



CLASS SYSTEM VI. CLASSES IN THE PAHLAVI PERIOD

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Under Pahlavi rule (1304-58 Š./1925-79) Persia became a powerful centralized state with a sprawling public sector that by 1355 Š./1976 employed one-third of the urban work force. In that period the economy, particularly the service sector, grew steadily and was absorbed into the world economy. The population tripled (from 11.5 million in 1300 Š./1921 to 33.7 million in 1355 Š./1976), and the growth was accompanied by rapid urbanization (from 21 percent in 1300 Š./1921 to 47 percent in 1355 Š./1976; Bharier, 1971, p. 26; Markaz-e āmār-e Īrān, 1981, pp. 1-2, 68). As a result of an intense, ideologically inspired campaign, initiated and directed from above, the country's social, educational, and cultural institutions were Westernized. These and other changes brought about a significant transformation in the Persian class system.

The major social classes on the eve of the revolution of 1358 Š./1979 were the dominant strata, composed of Western-oriented professionals and bureaucrats and the growing modern bourgeoisie; the modern middle and lower-middle urban strata, employed in white-collar occupations in the public and private sectors; the traditional middle and lower-middle classes, consisting of the



majority of the '*olamā*', small-scale merchants, shopkeepers, and master artisans and their apprentices; the extremely heterogeneous working classes, including skilled and semiskilled industrial workers, unskilled laborers, seasonal workers, and others in marginal occupations; and the agrarian classes, comprising petty landowners, peasants, and landless agricultural workers.

The dominant strata

The dominant strata in the early Pahlavi period, like those of the late Qajar period, consisted of members of the royal household, high-level bureaucrats, great landowners, tribal khans, powerful '*olamā*', and prosperous merchants. By the end of the Pahlavi period major changes in both the size and composition of these strata had occurred. They included displacement of the old-guard politicians, most of whom had come from the ranks of traditional landowners and tribal chieftains, by a new professional and bureaucratic elite; the gradual displacement of prosperous merchants by new industrial entrepreneurs and traders, contractors, consulting engineers, financiers, and bankers; and erosion in the power and status of the '*olamā*' and traditional landowners.

The great landowners. The tradition of agrarian landlord-tenant (*arbāb-ra'yatī*) relations continued, though with some changes, during the period from the 1300s Š./1920s through the 1330s Š./1950s. Private landownership (*arbābī*) was, in fact, expanded and consolidated. It was provided with a new legal foundation in the land-registration law of Esfand 1310 Š./March 1932. The ranks of the old landowners—tribal chieftains, high state officials, and the prominent '*olamā*'—were expanded to include new bureaucratic, military, and mercantile elements (Lambton, *Landlord and Peasant*, pp. 182-89, 259-62). After an initial setback in their social status during the early phases of Reżā Shah's consolidation of state power, the great landowners played an increasingly active role in national and local politics until the late 1330s Š./1950s (Upton, pp. 105-10). Because they held the majority of the seats in the Majles throughout this period (Šajrī, 1965, pp. 179, 249), they possessed even more political power at the local level, where they could influence provincial governors, district heads, the rural police (*žāndārmerī*), and other local officials (Lambton, *Landlord and Peasant*, pp. 268-74; Arsanjānī, pp. 150-77; Jahānšāhlū Afšār, pp. 191-92; Good).

At the time when the land-reform program was announced on 19 Dey 1340 Š./9



January 1962 members of the royal household, some 100 large landowning clans and tribal chieftains, and a few hundred other families owned almost two-thirds of the agricultural land in Persia; charitable endowments (*awqāf*) and the state domains (*kāleša*) accounted for another 18 percent; and about 750,000 small landowners and peasants owned less than 20 percent of the total (Edāra-ye āmār-e ‘omūmī, 1962, table 101; Khamsi, p. 4; McLachlan, pp. 686-87). Land reform virtually eliminated the old landowning class and with it the traditional patron-client relationship in the countryside. The program also put an end to the mediating role that the landowners had often played between the government, on one hand, and the *bāzārīs* and the ‘*olamā*’; on the other.

The rise of the new bureaucratic elite. Occupying key positions within the burgeoning modern state apparatus was a new professional bureaucratic elite (“state bourgeoisie”), which played a pivotal role in the economic and social development of Persia under the Pahlavis. Writing barely a decade after the coup d’état of 1300 Š./1921, a Western observer commented that this class “. . . though numerically small, is today predominant in every walk of life. Its members form an *oligarchy* which controls elections, manages all public affairs, and in the last resort, by constitutional or other methods, exercises a decisive influence in national policy” (Wilson, p. 45). Between 1320 Š./1941 and 1357 Š./1978 members of the new bureaucratic elite came to dominate the Majles, the cabinet, and the key positions in the government-sponsored political parties and state-owned industries.

The shift of power from the old landed gentry to the rising bureaucratic and professional elements is clear from the changing composition of the political elite between the mid-1300s Š./1920s and the late 1350s Š./1970s. Thus, for example, in 1304-40 Š./1925-61, 70-80 percent of deputies in the Majles came from landowning (30-40 percent), bureaucratic (30 percent), or professional (9-13 percent) backgrounds. By comparison, in the last sessions of the Majles under the Pahlavis (1354-58 Š./1975-79; see [Table 48](#)), approximately three-quarters of the deputies came from the new bureaucratic, professional, and entrepreneurial groups. Similarly, a survey of the social origins (as defined by father’s occupation) of 328 members of the political elite, conducted in the mid-1340s Š./1960s, showed that 40 percent were sons of government servants, 26 percent of landowners, 12 percent of merchants, 8 percent of religious leaders, 8 percent of professionals, and 6 percent of workers and others (Zonis, p. 161). The level of education among the new political elite, according to



surveys conducted in the 1340s Š./1960s and 1350s Š./1970s, was also quite high; about 90 percent of the directors of government agencies, more than 70 percent of the Majles deputies, and nearly all cabinet members had received at least the bachelor's degree (Bill, 1975, pp. 27-29; Šajrī, 1965, p. 229; idem, 1976, pp. 184-442; Zonis, pp. 168-71).

The modern bourgeoisie. By the end of the Pahlavi period the modern bourgeoisie had developed from the small group of factory owners and international traders of the mid-1300s Š./1920s into a significant socio-economic group, comprising hundreds of great industrialists, bankers and financiers, importers and exporters, contractors, and consulting engineers (for a roster of about 2,000 members of the Persian bourgeoisie and their major activities in the late 1350s Š./1970s, see Bricault).

The new industrial bourgeoisie came mainly from the old merchant class, often continuing earlier commercial activities. The first major efforts toward industrialization in Persia began in the 1310s Š./1930s, when 175 modern factories were established; 111 of them, with almost 25,000 workers, were in private hands (*Būletan-e Bānk-e mellī-e Īrān*, various issues from 1312 Š./1933 to 1319 Š./1940; *Wezārat-e kār*, 1326 Š./1947, passim). In the meantime the commercial bourgeoisie had become more differentiated as the country began to import various types of machinery and consumer goods in addition to such commodities as textiles and sugar. Involvement in foreign trade encouraged modernization among the great merchants of this period, nearly all of whom came from traditional *bāzār* backgrounds. Having supported Reżā Khan's campaign to become monarch in 1304 Š./1925 many wealthy merchants and entrepreneurs continued to play an active role during his reign and to influence various economic policies and decisions. Members of this group formed the [chamber of commerce](#) in 1305 Š./1926.

During World War II many members of the new bourgeoisie significantly increased their capital, but, because a surge of imports reduced the profitability of domestic manufacturing, this increase did not lead to industrial investment, even after the end of the war. The state, in the meantime, tried to retain some of its previous economic power by controlling imports and foreign exchange. These policies helped to improve the financial position of the bureaucratic elite and their partners among the bourgeoisie (for specific instances, see Key Ostovān, I, pp. 143-44, 250-55, II, pp. 189-203).

The Persian bourgeoisie experienced a sustained period of growth beginning



in the late 1330s Š./1950s, when the government extended low-interest loans totaling 350 million rials (\$100 million) to a small number of mercantile and industrial leaders. Later, in the 1340s Š./1960s and 1350s Š./1970s, dramatic increases in oil income led to further accumulation of capital in the private sector in at least two ways: First, the state provided credit to business magnates at favorable rates (see Salehi-Isfahani, pp. 359-79), and, second, inflation and increases in real income created windfall profits from land speculation and real-estate development. Furthermore, state incentives to substitute domestic products for imports led many importers of industrial goods to establish factories inside the country. All these factors led to an increase in the contribution of the private sector to capital formation in machinery and construction from \$750 million in 1338 Š./1959 to \$6.7 billion in 1356 Š./1977. The number of factories employing ten or more workers rose from 1,400 units, with nearly 100,000 workers, in 1339 Š./1960 to 5,400 units—96 percent of which were in private hands—with nearly 400,000 workers, in 1355 Š./1976 (Bānk-e markazī-e Īrān, pp. 408-09; Markaz-e āmār-e Īrān, 1976, p. 131; *Sāl-nāma-ye āmārī-e 1360*, pp. 433-36).

Huge state construction projects, an expansion of internal markets, rapid population growth, and overurbanization allowed hundreds of merchants, industrialists, import traders, contractors, consulting engineers, and others to make fortunes. After the land reform of 1341 Š./1962 hundreds of commercial farmers who had recently moved into mechanized agriculture and livestock and poultry farming moved into the modern Persian bourgeoisie (Ajami; Ashraf, 1991, pp. 286-87; Okazaki; Qahramān).

The Pahlavi state and the politics of the dominant class. Both Reżā Shah and Moḥammad Reżā Shah were able to control the dominant strata, providing opportunities for advancement and material gain for individuals but preventing them from organizing and engaging in independent political action. It was only at an informal level that members of the political elite were able to form such loose associations as *dawras* (Bill, 1973) or the secret lodges of Freemasons (see Rāʾin, III, pp. 29-38, 640-80). Moreover, both monarchs habitually replaced powerful, independent-minded politicians with more accommodating and submissive aides, a strategy that cost them dearly at times of international or domestic crisis (Daštī, pp. 176-79; Homāyūn, p. 80). Thus, for example, Reżā Shah eliminated or dismissed from office such leading architects of his own modern state as ‘Alī-Akbar Dāvar, ‘Abd-al-Ḥosayn Teymūrtāš, Noṣrat-al-Dawla Fīrūz, and General Ḥabīb-Allāh Khan Šaybānī.



In the relatively free political atmosphere of the period 1320-32 Š./1941-53 an oligarchy of old-guard politicians, landowners, great merchants, entrepreneurs, and influential religious leaders was able to dominate the Majles, the cabinet, and local governments. However, these privileged strata were challenged continually, on one hand, by intellectuals and workers who had been mobilized by the communist Tudeh party (see [COMMUNISM ii](#)) since 1320 Š./1941 (Abrahamian, 1982, pp. 326-70), and, on the other, by the National front (Jabha-ye melli), a broad coalition of the new middle class and the old *bāzārī* middle and lower-middle classes under the leadership of Moḥammad Moṣaddeq (Young, *passim*). Throughout this period the old-guard political elite rallied behind the court and fought against both the nationalist middleclass movement and the leftist labor movement (Elwell-Sutton, *passim*). All these conservative elements supported the [coup d'état of 1332 Š./1953](#), in which the exiled shah returned to power (see Upton, pp. 107-08).

In 1332-40 Š./1953-61 the dominant strata were generally protected from the political challenges of both the middle and the working classes; nonetheless, its members felt increasingly threatened by the tightening of the shah's control over the bureaucratic elite and the entrepreneurial class. The landowners still controlled both houses of parliament and retained their influence in the central and local governments. The old Tehran chamber of commerce, which had been suspended by Moṣaddeq, was revived, and a number of its members were elected to the Majles and the Senate. However, the political aspirations of the modern bourgeoisie remained unfulfilled, for its members were never allowed to establish autonomous associations. The Chamber of commerce, industries, and mines, for example, was reorganized in 1349 Š./1970 by the minister of the economy, and a former minister of industries and mines was appointed to direct it. Subordination of this association to the Ministry of economy prevented it from exerting any significant influence as an independent interest group. Moreover, the modern bourgeoisie had no mass constituency, and thus it was never accorded the political privileges enjoyed by the landowning class. For example, an election campaign by several leading industrialists in the mid-1350s Š./1970s irritated the shah and prompted him to sound the following warning: "The affluent candidates who have managed to get elected to the Majles and the Senate are by no means allowed to misuse their political office in order to protect the interests of capitalists and plunder the people" (*Rastākīz*, 2 Tīr 1354 Š./23 June 1975, pp. 1-2).

Industrial entrepreneurs also had to cope with seemingly arbitrary state



policies like the compulsory sale of stock in their companies to employees or on the open market, the formation of capital markets through joint ventures, and state-imposed profit-sharing schemes to benefit workers. In almost every instance these policies were promulgated without the prior consent or even knowledge of the industrialists themselves. The government's highly publicized campaign against price gouging in the mid-1350s Š./1970s was an especially humiliating blow to the *bāzār* merchants and the commercial and industrial bourgeoisie (see [BĀZĀR iii. SOCIOECONOMIC AND POLITICAL ROLE OF THE BĀZĀR](#)). Their sense of powerlessness and uncertainty led to a flight from responsibility and a desire to realize maximum profits in the shortest possible time. Many great entrepreneurs and traders relied increasingly on import trade and land speculation, while others transferred major portions of their assets to Western countries.

Of all the dominant social groups it was the bureaucratic elite that was most directly subject to the shah's increasingly autocratic rule. Independent-minded ministers, officials, and managers were replaced by weaker and more obliging men. The new officials, usually inexperienced and unable to exercise independent judgment, lacked political bases of their own within the population and were generally much less familiar with the political culture of the popular classes. The monarch's slighting of the political aspirations of the bureaucratic elite and the entrepreneurial class therefore weakened the ideological commitment of these groups to the regime and limited their ability to mobilize support for it at times of political crisis (see Herz, *passim*; Homāyūn, pp. 13-32, 46-85; Zonis, pp. 80-117, 299-329).

The new middle class

The growth of the bureaucracy, increasing demand for technicians and managers at all levels in both the public and private sectors, and the rapid expansion of Western-style education contributed to the rise of a nonentrepreneurial middle class, comprising independent professionals, civil servants, military personnel, white-collar employees and technicians in private enterprises, and the intelligentsia. Members of this class were the principal agents of state building and modernization in the Pahlavi period. Yet lack of opportunities for meaningful political participation, particularly in the last two decades of that period, generated ambivalence, discontent, and eventually active opposition toward the regime among many members of this class (see, e.g., Ashraf and Banuazizi, 1985, pp. 25-29; Bill, 1972, pp. 73-102; Herz, pp. 4-12).



The new middle class began to emerge in Persia with Reżā Shah's efforts to develop a modern army and an efficient centralized bureaucracy. The leadership of the new army, composed initially of elements from the Russian-trained *Cossack brigade* and the Swedish-trained gendarmerie, gradually evolved into an indigenous officer corps. Each year scores of young Persians were sent to European military academies for training. The rapid growth of the army, its victories over rebellious tribes in the early 1300s Š./1920s, and its function as the power base of the new regime raised its prestige well beyond that of its counterpart in the Qajar period. Owing to this new social status and increased pay, officers were a privileged segment of the new middle class under Reżā Shah (Banani, pp. 54-58; Cottrell, pp. 390-94).

An even more dramatic expansion took place in the size of the civil bureaucracy and the technical competence of its middle and upper echelons. In Tehran, for example, in 1307 Š./1928 there were 24,000 government employees, half of whom could be considered as having middle-class status (Baladiya-ye Tehrān, p. 84). By 1355 Š./1976 there were as many as 240,000 government managerial, technical, and clerical workers in the city (Markaz-e āmār-e Īrān, 1980, p. 245). Similarly, whereas in 1335 Š./1956 there were 200,000 professional, technical, and clerical workers in Persia, by 1355 Š./1976 there were nearly a million, two-thirds of whom worked for the state (Edāra-ye āmār-e 'omūmī, I, 1961, p. 283; Markaz-e āmār-e Īrān, 1981, pp. 61, 64, 67).

To meet the manpower needs of the new bureaucratic structures and state-owned industrial and commercial enterprises, new schools were established at all levels, existing schools were expanded, and the curricula were modernized. Between 1300 Š./1921 and 1320 Š./1941 the number of primary schools rose from 432 to 2,407, that of secondary schools from 33 to 299. In 1314 Š./1935 the University of Tehran was founded with the merging of five separate colleges having a combined enrollment of 886 students. By the time of Reżā Shah's abdication in 1320 Š./1941 there were approximately 5,000 college graduates in Persia, one-fifth of whom had received their education in the West; more than 10,000 students had completed senior high school, 25,000 junior high school, and more than 65,000 elementary school (Wezārat-e kār, 1343 Š./1964, pp. 2010-43). Between 1339 Š./1960 and 1355 Š./1976 the number of students enrolled in senior high schools rose from 250,000 to more than 900,000, while the number of students in higher education increased from about 20,000 to more than 150,000. The number of Persians studying abroad (mostly in Europe and the United States) increased from 15,000 in 1339 Š./1960 to more than



70,000 in 1355 Š./1976 (Markaz-e āmār-e Īrān, 1976, pp. 40-41, 51; *Sāl-nāma-ye āmārī-e 1347*, p. 75).

Whereas earlier generations of the new middle class had retained connections with the traditional culture of Persia, the generations that came of age after the reign of Reżā Shah became increasingly Westernized and isolated from the indigenous popular culture and, in particular, from Islamic values and modes of behavior. For example, while nationalism and Marxism flourished among the intelligentsia after World War II, Islam as a political ideology was represented only by tiny groups like the Association of Islamic engineers (Anjoman-e eslāmī-e mohandesīn) and the “Islamic socialists” (Sosiālisthā-ye kodāparast), which had little impact on national politics (Jāmā, pp. 5-33). It was only in the mid-1340s Š./1960s that large numbers of intellectuals, particularly those from lower middleclass and rural backgrounds, began adopting militant Islamic ideologies. This trend was especially evident among university students, about one-third of whom came from *bāzār* and rural backgrounds by the mid-1350s S./1970s (see Naşafat, p. 91).

The state and the politics of the new middle class. On the whole, the modern middle class occupied a favored position under both Pahlavi monarchs. Its Westernized life-style, norms, and values were consistent with those of the ruling elite, especially during the reign of Reżā Shah, when most members of this class considered their own material interests and aspirations tied to the monarch’s program of modernization and secularization. Politically, however, the modern middle class was offered few opportunities for meaningful participation. With the shah’s departure in 1320 Š./1941 there was a sudden efflorescence of political activity among members of the new middle class, especially the intelligentsia, including formation of the Tudeh party and the National front, creation of numerous political and trade organizations, and publication of scores of newspapers and magazines. The principal target of most of these activists was the royal court, which was supported for the most part by old-guard politicians and representatives of the propertied classes (Abrahamian, 1982, pp. 326-70; Elwell-Sutton; Young; Nīkbīn, pp. 89-204, 239-56; Key Ostovān, I, pp. 31-84, 256-404).

After the coup d’état of 1332 Š./1953 the Pahlavi state continued to experience difficulty in rallying the support of the new middle class. Most intellectuals, again barred from independent political activity, remained sympathetic toward the remnants of the National front or the non-Tudeh left. Many writers and poets, teachers, lawyers, physicians, engineers, and students were



opposed to or were ambivalent about the regime (see, e.g., Bill, 1972, pp. 73-102). The rapid growth in the number of college and university students, both at home and abroad, coincided with a worldwide trend toward radicalization of youth. Following the abortive liberalization of the early 1340s Š./1960s, many Persian students adopted leftist and revolutionary ideas and formed a number of political, revolutionary, or guerrilla organizations (see [COMMUNISM iii](#)). Outside Persia the [Confederation of Iranian Students](#), with thousands of members and sympathizers in the United States and Europe, became the most vociferous organ of opposition to the shah's regime during the 1340s-50s Š./1960s-70s.

The traditional middle strata

The old religious strata (*mo'ammamīn* "turban wearers") and the *bāzārīs*, including merchants (*tojjār*), master artisans (*pīšavarān*), and shopkeepers (*kasaba*), showed remarkable economic and cultural resilience in the Pahlavi period. The *bāzār* remained the financial and political power base of the Shi'ite clerical establishment and the bastion of popular political-protest movements, including the antirepublican movement of 1301 Š./1925, the drive to nationalize oil in 1329-32 Š./1950-53, the urban riots of 1342 Š./1963, and the Revolution of Bahman 1357 Š./February 1979.

The traditional petite bourgeoisie. Master artisans and shopkeepers constituted the core of the traditional petite bourgeoisie in Persia. Their shops were located in the vaulted urban *bāzārs* and along the streets of the new urban quarters. Operating with limited capital, they did manual work, sold at retail, and typically employed one or more apprentices and footboys. Shopkeepers, master artisans, and their apprentices were considered to be a single status group, the *kasaba*, and, together with the religious hierarchy, they served as the principal carriers of traditional urban life-styles and values.

With rapid urbanization came a proliferation of retail stores and workshops both inside and outside the *bāzār*. In Tehran, for example, the number of persons in such occupations increased from 12,000 in 1307 Š./1928 to 250,000 in 1355 Š./1976 (Baladīya-ye Tehrān, pp. 72-83; *Iran Almanac* 1976, p. 361). By the late 1350s Š./1970s the traditional petit bourgeois and their employees constituted more than a quarter of the urban work force (Markaz-e āmār-e Īrān, 1981, p. 245; Banū'azīzī and Ašraf, 1359 Š./1980, p. 43).

Master artisans and shopkeepers of each craft or trade were linked in



informal groups known as *aṣṇāf*, headed by elders (*rīš-safīds*, lit. “graybeards”), who rose gradually to positions of leadership through informal processes and the consensus of their peers. A particularly significant mechanism of social cohesion and collective action was the informal religious gathering (*hay’at-e madhabī*), at which members of the same occupation, residents of the same neighborhood, or recent migrants from the same village or town met periodically face to face, thus reinforcing common religious, interpersonal, cooperative, and political ties (see Thaiss, p. 202).

The religious hierarchy. Under the Pahlavis the Shi’ite clerical establishment lost many of its traditional functions in society, though it was successful in maintaining relative independence from the state. The relationship between these groups and the state was in fact often strained and at times antagonistic. The hostility of the Pahlavi regime toward the religious hierarchy began shortly after Reżā Shah’s accession to the throne in 1305 Š./1926 and included a forceful campaign to change the dress (*‘abā’ wa ‘amāma*) of the *‘olamā’*, to end the exemption of religious students from military conscription, and to require young clerics to take external examinations for the purpose of determining their academic status. Reżā Shah’s transfer of the judicial and educational functions of the *‘olamā’* to the secular institutions of the modern state severely weakened their political and economic position (Komeynī, 1323 Š./1944, pp. 271-74, 302-03; idem, 1981, pp. 333-34; idem, 1361 Š./1983, I, pp. 46, 168, 247, 269, V, pp. 153-54; Rāzī, I, pp. 46-51). The decline in their social status and the gradual shrinking of opportunities for gainful employment in their traditional roles forced many *‘olamā’* and religious students to change their attire and to seek employment in such modern institutions as secular public schools, the Ministry of justice, and offices for the registration of titles and personal status (Rāzī, I, pp. 46, 51-53). The number of students in religious schools (*madrasas*) dropped from 6,000 in 1304 Š./1925 to as few as 800 in 1320 Š./1941 (Akhavi, p. 187).

After 1320 Š./1941 members of the religious hierarchy regained some of their old privileges. Contributions from their followers increased steadily. Many *‘olamā’* returned to their traditional attire, and more students were attracted to religious schools, nearly 7,500 in 1347 Š./1968 (Akhavi, p. 187). Furthermore, authorities at Qom, the theological center of the country, adopted a more receptive attitude toward modern education. They began to admit graduates of modern schools for the first time and, starting in the 1340s Š./1960s, allowed their own advanced students to pursue further studies at secular universities



in Persia (see, e.g., Højjatī Kermānī, in *Iran Times*, 13 January 1988, p. 8).

By the late 1350s Š./1970s Qom had emerged as a significant center of power. The best-known religious leaders in the city at that time were three grand ayatollahs (Sayyed Moḥammad-Kāẓem Šarīʿatmadārī, Moḥammad-Reżā Golpāyagānī, and Sayyed Šehāb-al-Dīn Najafī Maṛʿašī), who, together with some ten other prominent ayatollahs (*ʿolamāʾ-ye aʿlām*), constituted the leading group within the hierarchy (*ʿolamāʾ-ye ʿet̄erāz-e awwal*). There were also about fifty professors (*modarresīn*) of advanced (*dars-e k̄ārej*) and upper-middle (*soʿtūḥ-e ʿālīya*) courses, who occupied the second rank within the hierarchy (*ʿolamāʾ-ye ʿet̄erāz-e dovvom*). Combined with some twenty leading provincial clerics (*ʿolamāʾ-ye belād*) and senior instructors at other religious centers in Mašhad, Isfahan, Hamadān, Tabrīz, Ahvāz, Shiraz, and Tehran, these individuals were the core of the *ʿolamāʾ* in the more specific connotation of the term, that is, clerics of great learning in the fields of Islamic jurisprudence and sciences. Other members of the *ʿolamāʾ* included about a thousand “men of knowledge” (*fożalāʾ*), “respected elders” (*moḥtaramīn wa moʿammarīn*), sons of grand ayatollahs with clerical attire (*ayatallāhzāda, āqāzāda*), preachers (*woʿāz*), about 3,000 prayer leaders in principal mosques (*pīšnamāz, emām-e jamāʿat*) in major cities, and about 8,400 students (*ṭollāb*; Rāzī, II, passim; Fischer, pp. 79-83; Akhavi, pp. 187-208). In addition, there were more than 10,000 “men of the turban,” often from semiliterate lower-class backgrounds, who served as reciters of verses about the martyrdom of Imam Ḥosayn and his family in Karbalāʾ (*rawżakʿvāns*), reciters of prayers (*zīārat-nāmakʿvāns*) during pilgrimages (*zīārat*) to the holy shrines, and rural clerics (*ākūnd-e deh*). According to the 1355 Š./1976 census, the total number of clerics was 23,476, which appears to have been too low a figure (see Markaz-e āmār-e Īrān, 1981, p. 95). In 1354 Š./1975 the total enrollment at the Qom *madrasas* was 6,414 students, of whom about 70 percent had begun their religious education at modern elementary schools (Fischer, pp. 79-80; for the style and the contents of the curricula of religious schools, see Mottahedeh, pp. 69-109; Fischer, pp. 61-103). Of 282 students at one of the schools in Qom (Madresa-ye ḥaqqānī), for instance, about 45 percent came from peasant families, 20 percent from urban clerical families, 17 percent from urban artisan and shopkeeper backgrounds, and 7 percent from urban working-class backgrounds (10 percent came from unknown or other backgrounds; Fischer, p. 80). Other religious centers, including those at Mašhad, Isfahan, Hamadān, Tabrīz, Ahvāz, and Shiraz, enrolled about 2,000 students, many of whom received more advanced training for a period of six months a year at Qom. Students received



from the grand ayatollahs small monthly stipends, which in the mid-1350s Š./1970s ranged from 1,500 rials (\$22) to 4,700 rials (\$69), depending on their academic level (*moqaddamāt*, *saḥ*, and *kārej*) and marital status (Fischer, p. 81). The *ṭollāb* were regularly dispatched to various parts of the country to perform religious services, which significantly expanded the influence and capacity for mobilization of the religious hierarchy at Qom.

The state and the politics of the 'olamā'. In its relationship with the Pahlavi regime the religious establishment remained either collaborationist or accommodationist during much of the 1300s Š./1920s and 1310s Š./1930s. In this respect they followed the example of Ayatollah 'Abd-al-Karīm Ḥā'erī, who founded the center at Qom and led it during the period 1301-14 Š./1922-35; his successors maintained this stance until 1340 Š./1961 (Rāzī, I, pp. 22-51; Rūḥānī, I, pp. 890-96, II, pp. 549-89; Akhavi, pp. 117-58). In the face of a new challenge from the Westernized Marxist and liberal-nationalist intelligentsia in the 1320s Š./1940s and early 1330s Š./1950s, the majority of the 'olamā' sided with the royal court and the propertied classes. Although some of them supported the movement to nationalize oil during the first phase (1329-31 Š./1950-52), most sided with the monarchists during the coup in Mordād 1332 Š./August 1953 (see [CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY](#)).

In the years after the death in 1340 Š./1961 of the grand ayatollah Sayyed Ḥosayn Borūjerdī, the powerful, conservative, and accommodationist leader of the Persian Shi'ite community, the clerical establishment became more open to new ideas and leadership and became divided into three main factions. The largest, which included most of the high-ranking 'olamā', maintained the accommodationist stance of Ḥā'erī and Borūjerdī. A second faction actively collaborated with the Pahlavi regime. Some members of this group were appointed by the shah to lead Friday prayers in Tehran and other major cities; others were attached to the state-controlled organization of religious endowments (*awqāf*); and still others served as advisers and officials of the Religious corps organization (*Sepāh-e dīn*), which had been established as part of Moḥammad Reżā Shah's White Revolution in the 1340s-50s Š./1960s-70s (Akhavi, pp. 129-43). These clerics were often denounced by Ayatollah Khomeini and his circle as "clerics of the palace" (*ākūnd-e darbārī*; Komeyni, 1357 Š./1978, pp. 199-204; for the collaborationist 'olamā' in Mašhad, see Kāmena'i, pp. 45-47).

Beginning in the early 1340s Š./1960s, a small group of militant clerics formed a third group within the religious establishment at Qom. Capitalizing on



resentment engendered by land reform, women's suffrage, the extension of diplomatic immunity to American military advisers in Persia in the early 1340s Š./1960s, and similar issues, this group rallied around the charismatic Ayatollah Khomeini, who soon emerged as a figure to be emulated (*marja'-e taqlid*), with the title "grand ayatollah" (*āyat-Allāh al-'oẓmā*). His young, politically active disciples had often been critical of the apolitical stance of the religious leaders at Qom and Najaf and were designated *ākūnd-e sīāsī* ("political clerics") by the more conservative '*olamā*' (Hāšemī Rafsanjānī, p. 19; Rūhānī, I, pp. 623-24; see also Ashraf, 1990, pp. 113-21).

The most remarkable feature of the religious establishment in Persia under the Pahlavis was its resilience in the face of modernization, secularization, and state intervention. Following a period of retreat (1300s-10s Š./1920s-30s), the hierarchy made the necessary doctrinal and organizational adaptations to the new economic, political, and cultural environment in the country. Using modern means of [communication](#), as well as informal networks, the leaders at Qom improved their capacity for collecting and distributing religious taxes and used their resources for educational, charitable, and political purposes. They attracted hundreds of new students from many parts of the country on a full-time or seasonal basis, thus guaranteeing the spread of their influence throughout the country. And, finally, in an even more active attempt to counter the encroachment of Western culture and secularism, a small segment of the '*olamā*' began in the 1350s Š./1970s to address the social and political concerns of the urban middle classes, especially the young intelligentsia, in a new, Islamic language of protest (see Ashraf, 1990, pp. 120-21).

The working classes

In the 1300s Š./1920s almost all Persian workers were still employed in handicrafts and other traditional small-scale industries. For example, in Tehran, where, 5,000 master artisans and 7,000 apprentices were engaged in the various crafts in 1306 Š./1927-28 (Baladīya-ye Tehrān, pp. 72-83), only a few hundred were employed in such small, modern factories as the arsenals, textile factories, printshops, and power plants (Kayhān, *Joğrāfiā* III, pp. 301-02). In the 1310s Š./1930s the size and technical competence of the industrial labor force increased. By the end of the decade there were more than 260,000 workers in the various branches of industry and mining, construction, transportation, and the crafts, more than twice as many as before World War I.



As shown in Table 49, the 75,000 workers in the traditional crafts accounted for less than one-third of the wage earners in the country—a substantial drop from their 80 percent share twenty-five years earlier. The establishment of several large factories, including the state arsenal (2,300 workers), the state tobacco plant (3,300 workers), and several major textile mills (500-1,000 workers each) in Isfahan and Tabrīz, raised the proportion of workers in large industrial enterprises (*Persia*, pp. 457-64; Wezārat-e kār, 1947; *Būletan-e Bānk-e mellī-e Īrān*, 1312-20 Š./1933-41, various issues). By the early 1320s Š./1940s, 29,930 workers, nearly one-third of the industrial labor force, were working in plants with more than 500 workers (Abdullaev, p. 86). In the same period the proportion of seasonal workers in the total industrial labor force decreased from 15 percent to 6.5 percent (Abdullaev, p. 90). These changes were not accompanied, however, by any large wage increases in the modern industrial sector during the 1300s Š./1920s and 1310s Š./1930s. Thus, for example, in such industries as cotton cleaning, textiles, and railroad construction the average daily wage was still about 3 *qerāns* for unskilled and 7-8 *qerāns* for skilled workers, only a modest increase over the prevailing wage two or three decades earlier. Women in unskilled positions, even when they performed work similar to that of men, were paid an average of 1.5 *qerāns* a day, while children received even less, about 1 *qerān* a day (Abdullaev, pp. 102-05; for labor conditions in this period, see Floor, pp. 99-118).

The industrial working class continued to expand during the 1320s Š./1940s and 1330s Š./1950s. In the period 1320-35 Š./1941-56 the number of workers in large industrial establishments (employing ten workers or more) rose from about 40,000 to 70,000 (see Table 50). In the next twenty years there was a major acceleration in the pace of industrialization, and the number of industrial workers employed in large establishments increased dramatically, from 70,000 to 400,000. By 1355 Š./1976 there were approximately 1.25 million wage earners in production and related activities, including 750,000 in industries, mines, and related occupations and 500,000 in construction (Markaz-e āmār-e Īrān, 1981, pp. 68, 85; these figures do not include workers in the service sector and self-employed artisans and shopkeepers).

At the top of the labor pyramid, in terms of social status, job security, and wages, were workers in more than 800 large-scale (employing 100 or more workers) modern industrial establishments in the oil industry, petrochemicals, steel, machine tools, manufacturing to replace various imports, and transportation. Members of this “labor aristocracy,” who constituted as much



as one-third of the labor force by 1355 Š./1976, received wages that were five times the average for the majority of industrial workers (Halliday, pp. 189-90). “By 1976 real wages were double their 1969 level, and by 1978 workers’ purchasing power in the larger manufacturing establishments was 50 per cent higher than in 1974” (Hakimian, p. 13). The remaining two-thirds of the work force consisted of semiskilled and unskilled workers in construction, mining, small-scale industries, and services in urban areas. “Taken in money terms [construction workers’] wages had gone up tenfold in these two decades [1338-57 Š./1959-78]; but even allowing for stagnation up to 1976, their real wages in 1978 were three times better than in 1959” (Hakimian, p. 13). In the lower echelons of the labor force must be included more than a half-million impoverished self-employed workers in the so-called “informal sector” and those in low-paid services, many of whom lived in slum areas and on the margins of cities along with poor rural migrants (see, e.g., Kazemi, pp. 46-67).

The industrial working class and collective action. Despite its relatively small size, the working class in the 1300s Š./1920s was involved in intense and even radical political and union-building activities. For the most part this activity was stimulated by the organizing efforts of the Persian Communist party with indirect help from the Soviet Union (Kayhān, pp. 8-13; Floor, pp. 12-53; see [COMMUNISM i](#)). In the last decade of Reżā Shah’s reign there was a policy of repression of organized labor, including imprisonment of labor-union leaders and their supporters among the radical intelligentsia (Floor, pp. 57-58; Kayhān, pp. 11-15; ‘Alawī, *passim*).

From 1320 Š./1941 to 1332 Š./1953 trade-union activity reached an all-time peak, under the leadership of the Tudeh party, which formed the United central council of trade unions of workers and toilers of Iran (Šūrā-ye mottaheda-ye markazī-e etteḥādīyahā-ye kārgarān wa zaḥmatkašān-e Īrān) under the leadership of the veteran communist politician and labor organizer Reżā Rūstā (Floor, pp. 15-28; Ladjevardi, pp. 28-69). At the height of its influence in 1325 Š./1946 the council claimed the loyalty of some 300,000 workers (*World Trade Union Movement*, December 1949, pp. 30-31; Abrahamian, 1981, p. 186). It was particularly active in Tehran, Isfahan, and Ābādān, where it helped to organize a number of strikes in the mid-1320s Š./1940s. In the period 1325-30 Š./1946-51 the trade unions were suppressed, and government-sponsored unions were organized. However, labor unions resurfaced during the Moṣaddeq era (1330-32 Š./1951-53: Abrahamian, pp. 187-93; Ladjevardi, pp. 70-94).



From the coup of 1332 Š./1953 until the Revolution of 1358 Š./1979 workers were again prevented from organizing independent labor unions. The period from the coup until 1341 Š./1962 was perhaps the nadir of labor assertiveness, with only thirty inactive syndicates officially registered. After a decision by the government in 1342 Š./1963 to allow the formation of labor unions under the control of the Ministry of labor, the number rose from sixteen in 1343 Š./1964 to 519 in 1352 Š./1972. In order to control these syndicates, the government established an umbrella organization, the Workers' organization of Iran (Sāzmān-e kārgarān-e Īrān) in 1346 Š./1967 (see Wezārat-e kār, 1352 Š./1972, pp. 116-18, 124). In the meantime leftist groups continued to be active, though under severe restrictions, among industrial workers; the pace and scale of their activities intensified in the 1350s Š./1970s (Kayhān, pp. 28-32). Of 140 strikes in the period 1349-56 Š./1970-77, 83 percent took place in industrial establishments with 100 or more workers. Seventy percent of these strikes were peaceful, and in more than half of them the workers' demands were met (survey by the present authors).

The agrarian classes

During the Pahlavi period the proportion of peasants and tribespeople in the population decreased from about 80 percent in the early 1300s Š./1920s to about 50 percent in the late 1350s Š./1970s. The migrating tribespeople, in particular, lost their demographic significance under the Pahlavis, declining from approximately 25 percent of the population to less than 5 percent (for the social structure of the tribes and references, see 'AŠĀYER; ANTHROPOLOGY; see also Amān-Allāhī, passim; Beck, passim).

In the 1310s-30s Š./1930s-50s traditional relations between landlords and peasants (*arbāb-ra'īyatī*) achieved recognition in modern law. Although the commercialization of agriculture, population growth, rural-urban migration, and improvements in communications and transportation slowly altered rural communities over these decades, the overall condition of the peasants, in both absolute and relative terms, remained poor. The peasant continued to be "constantly in need of money for capital requirements to replace livestock and agricultural implements, and for current expenses such as provision of seed. Often, too, he had to borrow merely to feed himself and his family His only remedy when driven to extremity was to leave the land to seek a possibly even more precarious living in the town" (Lambton, 1969, pp. 29-30).

At the beginning of the 1340s Š./1960s the rural population of Persia,



accounting for about two-thirds of the total, was divided into three major classes: peasant proprietors and petty landowners, sharecroppers and tenant families (*ra'īyat* in the more specific connotation of the term), and landless villagers known as *košnešīns*, who were at the bottom of the village class structure. These strata comprised respectively about 25 percent, 40 percent, and 35 percent of the rural population (Edāra-ye āmār-e 'omūmī, 1962, XV, table 101; Markaz-e āmār-e Īrān, 1968, p. 119).

The land-reform program of the 1340s Š./1960s modified traditional *arbāb-ra'īyat* relations, forcing landowners to sell all or part of their property to the occupant sharecroppers (Ashraf and Banuazizi, 1980, pp. 33-35). As a result, ownership of 6-7 million ha of agricultural land (52-62 percent of the total) was transferred to sharecroppers and tenant farmers (estimated from Edāra-ye āmār-e 'omūmī, 1962, table 101; Kōsravī, pp. 6-8, 63-66, 98-100, 142-45, 162-64, 189-91). After land reform small landowners and peasant proprietors came to form nearly two-thirds of the rural population. The remaining one-third consisted of landless villagers, who reaped no direct benefits from the reform program.

The new rural strata included prosperous villagers, the middle peasantry, and poor villagers. The prosperous villagers comprised small landowners and peasants, traders, and moneylenders, as well as government functionaries stationed in larger villages. The small landowners were those who had either owned land or had been well-to-do sharecroppers or village traders before the reform (Lambton, *Landlord and Peasant*, pp. 275-82). Their numbers increased owing to recognition of the property rights of smallholders and the sale of land to occupant sharecroppers. In addition, villagers with small amounts of capital gradually acquired their own plots either from the old landowners or from peasants through moneylending or purchasing crops before the harvest (Keddie, pp. 383-88). The number of prosperous peasants and small commercial farmers, who owned most of the plots from 10 to 50 ha (45 percent of the total arable land), is estimated at about 400,000 households for the mid-1350s Š./1970s (*Ketāb-e āgāh*, p. 180).

Village traders, moneylenders, and lessors of agricultural implements (oxen, tractors, mills, etc.) formed the second component of the village upper class. As a group, they “control[led] the major portion of rural capital and credit and thus exercise[d] an influence upon the whole production system” (Hooglund, p. 232). After land reform the prosperous villagers, who had previously ranked below the traditional absentee landowners and their bailiffs, moved into the



top stratum of the village social structure. They consolidated their position, furthermore, by establishing working relations with the various government functionaries and serving in such newly formed rural organizations as village councils, cooperative societies, houses of equity (*kāna-ye enṣāf*), cultural units, and government-sponsored party cells—all of which were created by the state in the years immediately following adoption of the land-reform program (Ashraf, 1991, pp. 286-87; Kešāvarz, p. 118).

The middle peasantry, which substantially increased in numbers owing to land reform, consisted mainly of former sharecroppers, tenant farmers, and ordinary family owners and peasant proprietors. In the mid-1350s Š./1970s the core of the middle peasantry comprised 930,000 owners of plots from 2-10 ha (28 percent of total arable land; *Ketāb-e āgāh*, p. 180).

The lower stratum of the peasantry consisted of landless villagers and peasants with plots too small to support a family. In the mid-1350s Š./1970s about 1.1 million holdings (45 percent of the total) were less than 2 ha, accounting for about 5 percent of the total agricultural land (*Ketāb-e āgāh*, p. 180). Landless villagers, whose number had increased substantially as a result of rapid population growth after World War II, constituted as much as one-third of the rural population in the 1350s Š./1970s. According to the census of 1355 Š./1976, of approximately 2.4 million persons employed in rural areas, 1.1 million were landless agricultural workers and 1.3 million were workers in village industries and services. Half a million of the total were unpaid family workers (Markaz-e āmār-e Īrān, 1981, p. 88).

All villagers, regardless of their position in the social structure, benefited from the economic boom that began in the mid-1340s Š./1960s. The annual expenditure of rural households, at constant prices, increased from about \$1,000 in 1344 Š./1965 to about \$2,000 in 1354 Š./1975 (*Ketāb-e āgāh*, p. 186). The rising incomes of villagers reflected a modest growth in agricultural productivity combined with an increase in permanent or seasonal construction, factory, or other work in neighboring—and, at times, more distant—urban areas. The improvements in conditions resulting from land reform and economic growth may account for relatively high levels of peasants' satisfaction with their living conditions reported by several researchers in the late 1350s Š./1970s (see, e.g., Dowlat, Hourcade, and Puech, *passim*; Mahdawī, pp. 59-64; "Current Political Attitudes," p. 5) and for their failure to participate in the Revolution (Ashraf, 1991, pp. 288-89).



Social inequality and poverty

During the Pahlavi period the standard of living of all classes improved, owing to economic growth; heavy investment in public utilities and communications networks; expansion of public-health, education, social-security, and medical services; and the removal of many traditional obstacles that had restricted the participation of women in public life, education, and employment (Markaz-e āmār-e Īrān, 1355 Š./1976, pp. 35-72, 157-90, 315-32; idem, 1973, *passim*). However, many of the long-standing disparities in the distribution of resources persisted, and the economic boom of the last fifteen years of Pahlavi rule contributed to a further deepening of the economic inequalities among classes and regions.

Longitudinal data, including distribution of household expenditures by size of household, three national censuses of population and housing (1956, 1966, 1976), and a variety of other economic and social statistics, make it possible to assess the changing patterns of social inequality in Pahlavi Persia for the period beginning in the late 1330s Š./1950s (Pesaran). First, even before the oil boom of the early 1350s Š./1970s Persia had one of the most skewed patterns of income distribution in the world (International Labour Office, 1972, app. C, p. 6); however, a small moderating trend began in 1354 Š./1975. Second, living standards in the countryside were much lower than in urban areas (the ratio between urban and rural income, according to one estimate, was 4:1 in the early 1350s Š./1970s; Mehran, 1975a, p. 21), and the relative position of rural households declined even farther during the period of rapid economic growth. Third, income, as well as other resources, was more unevenly distributed in urban than in rural areas. Fourth, employment factors, including both employment status (i.e., employer, selfemployed, or employee for either wages or salary) and economic sector (i.e., agriculture, industry, services), were more closely associated with income disparities than were regional factors or urban-rural differences. Fifth, the low and regressive taxes levied by the central government had very little impact on income distribution (Mehran, 1975b, *passim*).

The percentage of the population living in poverty, as defined by the “poverty line” of \$800 per average household per year established by the World Bank in 1971, declined from 54 percent in 1350 Š./1971 to 28 percent in 1354 Š./1975; for urban households the decline was from 34 to 15 percent and for rural households from 68 to 41 percent. Of those living in poverty 74 percent were in rural areas, 54 percent worked in agriculture, and 84 percent were illiterate



(van Ginneken, 1980, pp. 640, 643-44). Starting in the late 1340s Š./1960s higher urban wages lured hundreds of thousands of landless villagers to the major cities, where they often lived in shantytowns and squatters' settlements. The stark contrast between the abject poverty of the new rural migrants and the ostentatious life-styles of some affluent urban families became an embarrassment to the government. Particularly in Tehran, attempts by municipal authorities to evict squatters led to confrontations between the poor migrants and security forces (Čerikhā-ye fedā'ī-e kalq-e Īrān, 1978a; Kazemi, pp. 77-88).

Inequality also persisted in housing, education, nutrition, and access to medical and other public services (see Banūa'zīzī and Ašraf, 1357 Š./1978). Differences between urban and rural areas, among provinces, and especially between the capital and the rest of the country were dramatic (on regional disparities, see also Nattagh; Amirahmadi and Atash; and Aghajanian). Thus, for example, in 1354 Š./1975 the number of persons per physician was 974 for Tehran, 2,855 for the country as a whole, and for provinces like Īlām, Zanjān, Lorestān, and Hamadān two to three times higher than the national average (Kīūmehr, p. 184). The proportion of the school-age population (six to fourteen years old) attending school in 1351 Š./1972 ranged from 76 percent in Tehran to about 40 percent in Kurdistan, Lorestān, Sīstān, Baluchistan, and other underdeveloped provinces (Ammadī, p. 261). In the same year 83 percent of urban families had electricity, and 68 percent had running water; for rural households the corresponding figures were 12 and 5 percent (Kāzemīpūr, p. 208).

The status of women improved substantially under the Pahlavis (Sanasarian, pp. 79-105; Bāmdād, *passim*). Notable achievements included universal suffrage (Bahman 1361 Š./February 1963); the family-protection laws (Qānūn-e ḥemāyat-e kānevāda of 1346 Š./1967 and 1354 Š./1975); a higher rate of female literacy (from 8 percent in 1345 Š./1966 to 36 percent in 1355 Š./1976) and education; and greater participation of women in the labor force (Markaz-e āmār-e Īrān, 1352 Š./1973, pp. 20-95; *idem*, 1981, pp. 25-69; Mirani, pp. 76-81). In all these areas, however, the principal—though by no means the exclusive—beneficiaries of the changes were urban middle-class women.

Social mobility

Between the early 1300s Š./1920s and the late 1350s Š./1970s Persia experienced significant changes in the sizes and boundaries of its social strata,



as well as considerable individual mobility across class lines. First, there was the general shift from agriculture to industry, beginning with Reżā Shah's modest industrialization program and continuing at a much more rapid pace during his son's reign, particularly in the 1340s Š./1960s and 1350s Š./1970s. At most levels industrial work required more education and technical competence than agriculture and offered greater social prestige and opportunities for advancement.

Second, migration from the countryside to the city provided another basis for mobility. Having remained fairly constant at about 21-22 percent for the first four decades of the century (Bharier, 1971, p. 25), the proportion of the Persian population living in cities increased dramatically in the following three decades—to 31 percent in 1335 Š./1956, 38 percent in 1345 Š./1966, and 47 percent in 1355 Š./1976 (Markaz-e āmār-e Īrān, 1981, pp. xvi-xvii). Although the prospect of better jobs was the chief motivation for migrants from the countryside (Hemmasi, p. 112), the cities also provided more opportunities for children to advance beyond their parents' stations in life.

Third, the rapid expansion of the military and civilian bureaucracies under the Pahlavis swelled the ranks of the modern urban middle class. The increasing reliance of employers, particularly in the public sector, on educational credentials as prerequisites for employment ensured that education would be the main means by which individuals from working-class or lower middle-class backgrounds could achieve middle-class status.

Fourth, the relaxation of state control over the economy after the departure of Reżā Shah in 1320 Š./1941 and the economic opportunities created by World War II provided many avenues for further development of the commercial and industrial bourgeoisie, most of whom had been *bāzār* merchants, commercial agents, or prosperous shopkeepers. During the 1340s Š./1960s and 1350s Š./1970s the land-reform program and subsequent expansion of the industrial and service sectors helped to replace great landowners with an industrial-commercial bourgeoisie and a professional-bureaucratic intelligentsia. These processes expanded the size of the privileged urban strata and introduced greater diversity within their ranks.

A survey of 1,800 male heads of households in Tehran and Shiraz in 1356 Š./1977 illustrates these changes (Banū'azīzī and Ašraf, 1359 Š./1980). In Tehran 40 percent of their fathers had worked in agriculture, and more than 10 percent of the heads of households themselves had begun their careers in that



sector. The industrial sector, in which 38 percent of respondents were employed at the time of the survey, had been the entry point into the labor market for 40 percent, whereas only 18 percent of respondents' fathers had worked in that sector. The service sector, where 61 percent of the respondents were employed in 1356 Š./1977, had served as the entry point for 49 percent of the men and had employed 40 percent of their fathers. Thus, the two generations of workers who had lived under the Pahlavis had moved from agriculture to industry and, to a lesser degree, from both agriculture and industry into the service sector. The Tehran survey showed high rates of upward and downward social movement over the two generations. For example, the proportion of sons who held jobs comparable to those of their fathers ranged from 48 percent among manual workers (18 percent having moved down, 34 percent having moved up) to 36 percent among white-collar employees (26 percent having moved down, 39 percent having moved up), 28 percent for the traditional middle class (shopkeepers and craftsmen, 34 percent having moved down, 38 percent having moved up), 10 percent for lower-level service workers (3 percent having moved down, 87 percent having moved up), and 18 percent for upper-level professionals (64 percent having moved down; 18 percent having moved up). The pattern of intergenerational mobility for Shiraz was generally similar to that of Tehran.

Social classes and the Revolution of 1357 Š./1979

Three groups provided the leadership, ideological formulations, and financial backing for the Revolution: the young intelligentsia, the militant *'olamā'*, and the younger generation of the *bāzār* community. White-collar workers in the public sector and industrial workers joined in only in the later stages of the Revolution, but they broadened its social base and staged strikes that pushed the economy to the verge of bankruptcy and ultimately incapacitated the state apparatus. The urban poor and rural migrants were involved in mass demonstrations and occasional violent confrontations with the police and the army, but they functioned primarily as auxiliaries to other groups, rather than on their own initiative. Finally, the peasants played no significant role in any phase of the revolutionary movement (Ashraf and Banuazizi, 1985, pp. 25-35).

University students, dissident intellectuals, writers, human-rights activists, and lawyers were the first to challenge the regime openly. ŹTaking advantage of the government's relaxation of curbs on political dissent in the early months of 1356 Š./1977, they initiated a variety of peaceful actions, including the circulation of open letters, protest meetings, nights of poetry reading, and



public rallies, at which they condemned government censorship and infringement on other political and civil rights (see, e.g., *Kāvešgar*, 2, 1366 Š./1987, *passim*; *Eṭṭelā'āt*, 12 Bahman 1357 Š./22 February 1979, pp. 4-5; Mo'adden, *passim*; Pākdāman, 1365 Š./1986, pp. 61-94). Throughout the nearly two-year span of the Revolution the young intelligentsia participated more actively than any other social group in every form of protest and revolutionary activity from peaceful marches to strikes to armed insurrection. Of nearly 2,500 demonstrations in that period about one-quarter originated in secondary schools and universities; moreover, students often played key roles in demonstrations outside the schools. Secondary-school and university students, along with young *bāzārīs*, helped to organize and actively participated in nearly half the approximately 1,200 strikes that occurred in Mehr and Ābān 1357 Š./October and November 1978 (Ashraf and Banuazizi, 1985, pp. 25-26; Bāzargān, pp. 25, 30, 39, 45-46, 48).

Although some members of the '*olamā*' were actively involved in the initial stages of the Revolution, most were suspicious of the radical youth and of Ayatollah Khomeini's militant stance and thus remained politically inactive through nearly the entire two years (Bāzargān, pp. 21-22, 39). As early as 10 Ābān 1356 Š./1 November 1977 Khomeini had exhorted them to become more active: "Writers belonging to political parties now criticize the regime. They write letters and sign petitions. You should write letters too. A hundred of the '*olamā*' should sign them" (*Šahīd-ī dīgar*, pp. 56-57).

The third major component of the revolutionary coalition was the *bāzār* community: merchants, shopkeepers, artisans, and apprentices. Many of the more successful tactics for agitation and revolutionary mobilization were planned and carried out by the younger generation of *bāzārīs* under the leadership of militant members of the '*olamā*'. The *bāzār* also provided financial support for other revolutionary groups, particularly those of the '*olamā*' (see Parsa, pp. 91-125).

Members of the modern middle class joined the ranks of the opposition in the later stages of the Revolution. Like the students and the *bāzārīs* they organized protests and strikes and intensified their efforts when they met with little or no harsh response from the government. For the most part, however, their participation was limited to making demands for higher salaries and other job benefits, staging peaceful strikes, and the like. Although they did not organize street demonstrations, they did participate in many such public protests organized by others (see Ashraf and Banuazizi, 1985, pp. 32-33).



Members of the industrial proletariat, especially those working in public enterprises, joined the Revolution at about the same time as white-collar state employees. They often struck alongside white-collar workers in the same industries, which enhanced the effectiveness of their protests and enabled them to close down many essential services and industries. Industrial workers in the private sector remained relatively inactive throughout the Revolution. During the critical months of Mehr and Ābān 1357 Š./October and November 1978, for example, strikes or protest activities were reported for only 110 (12 percent) of the country's 773 large (100 or more workers) industrial establishments (based on a survey conducted by the present authors). The Fedā'ī guerrillas complained openly in Mehr 1357 Š./October 1978 that "a major segment of our people, especially the workers, has still not entered the field We demand that our combatant workers and toilers not stand silent in the face of the slaughter and massacre of the suffering masses Protest against the regime's plots to stage phony, government-sponsored demonstrations by politically uninformed workers!" (Čerikhā-ye fedā'ī-e kālq-e Īrān, 1978b, p. 7).

Villagers, who constituted about half the population of Persia on the eve of the Revolution, remained indifferent to the uprisings in the cities. Of 2,483 demonstrations in support of the Revolution, only 2 percent occurred in rural areas. Some peasants even took part in counterrevolutionary demonstrations, for example, those in which demonstrators opposed to the regime were attacked with clubs and the *bāzārs*, local offices of the Ministry of education, and homes of revolutionary activists were pillaged (for a discussion of the counterrevolutionary role of the peasants, see Ashraf, 1991, pp. 290-91).

In its final stages (Ābān-Bahman 1357 Š./November 1978-February 1979) the Revolution, having been transformed from a series of sporadic protests by a small segment of the intelligentsia to an all-encompassing mass movement, came to include virtually all urban classes and groups. The important '*olamā*', despite their small numbers, played an increasingly decisive role in the movement, furnishing it with a utopian vision of a just "Islamic government" and, more important, providing in Khomeini an uncompromising and charismatic leader. Disillusionment with the Pahlavi regime and the prospect of a better postrevolutionary society helped to unite the diverse elements of the revolutionary movement until the final collapse of the government on 22 Bahman 1357 Š./11 February 1979. That victory, which came far more swiftly than anyone had expected, reflected not only the ability of the revolutionary



leadership to rally the support of nearly all major social strata but also the utter failure of the Pahlavi regime to hold the allegiance of the very social classes that it had helped to create and that had directly benefited from its economic and social policies for more than half a century.

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Table 48. DISTRIBUTION OF OCCUPATIONAL BACKGROUNDS OF MAJLES



DEPUTIES, 1324-99 = 1358 Š./1906-79 (in percentages)

Table 49. DISTRIBUTION OF THE PERSIAN WORKING CLASS IN VARIOUS INDUSTRIES IN THE LATE 1310s Š./1930s

Table 50. NUMBER OF INDUSTRIAL UNITS AND WORKERS IN LARGE ESTABLISHMENTS,* 1320-55 Š./1941-1976