that a compromise be arranged, in which the foreign technicians would operate the nationalized industry. Mossadegh would not accept any compromise. Mohammad Reza Shah had approved the Nationalization Law, because Iran could not remain under the unequal treatment of the AIOC; however, Mohammad Reza Shah intended that the foreign technicians should maintain the industry. Extremists opposed this, and rioted in the southern oil fields, after which Britain closed the oil operations on April 15, 1951.⁶⁴

The postoccupation years had been characterized by instability, and this was reflected in the instability of the successive governments. Mohammad Reza Shah felt that the popular support of Mossadegh would help to stabilize the government and to affect the changes related to the

⁶³Ibid., p. 179.

⁶⁴Pahlavi, Mission for My Country, p. 90.

nationalization of the oil industry. Mohammad Reza Shah decided to nominate Mossadegh as Prime Minister, for Mossadegh had said that he would implement the important reforms needed to improve the lifestyle of Iranians. Thus, on April 29, 1951, Mossadegh became Prime Minister, and asked for two months to enforce the Nationalization Law.⁶⁵

In May, 1951, Britain was still willing to work out the oil problem and to recognize the principle of nationalization. However, Britain wanted AIOC personnel to operate the industry. Mossadegh, meanwhile, had devised a Nine Point Law, which provided for a Board to affect the nationalization of the oil industry and the expropriation of the AIOC. Britain maintained that the expropriation of the company conflicted with the terms of the 1933 oil agreement, for that concession was not to be broken by unilateral action; rather, disputed matters were to be arbitrated.⁶⁶ The Iranian government, however, declared that nationalization by law repealed any agreement with private concerns.⁶⁷ With determination to follow through with nationalization, Iran formed the National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC), in June, 1951; however, the NIOC could not maintain efficient

⁶⁵Sanghvi, Aryamehr: The Shah of Iran, p. 180.

⁶⁶Avery, Modern Iran, p. 418. ⁶⁷*Ibid.*, pp. 420-21.

operations in the oil industry, and the oil revenues dwindled. By July, 1951, severe economic decline had begun.

In July, 1951, the United States, concerned with the production of oil, encouraged Iran and Britain to negotiate and to devise a working formula. For this purpose, Averell Harriman was sent as a special envoy to Iran, and Richard Stokes represented British interests. The negotiations floundered on the point of the operation of the oil industry, for, although Britain had conceded the principle of nationalization and had agreed that AIOC should be an agent of the NIOC, the AIOC would not concede to the expropriation of the company's oil installations. Moreover, Britain did not want the British technicians to work under a contract with NIOC, for Britain wanted the employees' contracts with AIOC to remain in effect, with mainly Britons maintaining the operation of the oil industry.⁶⁸

The negotiations failed, apparently, because Mossadegh would not agree to any terms, except complete control of the oil industry by the Iranian government, for Mossadegh was determined to crush Britain's position in Iran, despite the adverse effects upon Iran's economy. Mossadegh wanted recognition of Iran's right to nationalize the oil industry and to expropriate, with compensation, the AIOC. Therefore,

⁶⁸Alan W. Ford, The Anglo-Iranian Oil Dispute of 1951-1952 (Berkeley: The University of California Press, 1954), p. 96, cited by Cottam, Nationalism in Iran, p. 214.

no compromise would have been acceptable to him, not even the fifty-fifty proposal offered by Britain, an agreement which probably would have prevented the economic collapse which followed. The July negotiations and the dispute inflamed heightened emotions and incited riotous demonstrations by National Front supporters as well as Tudah supporters.

By September, 1951, there appeared to be no hope of reaching a compromise in the oil dispute. Therefore, the actual nationalization of the oil industry came into effect, with the expropriation of the AIOC. Although Mossadegh felt victorious over the assertion of Iran's position, Britain had not relinquished all hope of regaining its role in the Iranian oil industry. Following the breakdown of negotiations, Britain appealed to the International Court of Justice (ICJ) on the basis of the provision for arbitration in the 1933 oil agreement. Mossadegh did not recognize the jurisdiction of the ICJ, however, and Britain then submitted the matter to the Security Council of the United Nations, where it was debated in October, 1951.⁶⁹ For its part, the United Nations decided to await the International Court of Justice's decision on the position of an international organization in the oil dispute. Rather

⁶⁹Pahlavi, Mission for My Country, pp. 92-93.

than idly wait for a decision, Britain initiated several measures to apply economic pressure to Iran, such as freezing Iran's sterling balance, and canceling British licenses to export certain materials from the United Kingdom to Iran.⁷⁰ While such measures were an inconvenience for Iran, they were somewhat alleviated by the Soviet Union's exporting items to Iran.

The most drastic British technique, however, one which effectively crushed Iran's oil industry at that time, was Britain's cutting the market for Iranian oil. Britain had informed possible buyers of Iranian oil that anyone purchasing oil from NIOC would be sued for knowingly possessing stolen goods, for Britain had warned them that the oil belonged to the AIOC. Since the oil tankers would not accept Iranian oil, and Iran owned no oil tankers, Iran could not export its oil. Consequently, Iran received no revenue from the oil industry.⁷¹ The revenue from the oil industry remained lost until 1954, after Mossadegh was no longer Prime Minister. Due to the loss of oil revenues, the Seven Year Plan for Development collapsed.

The collapse of the oil industry adversely affected Mossadegh's position, for, as the situation worsened, the

⁷⁰Sanghvi, Aryamehr: The Shah of Iran, p. 191.

⁷¹Marlowe, Iran, pp. 94-95.

members of the Majlis became more open in their disapproval of Mossadegh's policies. In May, 1952, the Majlis rejected the National Front's candidate for its president. In July, 1952, Mossadegh told Mohammad Reza Shah that as Prime Minister, he could not maintain order unless he was given plenary powers for six months. Mossadegh wanted to rule by decree without consulting the Majlis, and he wanted the position of Minister of War, which would give him control of the armed forces. Mohammad Reza Shah refused to grant Mossadegh such powers. Consequently, Mossadegh resigned on July 16, 1952, and was replaced by Ahmad Qavam. Due to the demonstrations that occurred, however, the Shah asked Qavam to resign and Mossadegh was reappointed. The Majlis then went along with Mossadegh's request for plenary powers, as the deputies had been intimidated by the rioting crowds. At about the same time, the International Court of Justice returned its decision that it had no jurisdiction in the oil dispute between Iran and the AIOC, which Mossadegh regarded as a personal victory.⁷²

Nonetheless, Mossadegh's "victory" meant further political and economic decline for Iran, for no reversal in the oil shutdown would be forthcoming. Mossadegh's plenary powers were indeed wide-ranging, for he took charge of the

⁷²Pahlavi, Mission for My Country, p. 95.

Ministry of War, and he ruled by decree in such areas as banning strikes by government workers, placing restrictions on newspapers, and declaring martial law. In October, 1952, Mossadegh cut Iran's relations with Britain, while in January, 1953, he directed the Majlis to dissolve the Senate. In addition, Mossadegh obtained a six month renewal of his plenary powers, and he dissolved the Supreme Court. Next, Mossadegh initiated a referendum on the question of dissolving the Majlis, during which the people were intimidated into voting for dissolution.⁷³

Real support for Mossadegh was dwindling, however, and by spring, 1953, a split had occurred in the National Front. A number of former Mossadegh supporters, notably Hossein Maki, Mozaffar Baqai, and Abolqassem Kashani, defected from the National Front. With the defection of these leaders, a number of their followers became anti-Mossadegh. Indeed, in February, 1953, a crowd rioted before Mossadegh's house, causing him to take refuge in the Majlis building.⁷⁴ Mossadegh was not completely abandoned, however, for those who naively thought that Mossadegh's prime concern was

⁷³Marlowe, Iran, p. 98.

⁷⁴Cottam, Nationalism in Iran, pp. 277, 280.

ridding Iran of foreign imperialists, continued to support him.⁷⁵

As opposition to Mossadegh grew, and support for him declined, the role of the Tudah Party in relation to Mossadegh became significant. Mossadegh and the Tudah Party shared mutually ambivalent feelings toward each other. The initial relationship between the Tudah Party and Mossadegh was one of animosity. The National Front had adopted an anticommunist policy in order to attract American aid, a policy which turned the Soviets and the Tudah Party against Mossadegh and the National Front.⁷⁶ For its part, the United States had told Mossadegh to amend the oil dispute before increased aid would be given. This rejection strained America's relationship with Mossadegh, and as that relationship became increasingly strained, Mossadegh's relationship with the Tudah Party became less so. By July, 1952, Mossadegh had relaxed the restraints on the banned Tudah Party, and the government reduced the ban on communist activities. In a like manner, the Tudah press had eased its criticism of Mossadegh following July, 1952.

Although the legal ban on communist activities still existed, it was not enforced, and the Tudah Party took advantage of the relaxed restraints. The Tudah Party

⁷⁵Ibid., p. 280.

⁷⁶Ibid., p. 222.

utilized front organizations for open activity, while the party itself worked underground.⁷⁷ The Tudah Party then adopted a more revolutionary program, which included the increased training of military cadres, for the Tudah leaders had ultimate plans of usurping power, and the military network of the party was to play a vital role.⁷⁸ The Tudah had actually infiltrated the Iranian military, and maintained an organized military network until the fall of Mossadegh. In order to gain influence in Iran, the Tudah Party pretended to support Mossadegh's nationalist policies; however, the Tudah Party did not actually acknowledge the National Front as an ideological partner. The Tudah was only using Mossadegh as a step to reach its own goals. The Tudah Party wanted to destroy Iran's Western ties and to have Iran aligned with the Soviet Union. To do so, the Tudah Party intended to take advantage of the chaotic conditions in the government, and the anti-Western aspects of Mossadegh's nationalism.⁷⁹ Indeed, Mossadegh's relaxation of anticommunist restraints had facilitated the expansion of the communist organization, and had allowed the Tudah Party to advance closer to its goal.

⁷⁷ Zabih, The Communist Movement in Iran, p. 167.

⁷⁸ Ibid., p. 177.

⁷⁹ Ibid., p. 190.

One of the main reasons for Mossadegh's relaxation of restraints on communist activity was his belief that greater freedom for communist activities in Iran would prompt the United States into providing more aid to Iran in an effort to prevent Mossadegh from turning to the communists. On May 28, 1953, Mossadegh implied, in a letter to President Eisenhower, that without increased American aid, Mossadegh would have to turn to the communists for aid. Mossadegh was unsuccessful in his attempt to alter the policy of the United States, for, in a return letter of June 29, 1953, President Eisenhower rejected his request, and declared that Iran must determine its own foreign and domestic policies in the best interest of the country.⁸⁰ Eisenhower's reply resulted in a further decline of Mossadegh's popularity, for the Prime Minister's inability to acquire funds for Iran was exposed. Mossadegh became increasingly dictatorial, and somewhat paranoid, as exhibited by his living in the Majlis building for refuge, for he feared that he might be assassinated.⁸¹

One of Mossadegh's goals had been to undermine the authority of the Shah. In this regard, Mossadegh had designated a committee in the Majlis to determine ways to

⁸⁰Cottam, Nationalism in Iran, pp. 223-24.

⁸¹Avery, Modern Iran, p. 436.

limit the Shah's power as Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces. However, the Majlis would not consider such a tactic.⁸² Mohammad Reza Shah realized that Mossadegh hoped to overthrow the Shah and to destroy the Pahlavi Dynasty.

Iran was declining into greater political and economic instability and action was needed to prevent further decline at the hands of Mossadegh. The impetus to action came with the apparent illegality of a referendum initiated by Mossadegh to formalize the dissolution of the Majlis in August, 1953.⁸³ On August 13, Mohammad Reza Shah issued a decree dismissing Mossadegh and naming General Fazlollah Zahedi as Prime Minister. Mossadegh would not accept the decree, and he arrested the messenger who delivered it. Such actions initiated the coup d'état by the Army and the people against Mossadegh, and in support of Mohammad Reza Shah. Mohammad Reza Shah and the Queen left for Baghdad, then flew to Rome. Mohammad Reza Shah explained that it had been prearranged that if Mossadegh used force to resist the decree, Mohammad Reza Shah and the Queen would leave the country, in order to force Mossadegh and his force to "show their real allegiances,"⁸⁴ and thereby aid in defining the

⁸²Cottam, Nationalism in Iran, p. 281.

⁸³Zabih, The Communist Movement in Iran, p. 199.

⁸⁴Pahlavi, Mission for My Country, p. 104.

opinion of the Iranian people. It would, in effect, give Iran an opportunity for a true referendum on the country's support for Mohammad Reza Shah.

On August 16, 1953, General Zahedi led royalist retired Army officers against Mossadegh's tank-guarded estate. The attack was unsuccessful, and was followed by two days of demonstrations and riots, much of which was incited by the Tudah Party. At that point the Tudah was involved in pro-Mossadegh demonstrations. However, on August 19, the Tudah-inspired mobs turned against Mossadegh and the Tudah members were instructed not to be involved.⁸⁵ The communists had abandoned Mossadegh, for they realized that there was very little genuine support for Mossadegh, and that he would be defeated.

The Army, loyal to Mohammad Reza Shah, resumed its fight, reclaimed areas of Tehran, and at the same time, segments of the Iranian people joined the Army in the fight against Mossadegh. The people wanted to depose the dictatorial Prime Minister who had ruined Iran's economy and had allowed the communists to reorganize and gain influence in the country. The Iranian people wanted their Shah to rule Iran. For this goal they were willing to risk their lives and fight Mossadegh's forces. The Army and the

⁸⁵Avery, Modern Iran, p. 439.

people captured Mossadegh, and on August 22, 1953, Mohammad Reza Shah and the Queen returned to Tehran and to the rejoicing of the Iranian people.⁸⁶

Mossadegh was tried, convicted, and imprisoned, and was then placed under village arrest. Through the trials, the inner nature of Mossadegh's period was revealed, including the infiltration of six hundred Tudah officers into the Iranian Armed Forces, as well as the Tudah plan to eliminate Mossadegh once he had overthrown the Pahlavi Dynasty and establish a communist regime. It has been noted that the communists deserted Mossadegh because of the uprising against him, for the determination of the Iranian people to fight against Mossadegh made the Tudah members realize that Iran was not a ripe target for a communist takeover.⁸⁷ With the ending of Mossadegh's period, the ban on the Tudah Party and communist activity was strictly enforced, with the imprisonment of many communist leaders and party members.

The characterization of the August, 1953, revolution as a coup d'état of the Army and the people has been prefaced by some observers with a claim that the overthrow of Mossadegh was made possible by the involvement of the United States Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). One widely

⁸⁶Sanghvi, Aryamehr: The Shah of Iran, p. 210.

⁸⁷Pahlavi, Mission for My Country, p. 105.

circulated account of such alleged involvement was an article written by Richard Harkness and Gladys Harkness in the Saturday Evening Post.⁸⁸ The article proposed that the overthrow of Mossadegh was initiated by CIA officials who paid local agents to induce Iranians to fight against Mossadegh. Although the alleged involvement of the CIA was a controversial and unclear matter, a more careful observation of the events would reveal that the Harkness and Harkness article had distorted the facts, and was filled with "puerile innuendoes."⁸⁹

The allegations in the Harkness and Harkness article have been refuted, and, although it was possible that some local leaders may have been paid to fight against Mossadegh, the great number of Iranian people who joined the fight surprised General Zahedi, and those people were not paid to fight. Those Iranians were determined to crush Mossadegh, along with any possibility of having a communist government in Iran. Moreover, the Harkness and Harkness article erred in not recognizing the spontaneous development of the events of August 19, 1953, for, "Mossadegh could not have been

⁸⁸Richard Harkness and Gladys Harkness, "The Mysterious Doings of the CIA," The Saturday Evening Post, November 6, 1954, pp. 66-68, cited by Cottam, Nationalism in Iran, pp. 227-29.

⁸⁹Cottam, Nationalism in Iran, p. 229.

overthrown if significant elements of the population had not lost faith in his leadership."⁹⁰ Mohammad Reza Shah dealt with the allegations by stating that it was possible that payments could have been made in some cases. However, Mohammad Reza Shah believed that the spontaneous participation of such a large number of Iranians in the fight against Mossadegh indicated that those who joined the fight were not paid to do so. Mohammad Reza Shah noted that loyal men, women, and children risked their lives to overturn Mossadegh, and that money could not have been an inducement to make them risk their lives. The people were inspired by "indigenous nationalism."⁹¹

The period of the Mossadegh premiership was overwhelmingly an unstable time in Iran. The political and economic instability was mainly the result of the disruptive policies of Prime Minister Mossadegh and his stubborn refusal to compromise, even in the interest of Iran. Mossadegh had brought about the nationalization of oil, despite the warnings of the Shah and oil experts that Iran was not then capable of maintaining the oil industry. The resultant economic deterioration affected the political and social situation, and brought about greater frustration and

⁹⁰Ibid., pp. 227, 229.

⁹¹Pahlavi, Mission for My Country, p. 106.

instability. Mossadegh had planned to use the world's need for Iranian oil as a bargaining weapon in inducing Britain to agree to his terms. However, Mossadegh had misjudged the situation, for the world soon adjusted to operating without Iran's oil. Moreover, Britain would not agree to Mossadegh's terms, and retaliated against Mossadegh's nationalization through economic pressures.

Mossadegh was mainly concerned with securing power for himself, and was not greatly occupied with the stabilization of Iran, although he had promised Mohammad Reza Shah that such would be his goal as Prime Minister. Mossadegh, however, adopted destructive policies in foreign and domestic matters. Mossadegh actually wanted dictatorial powers, and he used various tactics to attempt to undermine the authority of the Shah. In his quest for personal power, Mossadegh sought to make the Shah reign, not rule. Mossadegh's struggle for power adversely affected the stability of Iran. The intensity of Mossadegh's attempts to undermine the authority of the Shah and to gain personal power led to the collapse of political and social stability by August, 1953, at which point a revolution of the Army and the people removed Mossadegh from power and reestablished the stabilizing authority of Mohammad Reza Shah.

Another trend in Mossadegh's policies which adversely affected the stability of Iran was the relaxation of restraints on communist activities. Because of the relaxed

conditions, the Tudah Party became well organized during Mossadegh's period, and it gained strength in the midst of the political and social chaos caused by the economic decline and confusion following the nationalization of oil.⁹²

Mossadegh's relaxation of restraints against communist activities made it possible for Tudah members to infiltrate the military, which brought the communists closer to their ultimate goal of taking over the government of Iran.

Although Mossadegh would not work openly with the Tudah Party, for he feared such an alliance would shatter his support, Mossadegh did deal with the Tudah and relax restraints upon them.⁹³ The Tudah Party was thereby able to work more openly in demonstrations and riots against the political and social structure of Iran, thus, increasing the intensity of the unstable situation in the country. Such activities were an added impetus for the people of Iran to fight against Mossadegh in August, 1953, for they feared the Tudah would become overly powerful, and the Iranian people were determined that they did not want a Tudah government coming into power.

Mossadegh hoped to use the scare of Communism as a bargaining tool to obtain more American aid. Indeed, this

⁹²"Man of the Year: Challenge of the East," Time, January 7, 1952, p. 20.

⁹³"Mossadegh's Role in the Events of 1951-3 in Persia," Central Asian Review, IX, No. 3 (1961), 305.

was a negative policy of "strength through weakness,"⁹⁴ characteristic of Mossadegh's term. Mossadegh's negative policies did not work, however, and the United States would not be prodded into fulfilling Mossadegh's requests. This loss of bargaining power, along with the other fiascos of Mossadegh's term caused the Prime Minister to lose a good deal of support. The prime reasons for Mossadegh's fall, however, were his quest for personal power and his disregard for the interests of Iran. Mossadegh's power-seeking policies caused economic collapse in Iran, as well as increased political and social instability.

The return of Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi on August 22, 1953, was a joyful day for Iranians. A new era began for Iran, an era in which Mohammad Reza Shah strengthened his position such that he was able to rule effectively and not merely reign.

In summary, the period between 1941 and 1953 was characterized by political, economic, and social instability in Iran. The occupation of Iran by Allied forces in 1941 marked the beginning of an era of instability in the country, for the actual independence of Iran was hampered by the domination of the country by Britain and the Soviet Union.

⁹⁴"Mossadegh—Prophet or Buffoon," New York Times, September 28, 1952, Sec. VI, p. 16.

Furthermore, the economic and social problems brought to Iran with occupation were destabilizing elements of the war years. An additional threat to Iran's stability was exhibited in the Soviet influenced separatist movement of Azarbayjan in 1945, which, if it had lasted, would have resulted in Azarbayjan becoming a satellite of the Soviet Union, and in further Soviet domination over other provinces in Iran. Iran was able to oust the Soviets in 1946 through effective bargaining and the support of Iran's Western allies, which revealed a degree of strength on the part of Iran. During the period 1941-1953, there were intermittent resurgences of communist activities, which comprised a major destabilizing force in Iran. Following the August, 1953, coup d'état, however, the communist movement was quelled through the strict enforcement of the ban on communist activities. The climax of instability during that period arrived with the rise of Mossadegh, whose destructive policies, especially his policy on oil nationalization, brought increased economic collapse as well as political and social instability in Iran. With the fall of Mossadegh in August, 1953, Mohammad Reza Shah began an effective revival of political and economic stability in Iran.

CHAPTER IV

THE RULE OF MOHAMMAD REZA SHAH, 1953-1973

The return of Mohammad Reza Shah on August 22, 1953, was a time of rejoicing in Iran; moreover, it marked a turning point in the country. Mohammad Reza Shah realized that, in the interest of stabilizing his regime and the country, the Shah must effectively rule, not reign while other forces interfered with the control of the country. In order to establish himself as the undisputable ruler, Mohammad Reza Shah needed to strengthen his position such that his rule would not be challenged by the destabilizing forces of the communists and the National Front extremists. The Shah utilized a number of methods in strengthening and stabilizing his rule and the country between 1953 and 1962. By 1962, the gradual process of strengthening and stabilizing the Shah's rule was virtually completed with Mohammad Reza Shah's success in launching and carrying out his land reform program, which had been opposed by several powerful elements in the country. In 1963, the "Revolution of the Shah and the People" was initiated, and the reforms brought about during the decade of the Revolution, under the stabilizing influence of Mohammad Reza Shah, served to stabilize the political, economic, and social spheres in Iran.

Mohammad Reza Shah built the strength of his rule with political, economic, military, and social means. The support for the Shah was strengthened in October, 1953, by the Shah's resumption of the distribution of the Royal Estates to the peasants who worked the land, a step which formerly had been disrupted by Prime Minister Mossadegh.¹ The Royal Estates included about two thousand villages, all of which were to be redistributed to the peasant cultivators. Mohammad Reza Shah's distribution of the Royal Estates elicited a favorable response from the peasants and others favoring the redistribution of land to the peasants who worked on the land.

One of the methods used to increase the stability of the Shah's regime was to weaken the destabilizing forces of opposition. In this regard, anticommunist (anti-Tudah) and anti-National Front campaigns were important in crushing the influence of those opponents of the Shah's regime. Following the August, 1953, coup d'état, a number of National Front leaders were arrested and several were imprisoned.² Regarding the anticommunist campaign, the prosecution of the illegal communist movement was intensified following the 1954 discovery of Tudah infiltration in the military.³

¹Peter Avery, Modern Iran (London: Ernest Benn, 1965), p. 443.

²Donald N. Wilber, Contemporary Iran (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1963), p. 147.

³Sepehr Zabih, The Communist Movement in Iran (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1966), p. 209.

The stability of the Shah's regime was heightened through the repression of subversive organizations which Mohammad Reza Shah noted, are restrained by other free nations also in the interest of security.⁴ Through the suppression of the opposition forces, the organization of the National Front was scattered by the mid-1950s. However, the National Front supporters managed to form a secret organization called the National Resistance Movement.⁵ Thus, the National Front, though weakened, survived and managed to carry on opposition to the Shah's regime, apparently because the government was more tolerant toward the National Front supporters than toward the Tudah members.

By 1955, the organization of the Tudah Party was effectively dispersed, for there was no tolerance for the outlawed communist movement.⁶ Mohammad Reza Shah explained that in dealing with ex-communists, punishment was enforced for traitors and murderers, while other ex-communists "who have repented and begged to serve their country and king"⁷ have been permitted to do so, for Mohammad Reza Shah

⁴Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi, Mission for My Country (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1960), p. 209.

⁵Wilber, Contemporary Iran, p. 148.

⁶Zabih, The Communist Movement in Iran, p. 208.

⁷Pahlavi, Mission for My Country, p. 129.

maintained that such a policy of social justice was the "fundamental key in combating internal communism."⁸

Other effective instruments in suppressing the subversive opposition forces were the reorganized loyalist forces of the military and the Security and Information Organization (Sazeman Ettelat Va Amniat Keshvar), referred to as SAVAK.⁹ SAVAK was the special department for security in Iran. SAVAK functioned as one of the Shah's instruments for maintaining internal security and stability by checking "any activities directed against the State,"¹⁰ whether such activities were by Iranians or foreigners. SAVAK was responsible for monitoring and eliminating communist activities in the country. Mohammad Reza Shah explained that as long as subversive communist activities persisted in Iran, SAVAK would be necessary, for the Shah was determined to prevent destabilizing activities by

⁸Ibid., p. 130.

⁹James A. Bill, The Politics of Iran (Columbus, Ohio: Charles E. Merrill, 1972), p. 139.

¹⁰SAVAK is frequently compared to similar agencies in the United States and most other countries. Mohammad Reza Shah has explained that other countries have several organizations designed to check activities directed against the State (such as the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Central Intelligence Agency in the United States). In Iran, the operation is more concentrated, for SAVAK is the main organization which performs this role in the country. Ian McIntyre, "Men of Power: The Shah of Iran," The Listener, December 5, 1974, p. 723.

subversives.¹¹ SAVAK was effective in rooting out many subversives, and continues its duties in Iran.

The military forces have been a viable instrument in countering subversive activities, and a source of strength and stability for Mohammad Reza Shah's regime. The military has consistently supported Mohammad Reza Shah, enhancing and strengthening his position. The military's support added to Mohammad Reza Shah's confidence in his position as effective ruler.¹²

The military forces were expanded and better equipped during the 1950s to assist them in effectively maintaining internal security and defense. The expansion of the military was made possible by the improved financial situation brought about by American aid and by the resumption of revenues from the oil industry in 1954. Indeed, prospects for economic development depended upon settling the oil dispute with Britain and upon obtaining financial assistance from the United States. While aid had come to Iran in 1952 under President Truman's Point Four Program, financial and technical assistance was increased after the fall of Mossadegh. The increased assistance was significant

¹¹"Oil, Grandeur and a Challenge to the West," Time, November 4, 1974, p. 34.

¹²Hafez F. Farmayan, "Politics During the Sixties: A Historical Analysis," Iran Faces the Seventies, ed. Ehsan Yar-Shater (New York: Praeger, 1971), p. 89.

considering the earlier rejection of Mossadegh's request for increased aid in June, 1953. The continuation and increase of financial and military assistance was welcomed in Iran because such aid helped Iran to overcome its financial deterioration, caused by the oil dispute.¹³

The United States was willing to increase its aid to Iran in order to encourage economic development and stability, and in this regard, to prevent the Soviet Union from promoting its influence in Iran. Indeed, the United States had been alarmed by the apparent communist influence during Mossadegh's period. Therefore, the U.S. government decided to provide increased economic assistance to Mohammad Reza Shah's regime, for the assistance would strengthen Mohammad Reza Shah's regime and Iran's economic situation and thereby decrease communist influence.¹⁴ In providing economic and military assistance, the United States had replaced Britain as the main adversary of Soviet interests toward Iran.¹⁵ Initially, the United States had intended to assist Iran in maintaining a military force designed for keeping internal security in Iran; however,

¹³Pahlavi, Mission for My Country, p. 130.

¹⁴John Marlowe, Iran (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1963), p. 102.

¹⁵Wilber, Contemporary Iran, p. 195.

Mohammad Reza Shah wanted to expand the armed forces into a large, well equipped military for stability and defense. Mohammad Reza Shah utilized the American financial aid, and military training and equipment, in developing the strength of Iran's military.

In addition, Iran was able to utilize the resumed revenues from the oil industry. In August, 1953, Iran agreed to resume negotiations for the settlement of the oil dispute with Britain. The September, 1954, agreement replaced the former Anglo-Iranian Oil Company with an international oil consortium composed of American, British, French, and Dutch companies, with the National Iranian Oil Company and the Iranian government as owner of the concessions and all oil produced.¹⁶ The agreement granted to the international oil consortium the rights of exploration and sale of oil from a limited zone, for a period of twenty-five years with the option for renewal for three five-year periods. Iran was to receive one-half of the oil income before taxes.¹⁷ The economy of Iran was revived through the oil revenues, which were used, along with the American aid, for economic development and reorganization

¹⁶Pahlavi, Mission for My Country, p. 107.

¹⁷Ramesh Sanghvi, Aryamehr: The Shah of Iran (New York: Stein and Day, 1968), p. 244.

of the military forces. This provided for greater stability in Mohammad Reza Shah's rule, which was a cumulative, ongoing process throughout the decade following the Shah's return in August, 1953.

The strengthening of Mohammad Reza Shah's position as the effective ruler of Iran during the 1950s' corresponded with the Shah's building up the strength and stability of the country. One policy which served to enhance Iran's position was the Shah's policy of Positive Nationalism, which Mohammad Reza Shah developed gradually following 1953. Mohammad Reza Shah's policy of Positive Nationalism, as opposed to Mossadegh's destructive policy of negative nationalism, was defined as, "devotion to, or advocacy of, national interests or national unity and independence."¹⁸ Mohammad Reza Shah explained that Positive Nationalism promotes "maximum political and economic independence"¹⁹ in accord with the interests of the country, including freedom to conclude alliances which support the interests of Iran. Mohammad Reza Shah realized that the traditional policy of passive neutrality would not suffice in the modern world, for Iran's experience in World War II proved that declared neutrality would not necessarily protect Iran from world

¹⁸Pahlavi, Mission for My Country, p. 125.

¹⁹Ibid.

conflicts. Consequently, Mohammad Reza Shah decided that the country must rely on true "nationalist sentiments,"²⁰ that is, the true interest of the country, which included utilizing those foreign skills and services which would not impede Iran's independence or interests.

The policy of Positive Nationalism was apparent in Iran's decision to join the Baghdad Pact (referred to as CENTO after 1958), in October, 1955. In this respect, the interest of Iran was served in the alliance with the neighboring countries and Britain against possible Soviet aggression. Iran deliberated over joining the regional pact; however, several factors prompted Iran's decision to join. Among them, Mohammad Reza Shah felt that the Baghdad Pact was one source of protection against aggression, through military and cooperative international security.²¹ The feeling that such security was needed was underscored by President Gamal Nasser's statement that were Turkey attacked by the Soviet Union, Nasser would allow the Suez Canal base to be reactivated; however, he would not do so if Iran were attacked. This motivated Iran to join the Baghdad Pact.²²

Another motivating force was the United States, which encouraged Iran to join the Baghdad Pact, for, although the

²⁰Ibid., p. 126.

²¹Ibid., p. 306.

²²E. A. Bayne, Persian Kingship in Transition (New York: American Universities Field Staff, 1968), pp. 210-11.

United States was not a member of the Pact, the United States supported the concept of a regional defense pact. Moreover, the United States contributed to the financial support of the Pact. In this regard, military and civil advisors in Iran felt that Iran would receive increased economic and defense assistance from the United States if Iran joined the Baghdad Pact.²³

Another factor which prompted Iran to join the Baghdad Pact was Mohammad Reza Shah's realization that passive neutrality was not an effective means of defense.²⁴ In this regard, a nation could not expect to remain untouched by world issues and conflicts; consequently, alliances would be needed to guarantee assistance in the event of aggression on the part of an enemy. The history of Soviet designs toward Iran presented an image of a risk-filled future and possible Soviet interference. For its part, the Soviet Union protested that the Baghdad Pact was aggressive, and that Iran should not join. Iran did not wish to provoke the enmity of the Soviet Union, for that would have conflicted with Mohammad Reza Shah's policy of Positive Nationalism. Therefore, in a 1956 meeting with Nikita Krushchev in Moscow, Mohammad Reza Shah explained that the Baghdad Pact

²³Sanghvi, Aryamehr: The Shah of Iran, p. 249.

²⁴T. Cuyler Young, "Iran in Continuing Crisis," Foreign Affairs, XL, No. 2 (1962), 291.

was a nonaggressive "collective defense against aggression."²⁵ In addition, while Iran did hold a friendly attitude toward the Soviet Union, Iran could not dismiss the history of Soviet aggressive moves. Mohammad Reza Shah, however, assured Krushchev that, as Shah, he would not allow Iran to take aggressive steps toward the Soviet Union.²⁶

In Iran the National Front supporters were opposed to Iran's membership in the Baghdad Pact, for they considered the organization to be an Anglo-American device for controlling Iran's government. In addition, as opponents of Mohammad Reza Shah's regime, the National Front supporters also opposed institutions or policies which strengthened the Shah's regime. In view of the strength which membership in the Baghdad Pact provided Mohammad Reza Shah's government, the National Front supporters had an additional reason for opposing Iran's membership in the Pact.²⁷ The main issue concerning the Baghdad Pact was Mohammad Reza Shah's belief that, as a deterrent to Communism and aggression in the area, the Baghdad Pact served Iran's interests.²⁸ Such a policy was in keeping with Positive Nationalism. In addition, Iran's membership in the Baghdad Pact served to

²⁵ Pahlavi, Mission for My Country, p. 120.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Richard W. Cottam, Nationalism in Iran (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1964), p. 31.

²⁸ Pahlavi, Mission for My Country, p. 121.

strengthen Mohammad Reza Shah's regime in Iran, and Iran's position in the region.

Another development which strengthened Iran's position was the 1959 Mutual Aid Agreement between Iran and the United States. The Mutual Aid Agreement also affected the attitude of the Soviet Union toward Iran. The Soviets were opposed to Iran's concluding the agreement with the United States, as they had opposed the Baghdad Pact, for the Soviets said that such agreements appeared to be directed against the Soviet Union. In order to counterbalance Iran's membership in the pacts, the Soviet Union projected a friendly attitude and suggested that Iran conclude a nonaggression pact of thirty to fifty years, with the Soviet Union. Iran did not accept. However, the Soviet Union eased the practice of broadcasting and publishing propaganda against Iran, in an effort to affect better relations between the two countries. In this regard, the Shah accepted the Soviets' invitations to visit the Soviet Union, and he did so in 1961 and 1965.²⁹ While an atmosphere of peaceful coexistence prevailed between Iran and the Soviet Union, there remained the traditional sense of distrust toward Soviet intentions, considering the Soviets' former interest.

²⁹Bayne, Persian Kingship in Transition, pp. 216-17.

in Iran's oil fields, as well as the Soviets' interest in warm water ports.³⁰

In the late 1950s, the Iranian government was concerned about corruption in Iran's official circles. In order to eliminate corrupt activities, an anticorruption campaign was launched in 1958. The campaign tried to curtail practices in which Parliamentary deputies rendered decisions on issues solely on the basis of their own personal interests or gains. In addition, the campaign tried to eliminate deputies' acceptance of bribes by requiring government officials to file reports on their income and properties.³¹

A central concern in the stabilization of Iran was the economic development of the country. In this regard, the Seven Year Plans for Development under the Plan Organization were important. While the First Seven Year Plan had collapsed due to the lack of funds following the cessation of the oil industry in 1951, the resumption of the oil industry in 1954 brought the opportunity to implement a Second Seven Year Plan for Development. In 1956, the Second Seven Year Development Law gave the Plan Organization authority in developing agricultural and industrial production, mining, communications, and other fields. The

³⁰Sepehr Zabih, "Iran Today," Current History (February, 1974), p. 66.

³¹Avery, Modern Iran, pp. 476-78.

Second Seven Year Plan was not allocated all of the oil revenues, but was given 60 percent; in 1959, a set annual allocation was established. There were a number of successful projects carried out by the Plan Organization between 1956 and 1962, which raised the Gross National Product 6 percent a year.³² In 1962, the Third Development Plan began with a goal of increasing economic growth and social development. While the Development Plans contributed to the improvement of physical, social, and economic conditions in Iran, the programs for development were possible only as a result of the resumption of oil production, for the revenue from the oil was the source of funding for the Plan Organization.

The years following the resumption of the oil industry were prosperous for Iran, for the country benefited from the oil revenues, American aid, economic development, and improved internal stability and security. Amidst the apparent prosperity, however, arose a number of economic problems caused by the rapid economic growth. For example, a number of the economic problems of the late 1950s and early 1960s were: a high rate of inflation, high real estate prices due to land speculation, uncontrolled credit causing cases of bankruptcy, a great deal of imported luxury items affordable only by the wealthy, and continuous tax evasion

³²Wilber, Contemporary Iran, pp. 174, 177.

by many influential people. In addition, there was a deficit in foreign loans. The problems were largely the result of the lack of management and direction of the rapid economic growth, for the government needed to apply controls which would direct the economic growth toward beneficial goals for the country. That is, the country needed an economic stabilization program.³³

The United States was concerned about Iran's economic situation. Therefore, the United States made Iran's receiving additional aid conditional upon the country's implementation of an effective economic stabilization program.³⁴ In 1961, an economic stabilization program was introduced under the direction of Prime Minister Ali Amini. The program included steps to conserve foreign exchange, such as restrictions on importing luxury items and on travel abroad. Iran proved that it was capable of implementing financial stabilization, and the United States assisted Iran in this endeavor with sizable loans.³⁵ By July, 1961, the economic crisis had passed.³⁶

³³Young, "Iran in Continuing Crisis," pp. 280-81.

³⁴Avery, Modern Iran, p. 491.

³⁵Young, "Iran in Continuing Crisis," p. 281.

³⁶Avery, Modern Iran, p. 494.

While the economy was in the process of stabilization, there were other problems which needed to be dealt with in the country. The main problem was the need for agricultural reform, for the landowners had not followed Mohammad Reza Shah's example of selling the land to the peasant cultivators. The central problem in Iran's agricultural system was the land tenure, which was similar to that of medieval feudal systems; that is, the landowner controlled the land as well as the peasant cultivators who lived and worked on the land. The reform of the agricultural system was to be of paramount importance. Moreover, the process by which agricultural reform came about under Mohammad Reza Shah's leadership, was to demonstrate clearly that Mohammad Reza Shah had attained a position of strength as the effective leader of his country.

Mohammad Reza Shah had always believed that in order for Iran to become a truly modern and developed country, the traditional system of land tenure, which had been in existence for many centuries, needed to be reformed. In the traditional system, a relatively small number of landlords owned most of the arable land. In this respect, 56 percent of the cultivated land was held by 1 percent of the population; of this land 33 percent was held by large proprietors who comprised one-fifth of the agricultural population, while 10 to 12 percent of the cultivated land was

held by small landholders. Moreover, the landlords also controlled the villages and the peasant cultivators. In addition, most large landowners did not live on their land; rather, the large absentee landlords often lived in the towns and delegated the management of the property to village bailiffs. The absentee landlords had little interest in the welfare of the peasants or the development of agriculture. For their part, the peasant cultivators, who received a share of the crop for their livelihood, lived at subsistence level, and were unable to save due to low crop yield and their indebtedness to the landlords and others.³⁷ The traditional system of landownership benefited the large landowners, while the peasants suffered. The system had persisted because the large landowners held not only wealth and social prestige, but also political influence and power in the country.³⁸ The influence and power of the large landowners was possible because the Parliament was largely made up of landowners or deputies who were controlled by the landowners. In addition, the wealth of the large landowners also provided them with prestige and influence. Thus, a strong force was required to alter the landownership system

³⁷W. B. Fisher, The Cambridge History of Iran, Vol. I, The Land of Iran (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968), pp. 686-87.

³⁸Ann K. S. Lambton, "Land Reform and the Rural Cooperative Societies," Iran Faces the Seventies, ed. Yar-Shater, p. 9.

which was detrimental to the majority of Iran's agricultural population.

The force needed to reform the system was Mohammad Reza Shah. The Shah had distributed his Royal Estates to the peasant cultivators, making them the owners of their own land. The Shah had hoped that other landowners would follow his example and sell their lands to the peasants. However, the landowners were not willing to sell their lands, which they considered a source of wealth and influence. In the interest of those living on the land, and the modernization of Iran, Mohammad Reza Shah was determined to reform the agricultural sector of the country. It has been observed that, "the transfer of ownership from the landlords to sharecroppers is essential to the political stability and economic progress of underdeveloped countries."³⁹ Thus, the introduction of land reform would have been a step toward strengthening the framework of Iran's agricultural society, because the peasant cultivators would become independent of the landlords' dominance and they would be more productive citizens as owners of their own land. In another sense, simply redistributing the land would not, in itself, have been enough to improve the conditions of the peasants, for other reforms in the peasants' lifestyle

³⁹Wilber, Contemporary Iran, p. 180.

were also needed in order for the peasants to learn to manage their own lives and the productivity of their land.⁴⁰ For example, the peasants needed to be freed from the political dominance of the landlords and from dependence upon the landlords for loans and material needs.⁴¹ In this respect, Mohammad Reza Shah introduced a number of reforms which not only affected the system of land tenure, but affected the economic, social, and political elements of Iranian society as well.

Mohammad Reza Shah's first step was to secure the passage of a land reform bill. In December, 1959, the Shah's plan was formed into the Law on the Limitation and Reform of Landed Property, which was designed to limit landowners' estates to one village of farming area, and to allow the government to purchase the excess land and to sell it to the peasant cultivators.⁴² The concept was opposed by the landlords. Consequently, in May, 1960, the landlord dominated Majlis rendered the Bill meaningless through several amendments which favored the landlords. For example, landlords were given the right to transfer their property

⁴⁰Norman Jacobs, The Sociology of Development. (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1966), p. 144.

⁴¹Ibid., p. 145.

⁴²Sanghvi, Aryamehr: The Shah of Iran, p. 266.

to their heirs within two years of the enactment of the Land Reform Bill; also, the landlords were allowed to sell their land at their own price before the law came into effect.⁴³ With such amendments, the purpose of the Land Reform Bill would not prevail.

The situation was a test between the influence of the landlord dominated Majlis and the strength of the Shah. The outcome proved that the Shah was the strong leader needed by Iran, for the Shah exercised his constitutional powers to overcome the opposition. In accord with the constitution, Mohammad Reza Shah dissolved the Majlis on May 9, 1961. Following this, Prime Minister Amini's Cabinet approved the original Land Reform Bill in January, 1962. Minister of Agriculture Hassan Arsenjani was to direct the implementation of the land reform. Many of the opponents of the land reform realized that the Shah's position was firm, and they surrendered their fight. Others, however, maintained their opposition to the plan, while still others were skeptical about the government's ability or determination to implement the land reform program.⁴⁴

The land reform was carried out in segments of the country during different time periods, not simultaneously

⁴³Ibid., pp. 165-66.

⁴⁴Ibid., p. 267.

throughout the country, because of the shortage of trained land reform personnel. Despite such operational problems, the first stage of the land reform was successfully carried out beginning in March, 1962. The success was possible because the plan for the redistribution of the land was uncomplicated; that is, the landowners could retain one whole village, or, since a village was traditionally divided into six units (dang), a landowner could retain six separate dangs from different villages, and the excess land was to be bought by the government and sold to the peasants working and living on the land. Since the peasants became the owners of the same plot of land they had been living on, the complications of surveys were avoided.

Large landowners and tribal landowners attempted to thwart the government's land reform program. In November, 1962, a land reform official was murdered in the province of Fars, where there was resistance to the land reform. Consequently, the government accelerated the land reform program in Fars, and took action against the resisters. Such action made the opposition in the other districts less resistant to the land reform.⁴⁵ Although many landowners attempted to evade the land reform provisions, the program

⁴⁵Farmayan, "Politics During the Sixties: A Historical Analysis," p. 102.

was carried out with relatively few disruptions.⁴⁶ In January, 1962, the Land Reform Law initiated the breakdown of political and social power of large landowners, because the landowners' traditional symbol of wealth and power, their large land holdings, had been redistributed. Moreover, their influence in the Majlis had been cut because the peasants, free of the dominance of the landlords, would no longer allow the former landlords to control the votes of the peasant population. Although the Land Reform Law would be submitted to the next Majlis, it was believed that no Majlis would revoke the Land Reform Law because the people would not elect those who stood for privileged treatment of the landed elite.⁴⁷ Indeed, the Shah and his government, not the traditional landed class, were to receive the support of the masses.

In retrospect, the period between 1953 and 1962 was a time during which Mohammed Reza Shah coordinated his sources of support and concentrated upon strengthening his position as the effective ruler of Iran, steps which were taken in the interest of his country. The Shah's position was strengthened through several means. To summarize, important among these

⁴⁶Lambton, "Land Reform and the Rural Cooperative Societies," p. 22.

⁴⁷Wilber, Contemporary Iran, p. 188.

were the suppression of the subversive forces of the opposition, the reorganization and expansion of the Security and Information Organization (SAVAK) as an instrument for security and the elimination of subversive activities, and the expansion of the military, which was loyal to Mohammad Reza Shah. Another aid in stabilizing the Shah's regime was the increased revenues from the resumption of oil production, for these revenues improved the financial situation in Iran. In addition, aid from the United States in the form of finances, as well as military equipment and training, assisted Mohammad Reza Shah in strengthening the economic base and military forces which supported his regime. Throughout the 1950s, the Shah progressively strengthened his position as the effective ruler, such that by the end of the decade, Mohammad Reza Shah was undisputably the unchallenged ruler of Iran. The proof of Mohammad Reza Shah's firm position was established in 1962, for the Shah overcame the opposition of landlords who opposed the land reform program.

The process of strengthening Mohammad Reza Shah's rule was a source of stability for the country, for, as the effective leadership of Mohammad Reza Shah became more apparent, a sense of security and stability began to emerge in the formerly unstable country. With the stabilization of the Shah's position, Mohammad Reza Shah was able to

introduce policies which contributed to the stabilization process in the country. For example, the Shah's policy of Positive Nationalism enabled him to deal with other countries and carry out policies at the international level in the interest of Iran. In this regard, Iran joined the Baghdad Pact in 1955. In 1959, Iran concluded a Mutual Aid Agreement with the United States, which provided additional security for Iran's position. Internally, Iran's position was improved and strengthened through the implementation of the Development Plans, which served to increase Iran's industrial and agricultural output. In addition, the 1961 economic stabilization program provided the necessary controls for management of Iran's economy, which had been in an inflationary, mismanaged condition. The most significant internal policy which initiated the effective reform and modernization of Iran was the land reform program of 1962. The reform reversed the traditional agricultural system in which the large landowners controlled the land as well as the peasants, for the reform began the redistribution of the land. The agricultural system then developed into one of small landowners controlling their own land. The government aided the new peasant landowners through the establishment of agricultural cooperatives which provided credit for the new landowners, as well as necessary materials. The beginning of land reform was the beginning of the

modernization of Iranian society, in particular, the traditional social structure, for it abolished the ancient system of landownership, and provided the new peasant landowners with added incentive for increased agricultural productivity.

One year after the Land Reform Law had initiated the first stage of land reform, a National Congress of Peasants was held in Tehran. At the Congress, on January 9, 1963, Mohammad Reza Shah announced that he would place these six reforms before the people in a referendum: redistribution of land among the peasants, nationalization of forests and pastures, sale of shares in government factories, profit sharing for workers, the enfranchisement of women, and the formation of the Literacy Corps.⁴⁸ On January 26, 1963, the referendum was held, and over 99 percent of the votes were in favor of the reform policies.⁴⁹ Since Mohammad Reza Shah had gone to the people for the approval of the revolutionary reforms, the implementation of these reforms is referred to as "The Revolution of the Shah and the People." In another sense, it is called the "White Revolution," "Revolution" because the programs wiped away the old institutions and brought in new ideals, and "White"

⁴⁸Gregory Lima and others, The Revolutionizing of Iran (Tehran: International Communicators Iran, 1973), p. 17.

⁴⁹Ibid., p. 19.

because the programs were carried out without bloodshed.⁵⁰ The reforms of the referendum were indeed revolutionary for a developing country. The spirit of the Revolution inspired the Iranian government and people to such an extent that in 1964, three additional reforms were introduced: the Health Corps, the Reconstruction and Development Corps, and the Courts of Equity. In 1967, three other reforms were introduced: the nationalization of water, urban and rural reconstruction, and administrative and educational reforms. The enthusiastic and successful implementation of the reforms has gained the title the "Decade of the Revolution" for the period between 1963 and 1973.

While the majority of the Iranian people backed the policies of the Revolution, there were continued segments of opposition. The main sources of opposition were large landowners, tribal leaders, religious leaders, and the National Front. Each group had its own reason for opposing the reforms. The large landowners did not wish to relinquish their large landholdings, nor the wealth and influence which land symbolized. The tribal leaders resented governmental authority, especially that of land reform personnel, being exerted in tribal areas, for the tribal leaders felt that

⁵⁰ Central Insurance of Iran, Decade of the Revolution, 1963-1973 (Tehran: Central Insurance of Iran, 1973), p. v.

they held exclusive authority over their tribal lands. The religious leaders did not want the land reform to apply to the religious endowments (waqfs) and they did not want women to have the right to vote. The National Front supporters and leftists who opposed the government opposed the government's land reform, and gave as their reason, disapproval of the way that the land reform had been legislated and carried out.⁵¹

The opposition demonstrated its disapproval of the government's reforms through riots following the January, 1963, referendum. The most drastic steps taken by the opposition forces were in 1965. In January, 1965, Prime Minister Hasan Ali Mansur, who solidly supported the Shah's reforms, was assassinated. The assassin was captured and he revealed the conspiracy of the Islamic Nations' Party (Hizb-i Melal-i Islami) for an uprising against the government. In April, 1965, another conspiracy resulted in an attempt to assassinate the Shah by a guard of the Shah's Marble Palace; the guard was killed in the incident. The impact of the two occurrences resulted in a reorganization of the security system, with a determination to suppress subversive forces which were a threat to national security.⁵²

⁵¹Ibid., p. 22.

⁵²Farmayan, "Politics During the Sixties: A Historical Analysis," pp. 111-12.

The opposition was unable to frustrate the "Revolution of the Shah and the People," for the opposition had underestimated the strength of the government and Mohammad Reza Shah's determination to carry out the reforms. In addition, the opposition had underestimated the mass support of the reforms. Moreover, the opposition had overestimated its own cohesive strength, which in fact was not strong.⁵³

Popular enthusiasm for the reform was exhibited in the September, 1963, Parliamentary elections, which for the first time were held on the same day throughout the country. The popularity of the Shah's Revolution, and in effect, the defeat of the opposition, was proven by the nature of the elected deputies, for two female members were elected, in recognition of the revised status of women in Iran. Moreover, no great landlords and very few clerics were elected.⁵⁴

Each of the reform measures contributed to the cumulative success of the "Revolution of the Shah and the People," in its strengthening and stabilization of Iranian economic, political, and social spheres. The land reform

⁵³Lima and others, The Revolutionizing of Iran, p. 29.

⁵⁴Farmayan, "Politics During the Sixties: A Historical Analysis," p. 108.

policy was the first and most significant point, for the reform broke the traditional landlord-peasant relationship and gave the peasants a more responsible place in the society. The second stage of the land reform program was passed in January, 1963. The purpose of this stage was to provide for those peasants living on the land which the landlords had chosen to retain under the first stage of land reform.⁵⁵ The peasants appreciated the Shah's providing them with ownership to their land. Indeed, the peasants felt as though they had been reborn, for they became their own masters.⁵⁶ The ownership of the land by the peasants provided a greater incentive to the peasants, and, with the introduction of modern agricultural equipment, agricultural production increased.

Another reform was the nationalization of the forests and pastures. Mohammad Reza Shah believed that through the nationalization of these resources, all Iranians would benefit from them. In this regard, the government established conservation programs designed to develop the productive use and preservation of the natural resources of forests and pastures.⁵⁷

⁵⁵Central Insurance of Iran, Decade of the Revolution, 1963-1973, p. 10.

⁵⁶Lima and others, The Revolutionizing of Iran, p. 41.

⁵⁷Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi, The White Revolution (Tehran: Kayhan Press [n.d.]), pp. 46, 58.

The Third reform of the January, 1963, referendum was the sale of shares in state owned factories. The main purpose of this reform was to provide landowners, who sold their holdings in the course of land reform, with financial credits, for the landowners were able to use their capital in industrial enterprises by buying the factory shares.⁵⁸ The sale of factory shares also aided the development of industries, and thereby improved Iran's economic base.

An additional reform was profit sharing in industry for workers, and improvement in conditions of labor. Profit sharing provided that employers provide a share of the net profit of the factory, or another reward, for the workers, based upon increased production or reduction in costs or waste.⁵⁹ In this regard, Mohammad Reza Shah wanted the industrial workers to feel the same sense of having a part in, and a responsibility to, the economy and the society, as the new landowning peasants felt.⁶⁰ With this reform, the workers took a greater interest in the factories' production, and there were improved labor relations. The interest which the government took in the conditions of the workers actually helped to increase the support which the

⁵⁸ Ibid., pp. 66-67.

⁵⁹ Central Insurance of Iran, Decade of the Revolution, 1963-1973, p. 55.

⁶⁰ Pahlavi, The White Revolution, pp. 79-80.

workers and trade unions gave to the Shah's government, for they realized that the improvements were brought about by Mohammad Reza Shah's government.⁶¹

Another far reaching reform of the referendum was that providing women with the right to vote and to stand for Parliament. Mohammad Reza Shah felt that this was an important reform, for it provided women with equal status to men. Moreover, the enfranchisement and greater participation of women in social, political, and economic matters would contribute greatly to the reconstruction of Iranian society. Greater participation of women in the society would be essential in the modernization and development of the country.⁶²

Another of the reforms which was vital to the development of Iran was the campaign to eliminate illiteracy, primarily through the creation of the Literacy Corps. The Literacy Corps was composed of high school graduates, eligible for the draft, who fulfilled their service by teaching in remote villages. In this way, villagers who were otherwise out of the range of regular schools were able to acquire primary education. As a result of the Literacy Corps, the illiteracy rate began to decline significantly.⁶³ The Literacy Corps

⁶¹Ibid., pp. 84-85.

⁶²Ibid., p. 100.

⁶³Ibid., p. 108.

brought an educational revolution to the villagers and introduced the desire to obtain additional education. The effectiveness of the Literacy Corps contributed to the strengthening of Iran by bringing education to a greater percentage of the rural population. The Literacy Corps also inspired a greater sense of cooperation on the part of the rural population toward the central government, for the rural people realized that the government in Tehran was concerned about the development of the rural society.

The original six reforms were augmented in 1964 with three additional reforms. Two of these reforms created corps similar to the Literacy Corps. One such corps was the Health Corps, which was designed to extend improvements in public health to the rural villages. The other corps was the Reconstruction and Development Corps, which was responsible for completing the reforms introduced by land reform.⁶⁴ In this regard, the Reconstruction and Development Corps was to assist the villagers with agricultural improvements, through mechanized and modernized methods. These two corps provided improvements in the living conditions and productivity of the villages, and the villagers came to feel enthusiastic support for the

⁶⁴Ibid., pp. 126, 132-134.

governmental corps which had helped them to achieve these improvements.⁶⁵

The third reform of 1964, was the creation of Courts of Equity. These were special courts formed of local village leaders acting as judges in minor local cases. The Courts of Equity freed the villagers of the unnecessary and complicated procedure of taking their minor cases to the nearest town. In addition, town and city courts were relieved of minor cases, which aided in lightening the overloaded judicial courts. This reform gave the villagers a greater sense of responsibility in their local matters. Indeed, the Courts of Equity had proven effective; therefore, similar courts, called Adjudication Courts, were established in the towns in order to relieve the burden of the judges in the towns.⁶⁶

In 1967, three additional reforms were added to those in progress. One such reform was the nationalization of water resources in Iran. Since water was a scarce and precious resource, it seemed appropriate for the government to create the Ministry of Water and Power, which was directed to protect and conserve the natural resource of water.⁶⁷

⁶⁵Ibid., p. 137.

⁶⁶Central Insurance of Iran, Decade of the Revolution, 1963-1973, pp. 119-22.

⁶⁷Ibid., p. 133.

Another important reform was that of National Reconstruction for both rural and urban development. This reform dealt with the problem of housing, as well as town planning, the development of rural areas, and urban renewal. It was also concerned with introducing modern amenities in Iran.⁶⁸

The last reform of the Revolution was that of administrative and educational reform. Regarding the administration, the reform was aimed at promoting honesty and efficiency in government workers and officials by eliminating excess staff members, controlling the employment of new personnel on the basis of the applicant's qualifications, and guarding against malpractices.⁶⁹ In addition, less emphasis was to be placed on centralization, and greater responsibility was to be given to the provinces and cities for attending to local matters. In this regard, village, town, city, township, and provincial councils were created. The administrative reform was designed as a long term program to implement improved and efficient procedures in civil administration.⁷⁰ The civil administration was revised in the spirit of better management and effectiveness. The reorganization of the administrative system was in keeping

⁶⁸Ibid., p. 139.

⁶⁹Ibid., p. 150.

⁷⁰Ibid., p. 159.

with the government's role in leading social reform, and in aiming for economic prosperity, for "efficient administration of the social and economic programs requires an efficient administrative system."⁷¹ The administrative reform involved concentration on decentralization, which increased the cooperation of citizens and government in social and economic programs. Included was reform of the administrative organization and employment procedures. The reform of education was aimed at providing education for all Iranians, such that each might develop to fulfill his potential. Such aims were designed to produce well developed people capable of providing Iran with the needed skilled and trained personnel.

During the final stages of the introduction of the twelve reforms, the Fourth Development Plan was introduced. This Plan was directed toward economic growth as well as attaining social welfare programs for the people of Iran. The Plan Organization concentrated on urban reconstruction, housing, and family life, which corresponded with the reform policy of National Reconstruction.⁷²

⁷¹Shahpour Rassekh, "Planning for Social Change," Iran Faces the Seventies, ed. Yar-Shater, p. 163.

⁷²Ibid., pp. 144, 162.

Another development, which occurred in 1973, was the revision of the 1954 oil agreement with the oil consortium. Through the new agreement, Iran assumed the complete control of the Iranian oil industry, for all oil reserves, as well as policy making in the industry, were brought under Iran's control. According to Prime Minister Amir Abbas Hoveyda, the 1973 oil agreement represented the full implementation of the 1951 Oil Nationalization Act.⁷³

In retrospect, the decade from 1963 to 1973 must be regarded as the period which completed the process of stabilization for Iran. The basic instrument for success in this endeavor was the "Revolution of the Shah and the People," for each of the reform policies was a step in modernization and the majority of the reforms directly or indirectly improved the lifestyle of the Iranian people, especially that of the peasants who lived in the underdeveloped rural areas of Iran. Moreover, the reform policies brought greater enthusiastic support for the regime of Mohammad Reza Shah, the leader of the Revolution. The combined effects of the individual reforms delivered Iran from the ranks of the underdeveloped countries, and brought Iran into the role of a progressive and stabilized nation. The individual reforms of the Iranian Revolution combined to form a reform program

⁷³Zabih, "Iran Today," pp. 68-69.

which affected the social, political, and economic modernization and stabilization in the country.

In this regard, the nationalization of the natural resources of water, forests, and pastures provided conservation and development of these forms of national wealth. The sale of government factory shares and profit sharing plans for workers contributed to improved industrial production. The profit sharing program, as well as the establishment of Courts of Equity and Adjudication Courts, and the land reform, provided a sense of responsibility and greater incentive to work productively to a greater segment of the population. Moreover, these reforms instilled a greater enthusiasm in the rural and working classes' support for the Shah's regime. The formation of the Literacy Corps extended the opportunity for education, as well as the spirit of the Revolution to a wide spectrum of the rural population. Moreover, the Health Corps, and the Reconstruction and Development Corps assisted the rural population in the improvement of their health and living conditions, which also stimulated greater support for the Shah's regime. The enfranchisement of women, and the resultant changes in the status of women, provided Iran with a greater percentage of citizens participating in the political, economic, and social processes of the country, which contributed to the development of Iran. The urban and rural reconstruction contributed to

the improvement of urban living conditions and to the development of rural areas. The development programs brought greater modernization to areas of Iran. The administrative reform initiated policies for increased efficiency and less corruption in the administrative sphere, which are essential to the management of a stable and developed country. The stabilizing effect of the "Revolution of the Shah and the People" was exhibited in the greater cooperation between the government and the population. The land reform and the other reforms directed toward improving the lifestyle of the masses helped to make the masses the greatest source of support for the Shah's regime, which reversed the traditional situation in which the elite were the strongest supporters of the regime.

The successful, bloodless implementation of the reforms of the "Revolution of the Shah and the People" was possible mainly because of several characteristics of the Revolution which differentiated Iran's Revolution from those of other countries. Firstly, the Iranian Revolution was created by the Shah and approved by the people in a referendum. In this, as well as in other areas, the people placed their confidence and support in the leadership of the Shah. Indeed, the Iranian people looked to the Shah for "guidance,

direction and protection."⁷⁴ This characteristic of Iranian life corresponded to the fact that Mohammad Reza Shah was the stabilizing force throughout the Decade of the Revolution; moreover, Mohammad Reza Shah has been the stabilizer who holds together the various segments of Iranian society.⁷⁵ Mohammad Reza Shah is the force which draws together the separate elements of stability, such as the military, the civil administration, the economy, the mass support, and Western aid, thereby channeling the stabilizing effect of each element into the stabilization of the country as a whole.

Another distinguishing characteristic of the Iranian Revolution was that the Shah curtailed the power of the traditional landowning elite, and attended the situation of those traditionally powerless in the political sphere, that is, the rural and working classes, and women. Through such actions, the leader of the country received his most solid support from the masses, rather than from the traditional elite. Another distinct characteristic of Iran's Revolution was the many faceted nature of the Revolution, for the reforms dealt with the modernization and improvement of social, political, and economic conditions in the country.

⁷⁴Mohammad Ali Toussi, A Reflection upon the White Revolution of Iran (Tehran: State Management Training Centre, 1974), p. 14.

⁷⁵"Oil, Grandeur and a Challenge to the West," p. 33.

Moreover, the Revolution was an ongoing process of the decade, the spirit of which continues in Iran's present-day policies.⁷⁶

According to Mohammad Reza Shah, the initiator and leader of the Iranian Revolution, one of the most important results of the Revolution has been Iran's ability to "pursue a completely independent foreign policy, based solely on Iran's legitimate interests, while respecting the rights of other nations."⁷⁷ Such a development was possible because of the internal security and the stabilized position of Iran, which resulted from the suppression of subversive forces in the society. Mohammad Reza Shah explained that political, social, and economic instability were eliminated by the Iranian Revolution, thereby making Iran "a model of security and political stability."⁷⁸ The Shah noted that Iran's reformed condition and political and economic stabilization have provided Iran with an internationally prestigious and respected position.⁷⁹ Such a conclusion has been attested to by political observers, who concede that Iran is one of the most reliable (stable) states in the

⁷⁶Toussi, A Reflection upon the White Revolution of Iran, pp. 17-18.

⁷⁷Pahlavi, The White Revolution, p. 151.

⁷⁸Ibid., p. 152.

⁷⁹Ibid., p. 153.

Middle East.⁸⁰ Moreover, it has been noted that Mohammad Reza Shah is the most progressive leader of a Middle Eastern state in terms of planning for social and economic growth. In this regard, the Shah has been directing Iran's oil revenues toward the development of an industrial foundation in the country, for Iranian estimations indicate that Iran's oil resources will be exhausted by 1990.⁸¹

In essence, the overall goal of the Iranian Revolution was social and economic development throughout the country, with an emphasis on the improvement of the position of the working class and the peasants, and an increase in the effectiveness of the State. Political observers have concluded that the "Revolution of the Shah and the People," has brought Iran a prospering economy, and social and political stability.⁸² Such development is significant, for Iran's social and political stability is "considered exceptional in the Middle East region as a whole."⁸³

⁸⁰ Zabih, "Iran Today," p. 67.

⁸¹ "Oil, Grandeur and a Challenge to the West," p. 33.

⁸² Farmayan, "Politics During the Sixties: A Historical Analysis," p. 114.

⁸³ Rassekh, "Planning for Social Change," p. 164.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

In reviewing the sources of political instability and stability which prevailed in Iran during the periods discussed in this thesis, it has been found that no period was characterized solely by elements of instability or solely by elements of stability, except the period of Mohammad Reza Shah's strengthened rule, from 1963 onward, which has been regarded as completely stabilized. In the preceding periods, however, the various elements of instability and stability existed in combination, such that, if in a given period, there existed a greater number of elements of instability, that period was basically unstable. On the other hand, during periods in which there existed a greater number of elements of stability, that period was basically stable.

In retrospect, the period of the Qajar Dynasty, 1779-1925, was basically unstable, for elements of instability prevailed during that time. In this regard, the Qajar period was marked by a lack of strong leadership, administrative chaos, political influence by reactionary clergy, economic insolvency, and the practice of selling concessions to foreigners for unfavorable returns to Iran. Moreover, the

period was characterized by the interference of foreign powers in Iranian matters, and an overall domination of Iran by the Big Powers of Britain and Russia. The Qajars did not have a unified army capable of maintaining internal security or defending Iran. Thus, in the Qajar period, Iran exhibited the traits of lack of viable leadership, economic insolvency, inability to maintain internal security, and largely unrespected sovereignty by the Big Powers. The existence of the Big Power rivalry in Iran did allow for a degree of stability in one respect, for neither Britain nor Russia would dare to take complete control of Iran while the other maintained its interest in the country. In addition, the concern which the Big Powers had for their interests in Iran prompted them into establishing internal security in their spheres of influence.

The period of Reza Shah's rule, 1926-1941, was indeed basically a stable period in Iran, for the conditions of the time reflected mainly elements of stability. In this regard, Reza Shah was a viable leader. He had established a unified army which was capable of bringing about internal security throughout the country; he had rid the country of foreign domination and he had regained international respect for the sovereignty of the country. Reza Shah revived the economy of Iran by initiating economic reforms, by eliminating most of the foreign concessions, and by obtaining higher

royalties for Iran from the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company. Although the period of Reza Shah was primarily a stable time, World War II produced a destabilizing effect upon Iran, for Iran did not have the military or diplomatic ability to defend its neutrality, and thereby uphold its independent sovereignty.

The early reign of Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, 1941-1953, was basically an unstable period, for under the inexperienced young Monarch, there was a lack of viable leadership. The continued occupation of Iran by the Allies slighted the sovereignty of Iran. Moreover, the breakdown in the economy following World War II, the increased communist activities, the coming to power of Mohammad Mossadegh, and the decline of the economy following the 1951 nationalization of the oil industry, were destabilizing elements. There were, however, elements of stability during this period, as evidenced by Iran's ability to prompt the evacuation of Allied forces, particularly Soviet forces, and the Iranian government's recovery of the separatist province of Azarbayjan. Moreover, the British and American backing of Iran helped Iran to reassert its sovereignty.

The period during which Mohammad Reza Shah began to strengthen his rule, 1953-1962, and in which he actually achieved an effective rule, 1963 onward, has been a stable period. The viability of Mohammad Reza Shah's rule has been achieved through the use of the military, which has been

consistently loyal to him, through the revival of the economy with the resumption of oil production and American economic aid, and through the suppression of the subversive opposition. Moreover, the reforms of the "White Revolution," or the "Revolution of the Shah and the People," have brought about political, economic, and social improvements in Iran, which reflect the permanency of the present period of stability in Iran, and the stability of the rule of Mohammad Reza Shah.

It is the conclusion of this thesis that Mohammad Reza Shah is the principal stabilizing force who has brought about and maintained stability in contemporary Iran by overcoming the sources of instability and by consolidating the various sources of stability into a single focus. Therefore, an analysis of the nature of Mohammad Reza Shah's leadership is appropriate.

Leadership has been described by Dankwart A. Rustow as "a process of complex mediation between the leader's personality, the followers' expectations, the circumstances and a set of goals."¹ A comment on leadership by Max Weber proposed that there are social problems that require a single individual to solve them.² These two observations on

¹Dankwart A. Rustow, "The Study of Leadership," Philosophers and Kings, ed. Dankwart A. Rustow (New York: George Braziller, 1970), p. 20.

²Ibid., p. 15.

leadership are relevant to an analysis of the nature of Mohammad Reza Shah's leadership and to the conclusion that it was Mohammad Reza Shah's leadership which brought about political, social, and economic reforms and stability in Iran. In accord with Max Weber's proposal on leadership, Mohammad Reza Shah was the single individual required to solve Iran's problems.

Regarding the conclusion that Mohammad Reza Shah's leadership was required to solve Iran's problems and to bring about stability in Iran, it should not be said that Mohammad Reza Shah was absolutely the only person who possibly could have reformed Iran. On the other hand, it should not be said that the reforms were inevitable, that is, that any leader would or could have brought about the same results.³ It should be established, however, that Mohammad Reza Shah's distinct leadership abilities, coupled with the circumstances of the time, made the Shah's leadership vital to the successful implementation of reforms in the country. A number of characteristics of Mohammad Reza Shah's regime have designated the Shah's leadership as that needed by Iran.

Max Weber proposed that political legitimacy is based in varying proportions on three elements: tradition, charisma,

³Ibid., p. 21.

and rational legality.⁴ These criteria may be applied in the analysis of the leadership of Mohammad Reza Shah.

Regarding tradition, the Iranian people revere and respect the tradition of the Monarchy which has been an Iranian institution for 2500 years. The Iranian people not only respect the tradition of the Monarchy, but regard it as an integral part of their nation and a part of their Shiite Islamic tradition. This deep regard for the tradition of the Monarchy was exhibited in 1925 during discussions about the possible creation of a republic in Iran. The idea was discarded, for there was a great preference for retaining the Monarchy. The tradition of the Monarchy was challenged a second time in 1953 by Mohammad Mossadegh who hoped to establish a republic in Iran. The Iranian people's strong regard for the Monarchy was exhibited, however, in a coup d'état by the Army and the people which overthrew Mossadegh and championed the tradition of the Monarchy. The people wanted the Shah to retain the leadership of the country. Thus, the tradition of the Monarchy provides a strong foundation for Mohammad Reza Shah's leadership.

The tradition of the Monarchy encompasses more than a simple preference for a monarchical form of government, rather than a republic. The Iranian people have traditionally

⁴Ibid., p. 14.

looked to their Shah for "guidance, direction and protection."⁵ Indeed, the Iranian people traditionally expected their Shah to create better systems and to improve the lifestyle of the people.⁶ In this regard, Mohammad Reza Shah has fulfilled the traditional expectations of the people, and the tradition of the Monarchy has provided the Shah with a well-founded basis for his rule.

The awe-inspiring nature of the tradition of the Monarchy, as well as the personal characteristics of Mohammad Reza Shah, have given, to some degree, a charismatic quality to the position of the Shah. "Charisma" is regarded by Max Weber as an extraordinary quality of a person whether it is actual, presumed, or alleged.⁷ In this sense, charisma is viewed as a trait or quality that sets a person apart from ordinary people. In another sense, charisma is regarded not as a trait of the leader, but as a perception on the part of the people who follow him; that is, "a leader's charisma is in the minds of the followers."⁸ Thus, it is the people's belief that the leader has special qualities, a form of hero

⁵ Mohammad Ali Toussi, A Reflection upon the White Revolution of Iran (Tehran: State Management Training Centre, 1974), p. 14.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Rustow, "The Study of Leadership," p. 15.

⁸ Ibid.

worship, that contributes to the charismatic nature of a given leader.

Regarding the leadership of Mohammad Reza Shah, the tradition of the Monarchy is awe-inspiring and charismatic vis-à-vis the Iranian people. However, it is not merely the tradition of the Monarchy which inspires the people, for their traditional reverence for the Monarchy has, in the past, been outweighed by their contempt for weak or corrupt monarchs. Regarding Mohammad Reza Shah, there is an aura of charisma surrounding him as an individual Shah, for his personal traits and leadership abilities have a charismatic effect upon his Iranian supporters. The Iranian people, especially the peasants, view Mohammad Reza Shah as their deliverer. This feeling was particularly evident following Mohammad Reza Shah's implementation of the land reform and the other reforms which improved the lifestyle of the people. In this regard, the charismatic aspect of the relationship between the Shah and the people exists because "the results of the leader's actions induce the followers' belief, and the followers' belief becomes the criterion for charismatic authority."⁹

In this regard, it is important to note that the presence of a charismatic aspect in Mohammad Reza Shah's

⁹Ibid., p. 16.

leadership does not imply that the Shah's leadership rests mainly upon charismatic authority, for it does not. In accord with Weber's proposal that the elements contributing to leadership are in varying proportions, the charismatic element is of minor importance to the leadership of Mohammad Reza Shah. Charismatic authority is not the element which gives the Shah his viability as a leader. In this respect, charismatic leadership relies upon the perceptions of the leader's followers; therefore, such leadership is unstable. Mohammad Reza Shah's leadership, on the other hand, has proven its stability during Mohammad Reza Shah's reign of over thirty years. In essence, if the charismatic quality of Mohammad Reza Shah's regime disappeared with a change in the perceptions of the Iranian people, Mohammad Reza Shah's rule would prevail, for his rule is founded upon more stable elements than charismatic authority.

In this regard, the strength and stability of Mohammad Reza Shah's leadership emanates from the element described by Weber as the rational legality of the rule. The legality of Mohammad Reza Shah's rule, his legal right to rule, originates in the Iranian Constitution, which provides for the succession of the Pahlavi Dynasty. Moreover, the Shah's legal right to rule is enhanced by his leadership in the hierarchy of the bureaucracy. Although there are a number of decision making members in the

bureaucratic system, such as cabinet members, members of parliament, and high civil servants, they all consistently defer to the leadership of Mohammad Reza Shah.

It has been said that "authority must accomplish its proper task."¹⁰ Mohammad Reza Shah has fulfilled this function of leadership. An essential point is that Mohammad Reza Shah does not merely reign, he rules. Moreover, he is not only a ruler, he is a great political and social innovator. In this regard, Mohammad Reza Shah has transformed the traditional political and social institutions into improved, modernized systems. The Shah, through his reforms, has used military, political, economic, and social means to bring about order and stability in Iran and to transform Iran's traditional institutions into systems which would benefit the Iranian people, especially those who suffered under the traditional lifeways, such as rural peasants, urban workers, and women.

Mohammad Reza Shah developed the strength and stability of his leadership and used these qualities to strengthen and stabilize Iran. The Shah's strength and stability has come from his personal leadership abilities, such as initiative, innovativeness, the ability to communicate with the people,

¹⁰Dankwart A. Rustow, "Ataturk as Founder of a State," Philosophers and Kings, ed. Rustow, p. 236.

the ability to overcome the subversive forces of opposition, as well as his devotion to the interests of Iran and the Iranian people. Furthermore, the Iranian people have realized that Mohammad Reza Shah has been concerned with their interests. This recognition by the people has provided the Shah with wide support, which further enabled the Shah to implement his reforms. Two other sources of strength and stability for Mohammad Reza Shah's regime were the support of the Army, as well as the financial and military aid which the Shah obtained for Iran from the United States.

In essence, Mohammad Reza Shah's abilities strengthened and stabilized his leadership and his reign, and the strength of his reign plus his innovations brought about stability and allowed the Shah to implement his reforms. The modernization and improvements which the reforms brought to the lifestyle of the Iranian people and to the economic and political situation of Iran served to further strengthen the Iranian people's support for Mohammad Reza Shah's leadership. The strength of the Shah's regime, coupled with the wide support for his rule, allowed for greater stability of Mohammad Reza Shah's leadership. Indeed, throughout his reign, Mohammad Reza Shah acquired stronger leadership abilities. This fact, along with the expectations of the Iranian people and Mohammad Reza Shah's goals for modernizing

Iran and for bringing about social equality among the classes and between men and women, created the circumstances in which Mohammad Reza Shah's leadership was the necessary force in reforming and stabilizing Iran.

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