



# CONSTITUTIONAL REVOLUTION II. EVENTS

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## CONSTITUTIONAL REVOLUTION

### ii. Events

After 1308/1890 the Persian government found itself in increasing financial difficulties, as inflation produced a sharp decline in the value of the land tax (*mālīāt*; M. Durand, "Memorandum on the Situation in Persia," 27 September 1895, F.O. 60/566; *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 10th ed., 1902, s.v. "Persia"; Gilbar, 1983) and the silver *qerān* lost value against the pound sterling with the rapid fall of international silver prices at the end of the 19th century (Avery and Simmons, pp. 259-86). These difficulties led the government to borrow from Russia: 2 million pounds sterling in 1317/1900 and 1 million in 1319/1902. In 1315/1897-98 the grand vizier (*ṣadr-e a'zam*) [Mīrzā 'Alī Khan Amīn-al-Dawla](#) had begun attempts to reform the state finances (Amīn-al-Dawla, p. 218). His one success was the reorganization of the [customs](#) under the Belgian Joseph Naus (See [belgian-iranian relations](#)). Customs revenues rose from 200,000 pounds sterling per annum in 1316/1898 to 600,000 per annum in early 1322/1904.

*Events leading to adoption of the Constitution.* The leading merchants reacted to more stringent administration of the customs by organizing demonstrations in major urban centers, particularly Tabrīz, Tehran, Isfahan, and Shiraz,



between 1317/1900 and 1323/1905 (Spring Rice to Salisbury, no. 89, 18 September 1900, F.O. 60/618; Gérard to Favereau, 3 December 1898, no. 264/94, in fol. 2981, I-III, Belgian Ministry of Foreign Affairs; Gilbar, 1977, pp. 275-303). In 1322/1904 the situation was exacerbated by a shortfall in trade with Russia, Persia's major trading partner, because of the Russo-Japanese war (Entner, p. 63). In 1323/1905 discontent, with the customs reforms in particular and the government's fiscal policies and inaccessibility in general, led the merchants to organize and fund an opposition movement in Tehran; the chief spokesman was the *mojtahed* (theologian) Sayyed 'Abd-Allāh Behbahānī. The opposition took on a more reformist character when Behbahānī and Sayyed Moḥammad Ṭabāṭabā'ī, a *mojtahed* much influenced by the 19th-century reform goals of government according to law and greater administrative efficiency (see i, above), entered into an agreement to collaborate, on the eve of 25 Ramaẓān 1323/23 November 1905 (*Tārīḳ-e bīdārī*, ed. Sa'īdī Sīrjānī, I, pp. 272-73, 324; Kāẓemīya; Martin, pp. 65-85).

When 'Alā'-al-Dawla, the governor of Tehran, ordered two merchants bastinadoed on 14 Šawwāl 1323/12 December 1905, as punishment for having raised the price of sugar, he provided the opposition with a pretext for open resistance. The next day the *bāzār* went on strike, and a mass of people, led by Behbahānī and Ṭabāṭabā'ī, gathered at Masjed-e Šāh to demand the removal of 'Alā'-al-Dawla. The crowd had different aspirations, but some of them also sought a council for the redress of grievances. Sayyed Jamāl-al-Dīn Wā'eẓ Ešfahānī was addressing the crowd when followers of the conservative *mojtahed* Ḥājj Mīrzā Abu'l-Qāsem Emām-e Jom'a, the leading preacher at the Masjed-e Šāh, disrupted the meeting by attacking the listeners. Two days later Ṭabāṭabā'ī and Behbahānī led a group of about 2,000 people, most of them members of the lesser '*olamā*', to take sanctuary (*bast*) in the shrine of Shah 'Abd-al-'Aẓīm south of Tehran. Funded initially from the *bāzār* (*Tārīḳ-e bīdārī*, ed. Sa'īdī Sīrjānī, I, pp. 331-36, 344), the *bast* was also supported by two aspirants to the throne: Sālār-al-Dawla Abu'l-Faṭḥ Mīrzā and, according to E. G. Browne (*Persian Revolution*, p. 113; cf. Kasrawī, pp. 66, 113), the crown prince, Moḥammad-'Alī Mīrzā, the latter in the belief that it was directed mainly against the prime minister, '*Ayn-al-Dawla*, whom he mistrusted. In its later stages, however, the *bast* was sustained by two groups of high officials. The first consisted of the family and clients of the exiled former premier '*Alī-Ašgar Khan Amīn-al-Solṭān*. The second comprised reformist members of the elite, including Mīrzā Naṣr-Allāh Khan Mošīr-al-Dawla and more particularly his sons Mīrzā Ḥasan Khan Mošīr-al-Molk and Mīrzā Ḥosayn Khan Mo'tamen-al-



Molk; Mortazāqolī Khan Ṣanī‘-al-Dawla; Moḵber-al-Salṭana Maḥdīqolī Hedāyat; Mīrzā Jawād Khan Sa‘d-al-Dawla; Dūst-Moḥammad Khan E‘teṣām-al-Molk (later Mo‘ayyer-al-Mamālek); and Abu‘l-Qāsem Khan Nāṣer-al-Molk (*Tārīk-e bīdārī*, ed. Sa‘īdī Sīrjānī, I, p. 346; Ṣarīf Kāšānī, I, pp. 35-40; Grant Duff to Grey, no. 101, 22 April 1906, F.O. 371/109). Encouragement from these political factions was more consistent than that of the *bāzār* merchants, whose support flagged when it became clear that they were not going to dislodge ‘Ayn-al-Dawla and Naus, the architect of the customs reforms. Having tried and failed to break the *bast* by bribery and coercion, the government asked the protesting ‘*olamā*’ for their conditions. Their main requests emerged as the dismissal of Naus and ‘Ayn-al-Dawla; there was no request for reform on their initial lists (see *Tārīk-e bīdārī*, ed. Sa‘īdī Sīrjānī, I, pp. 353, 357; Dawlatābādī, *Ḥayāt-e Yaḥyā* II, p. 22). Having refused these requests, the government accepted a subsequent demand for an ‘*adālat-kāna*’ (lit. “house of justice”). This term, the precise meaning of which is obscure, had come into use, notably by Malkom Khan, during attempts at legal reform in the 1860s (see Ādamīyat, 1352 Š./1973, p. 81), and more particularly in the 1870s, when Sepah-sālār, influenced by the reforms of the Ottoman Tanzīmat, attempted to introduce a system of tribunals (‘*adalat-kānas*’) throughout the provinces under a central body in the capital, to which the state administration was accountable (Ādamīyat, 1352 Š./1973, p. 181). This reform was probably based on the Ottoman Şūrā-ye dawlat (Council of state), which in turn was modeled on the French Conseil d’État (Martin, pp. 76-77). In 1890 Malkom Khan pointed to the reforms in Ottoman law and compared progress in the making of laws and the organizing of ‘*adālat-kānas*’ in the Ottoman empire with the anarchic and oppressive system in Persia (*Qānūn* 16, p. 30). The purpose of the Persian ‘*adālat-kāna*’ has also been linked to a series of late 19th century institutions with differing names, all designed to redress grievances against the state administration (Etteḥādīya).

Mīrzā Yaḥyā Dawlatābādī claimed to have introduced the request for reform into the list presented to the shah (*Ḥayāt-e Yaḥyā* II, pp. 22-24), but his account is improbable, and it is more likely that the demand for establishment of an ‘*adālat-kāna*’ had been quietly suggested to Behbahānī by high-ranking bureaucrats with reformist goals (Ṣarīf Kāšānī, I, p. 20). In any case the vagueness of the term permitted a compromise between the regime, which had not yielded on the more significant demands for dismissal of Naus and ‘Ayn-al-Dawla, and the ‘*olamā*’ in *bast*, who were running out of money and could emerge with enhanced prestige and a guarantee of safety for their



followers. On 14 Du'l-qa'da 1323/10 January 1906 a rescript was issued granting an *'adālat-kāna* to “execute the laws of the Šarī'a and ensure the security of the subjects” (*Tārīk-e bīdārī*, ed. Sa'īdī Sīrjānī, I, p. 366), and the protesting *'olamā'* emerged from *bast* two days later.

There followed a period of inactivity while the government stalled on reform and attempted to divide the opposition, which was in any case uncertain how to proceed. Some of the *'olamā'* were suspicious of reform and especially of the implications of the proposed code of justice. Reformers operating in secret groups began a propaganda campaign in favor of political change (Lambton, 1958). The opposition movement gathered momentum in the late spring, when Ṭabāṭabā'ī, urged on by his followers, wrote to both the shah and 'Ayn-al-Dawla reminding them of their promise to institute reforms (*Tārīk-e bīdārī*, ed. Sa'īdī Sīrjānī, I, pp. 390-91, 403-05). Neither letter elicited a response. In June therefore, after an agitator named Mahdī Gāvkoš had been arrested for sedition and ill treated, Ṭabāṭabā'ī delivered a long sermon calling for an end to arbitrary government and for a *majles-e mašrū'a-ye 'adālat-kāna* (council of justice) in which all classes would be represented, stopping short, however, of a demand for full constitutional government (*Tārīk-e bīdārī*, ed. Sa'īdī Sīrjānī, I, pp. 442-54; Martin, p. 81). Agitation continued until 19 Jomādā I/11 July, when 'Ayn-al-Dawla ordered the arrest of Shaikh Moḥammad Wā'eẓ Ešfahānī, the leading preacher of Tehran, whose sermons had been particularly incendiary. The resulting demonstration ended with the death of a theology student (*ṭalaba*). His body was taken to the Masjed-e jāme', and a large crowd gathered, including Ṭabāṭabā'ī and Behbahānī. The conservative *mojtahed* Shaikh Faẓl-Allāh Nūrī, the foremost religious leader of Tehran and a supporter of the shah, was obliged by a large crowd gathered at his house to go to the mosque and join with the opposition, so that the *'olamā'* might offer a semblance of unity (Dawlatābādī, *Ḥayāt-e Yaḥyā* II, p. 70). The shah issued a rescript promising redress of grievances but refused to dismiss 'Ayn-al-Dawla. On the morning of 21 Jomādā I/13 July a procession bearing the shirt of the dead student and including people wearing shrouds passed through the *bāzār*. Negotiations between the shah and the leaders of the reformist *'olamā'* continued fruitlessly until 23 Jomādā I/15 July, when the latter departed for Qom in protest. The decisive event in breaking the power of the old regime, however, was the great *bast* at the British legation in Tehran at about the same time. Attempts by the government in the mid 19th century to limit the resort to *bast* in shrines and mosques had led increasing numbers to seek refuge in foreign, particularly the British and Russian, legations, which were exempt



from control by the Persian government (see [concessions ii](#)). The British were sometimes embarrassed by their uninvited and often long-term guests but were unwilling to break with tradition, partly because it enhanced their prestige and partly because it could be useful in bringing pressure to bear on the Persian government. It seems certain that the *bast* of 1324/1906 in the British legation was initiated by Behbahānī, who had a long-standing association with the British. On 18 Jomādā I/10 July, even before the demonstrations, he wrote to the chargé d'affaires, Evelyn Grant Duff, that the people were prepared to overthrow the government and asked for financial support (Grant Duff to Grey, no. 178, Tel., 19 July 1906, F.O. 371/112). Grant Duff's reply, that the British government could not support opposition to the government of Persia, reflected firm British policy throughout the *bast*, repeatedly reiterated in telegrams from the foreign secretary, Edward Grey, to Grant Duff. Behbahānī persisted, however, and on 24 Jomādā I/16 July again requested British support against oppression (Grant Duff to Grey, no. 194, 19 July 1906, F.O. 371/112). At the same time he ordered his merchant followers to take *bast* in the legation, and on 27 Jomādā I/19 July about fifty lesser merchants and mullahs did so (*Tārīk-e bīdārī*, ed. Sa'īdī Sīrjānī, I, pp. 510-11; Šarīf Kāšānī, I, pp. 73-81; Grant Duff to Grey, no. 192, Tel., 21 July, no. 197, Tel., 24 July, no. 200, Tel., 26 July, no. 211, 15 August 1906, F.O. 371/112; no. 203, 13 August 1906, F.O. 371/112). The merchants were led by two grain wholesalers, Ḥājī Moḥammad-Taqī Bonakdār and his brother Ḥājī Moḥammad-Ḥasan, who had organized the provisioning of the December *bast* (*Tārīk-e bīdārī*, ed. Sa'īdī Sīrjānī, I, pp. 344, 510-11). Behbahānī probably intended these men not only to seek protection but also to bring pressure to bear on the British to act as intermediaries between the opposition and the shah. It is probable also that he had discussed the matter with notables sympathetic to reform (*Dawlatābādī*, *Ḥayāt-e Yaḥyā* II, p. 71). The initial group was soon joined by theology students and representatives of nearly all the trade and craft guilds; by 11 Jomādā II/2 August the number had reached 14,000. Each guild had its own tent on the legation grounds; meals were prepared in a common kitchen and served from huge cauldrons. Most of the expenses were defrayed by the merchants, particularly Ḥājī Moḥammad-Ḥasan Amīn-al-Žarb, Ḥājī Moḥammad Mo'īn-al-Tojjār Būšehrī, Ḥājī Moḥammad-Esmā'īl Āqā Tabrīzī, and Arbāb Jamšīd (*Tārīk-e bīdārī*, ed. Sa'īdī Sīrjānī, I, p. 590; Browne, *Persian Revolution*, p. 120; Malekzāda, II, pp. 168-70; Tafrešī Ḥosaynī, p. 29).

From most contemporary accounts it is clear that the demand for a national assembly evolved during this *bast*; although most of the participants were



ignorant of the principles of constitutional government, members of the reformist secret societies were particularly active among them (*Tārīk-e bīdārī*, Saʿīdī Sīrjānī, I, pp. 512, 514; Dawlatābādī, *Ḥayāt-e Yaḥyā* II, p. 74; Şafāʿī, 1346 Š./1967, p. 78; Browne, *Persian Revolution*, p. 122). On 1 Jomādā II/23 July Grant Duff conveyed the first demands of the *bastīs* to the shah: dismissal of ʿAyn-al-Dawla, establishment of an *ʿadālat-kāna*, and the return of the *ʿolamāʿ* who had sought refuge in Qom (Grant Duff to Grey, no. 206, 13 August 1906, F.O. 371/112; Dawlatābādī, *Ḥayāt-e Yaḥyā* II, pp. 74-5). It was only three days later, in a meeting between ʿAyn-al-Dawla and eight leading Tehran merchants, that a request for an elected national assembly (*majles-e mabʿūṭān-e mellī*) was first put forward (Dawlatābādī, *Ḥayāt-e Yaḥyā* II, pp. 74-76; Gilbar, 1977, p. 299).

After further negotiations the shah agreed in principle to a *majles*, and on 7 Jomādā II/29 July ʿAyn-al-Dawla resigned. Some of the *bastīs* prepared to leave but were advised by the leaders to remain in the legation, as it was pointed out that the prime minister’s resignation was no longer the issue and that a more fundamental reform, a *majles-e mellī*, was required (Ḥ. Taqīzāda, quoted in Browne, *Persian Revolution*, p. 122). A struggle over the exact nature of the proposed *majles* ensued, the central issue being the degree to which reforms would be guided by Islamic law. The *ʿolamāʿ* at Qom sent a telegram to Moẓaffar-al-Dīn Shah in which they stated their demand for the establishment of a *majles-e ʿadālat* to ensure justice in all affairs, protect the country against foreign interference, and introduce reforms in accordance with the Şarīʿa (*Tārīk-e bīdārī*, ed. Saʿīdī Sīrjānī, I, pp. 546-48). A rescript of 14 Jomādā II/5 August granting a *majles* of representatives elected from all classes, including the guilds, was rejected by the opposition because they found it too vague. Finally, following further consultations, including an interview between the grand vizier, Mošīr-al-Dawla, and leading merchants, the rescript of 19 Jomādā II/10 August granted the right to a *majles-e šūrā-ye mellī* (*Tārīk-e bīdārī*, ed. Saʿīdī Sīrjānī, I, pp. 548-65; Grant Duff to Grey, no. 210, Tel., 10 August 1906, F.O. 371/112; Ẓahīr-al-Dawla, p. 136). All but a few *bastīs* then left the legation, and the *ʿolamāʿ* returned from Qom on 23 Jomādā II/14 August.

*Adoption of the Constitution and early debates.* Three days later a body met to make arrangements for organization of the Majles; it included members from three distinct groups: reformist notables, including Şanīʿ-al-Dawla, Mokḥber-al-Salṭana, and Mošīr-al-Molk, and some merchants; the younger *ʿolamāʿ* led by Ṭabāṭabāʾī’s sons; and court conservatives, most prominent among them Amīr Bahādor (*Tārīk-e bīdārī*, ed. Saʿīdī Sīrjānī, I, pp. 573-76; Dawlatābādī, *Ḥayāt-e*



*Yaḥyā* II, pp. 87-88). In the interval 28 Jomādā II-18 Rajab/19 August-8 September the group worked to formulate electoral rules. A draft based on the electoral laws in the Belgian constitution was submitted by Ṣanīʿ-al-Dawla's group (see iii, below). Although the 'olamā' feared that it gave insufficient prominence to religion and Amīr Bahādor tried both to preserve the powers of the shah and to restrict the Majles to Tehran (Ṣafāʿī, 1346 Š./1967, p. 381; Grant Duff to Grey, no. 226, 11 September 1906, F.O. 416/29), the draft was eventually presented to the shah. It was signed on 19 Rajab/8 September and announced the next day. The regulations provided for 156 deputies (*Tārīḵ-e bīdārī*, ed. Saʿīdī Sīrjānī, I, pp. 601-08); sixty of them were allotted to Tehran, reportedly in order to permit swift establishment of the Majles. Of the Tehran deputies thirty-two represented the guilds, ten the merchants, ten the landowners, four the 'olamā', and four the Qajar family. Elections took place in the capital on 10 Šābān/29 September, the number of voters being no more than a few hundred in each of the five classes, owing to high property qualifications. Ṭabāṭabāʿī and Behbahānī, though not officially deputies to the Majles, attended the sessions, as their presence was still necessary to legitimate the body. The formidable nature of the latent opposition to the new Majles soon became apparent, however, when the crown prince and governor of Azarbaijan, Moḥammad-ʿAlī Mīrzā, forbade publication in that province of the shah's rescript on the Majles; he yielded only after disturbances in Tabrīz (Kasrawī, *Mašrūṭa*<sup>3</sup>, pp. 153-64). Later in the autumn provincial elections to the Majles produced power struggles in which local and national issues were mingled.

The Majles opened on 18 Šābān/7 October, with Ṣanīʿ-al-Dawla as its first president. The dominant faction included Saʿd-al-Dawla, leading merchants, and some guildsmen. Despite efforts by some contemporary observers to detect the emergence of political parties, the pattern of groupings within the Majles was at that stage largely traditional (see v, below). Ṭabāṭabāʿī and Behbahānī continued to represent the views of the less privileged, and factions formed and reformed as their members cooperated over one particular interest and then united with others on another issue. Observers commented that the majority of the deputies had little understanding of constitutionalism and either pursued their personal interests or came under the influence of an ambitious few (Hedāyat, p. 148; Zinov'ev, p. 46). The guild deputies in particular were overawed by the proceedings and took little part in the debates, content to follow the guidance of the merchants and *mojtaheds*. The cabinet ministers, who were appointed by the shah and did not serve in the Majles, were also in a weak position, caught between the two opposing centers



of power.

The chief issue under discussion in the autumn of 1906 was the proposed constitution. It was agreed that the Majles, representing the people, would have the right to propose legislation and have final authority over the laws, the budget, and financial policy. It would sit in two-year sessions. The most contentious issue, the nomination of members of the senate, was resolved by allowing the shah and the Majles each to appoint half the members. The Constitution was rushed to the shah to be signed and presented to the Majles on 16 Dū'l-qa'da 1324/1 January 1907, just before his death (*Tārīk-e bīdārī*, ed. Sa'īdī Sirjānī, II, p. 35).

At the beginning of 1907 two more intransigent elements entered the political scene. On one hand, Moḥammad-'Alī Shah (1324-27/1907-09), who held the Majles in high disfavor, acceded to the throne. On the other, the deputies from Tabrīz arrived, led by Sayyed Ḥasan Taqīzāda. The first major issue confronting the Majles was the debate over the definition of constitutional government and the role of religious authority, which led to serious disturbances in Tabrīz, instigated by Taqīzāda, and was temporarily resolved only on 27 Dū'l-ḥejja/11 February, with the issue of a rescript declaring the government of Persia to be *mašrūṭa*, that is, constitutional in the parliamentary sense (*Tārīk-e bīdārī*, ed. Sa'īdī Sirjānī, II, pp. 82-86; Kasrawī, *Mašrūṭa*<sup>3</sup>, pp. 217-23; see i, above).

The other major problem facing the Majles was finances. There were no revenues to permit implementation of reforms, and salaries of government employees were already well in arrears. A proposed Anglo-Russian loan fell through because the Majles could not guarantee that the money would be spent properly by the government. On 4 Šafar 1325/19 March 1907 a finance committee composed of Šanī'-al-Dawla and leading merchant deputies proposed that government finances be reorganized along European lines, with revenues paid directly into the treasury and all officials salaried (Spring Rice to Grey, no. 65, 28 March 1907, F.O. 371/301). The old system of *madākel*, unregulated gifts, in the collection of the revenues and *pīškaš* (gifts) made to the shah in return for appointments was officially abolished. A national bank had been established in the previous autumn, in an attempt to solve the financial crisis without resorting to foreign loans (see [banking in iran i](#)). The bank had been unable to raise adequate subscriptions, however, and in March 1907 its directors were chartered to borrow money and initiate development projects. Nevertheless, it did not function effectively in the revolutionary



period, partly because it lacked collateral and partly because the limited amount of coinage in the country was mainly in the possession of the British Imperial Bank, which had the concession to issue bank notes (*Tārīk-e bīdārī*, ed. Sa'īdī Sīrjānī, II, p. 20; Majles [Tehran] 31, Du'l-ḥejja 1324/January 1907; Spring Rice to Grey no. 290, 4 December 1907, F.O. 416/29). On 1 Šafar/16 March the Majles abolished *toyūl* (benefices from land), but that move aroused opposition among notables and 'olamā', the main beneficiaries of such payments.

The covert opposition of the shah and court was bolstered by growing discontent among other groups that had profited from the old regime. The shah brought back Amīn-al-Solṭān from exile in Europe and appointed him prime minister in April 1907, arousing strong protests from the Anjoman-e Āḍarbāyjān (q.v.) and the leading reformist preacher Naṣr-Allāh Khan Malek-al-Motakallemīn (Kasrawī, *Mašrūṭa*<sup>3</sup>, p. 251). Amīn-al-Solṭān arrived at Bandar-e Anzalī in a Russian warship on 6 Rabī' I/19 April. Local radical forces tried to prevent his landing, but he was able to mollify some of the opposition by declaring on the spot in favor of the Constitution. Although some participants believed that he would use statecraft to incapacitate the Majles, others considered him the only person capable of reconciling opposing groups (Hedāyat, pp. 202-08; Kasrawī, *Mašrūṭa*<sup>3</sup>, p. 281).

It was recognized from the beginning that the Constitution so hastily presented to Moẓaffar-al-Dīn Shah had left some fundamental issues unresolved, and a commission of the Majles began work on a major supplementary law (Motammem-e qānūn-e asāsī; see iii, below). As it was completing its task, many of the conservative 'olamā', led by Shaikh Faẓl-Allāh, began to evince disquiet, particularly over Article 8, which provided for equality before the law, regardless of creed. To combat the influence of modernizing constitutionalists, Shaikh Faẓl-Allāh drafted an article to be included in the supplement, providing that no bill passed by the Majles could be implemented without the consent of a committee of 'olamā' (Kasrawī, *Mašrūṭa*<sup>3</sup>, pp. 316-17). The draft was incorporated into the constitution as Article 2 but with the proviso that members of the council be chosen by the Majles, which vitiated its intended effect (Kasrawī, *Mašrūṭa*<sup>3</sup>, p. 372). Shaikh Faẓl-Allāh then openly joined forces with discontented conservative groups and organized a number of demonstrations against the constitutionalists; they in turn attacked his followers. On 10 Jomādā I 1325/21 June 1907 he and his group took *bast* at the shrine of Shah 'Abd-al-'Aẓīm, whence, for the remainder



of the summer, they conducted a campaign against constitutionalism. The *bast* was subsidized by the court, notables whose economic interests had been negatively affected by measures adopted in the Majles, and above all by the shah (Malekzāda, III, p. 30; Kasrawī, *Mašrūṭa*<sup>3</sup>, p. 373; Dawlatābādī, *Ḥayāt-e Yaḥyā* II, p. 179; Šarīf Kāšānī, I, p. 128; Spring Rice to Grey, 18 July 1907, F.O. 800/70). In a series of leaflets the *bastīs* demanded an Islamic constitution (*nezām-nāma-ye eslāmī*) and accused the constitutionalists of having established a parliament that had no legitimate basis in the Šarī‘a, thus interfering with revealed law. They also attacked equality and freedom of the press as contrary to Islam (for texts and discussion of these leaflets, see Kasrawī, *Mašrūṭa*<sup>3</sup>, pp. 410, 414-23, 432-38; Reżwānī, *passim*; Torkamān, *passim*; Richard; Martin, pp. 123-30).

These charges were refuted in a number of constitutionalist newspapers that had been established following the granting of the Constitution (see vi, below). The first was *Majles*, founded in October 1906, which reported the debates in the Majles; others included *Ḥabl-al-matīn* (Tehran), which contained good discursive articles, and the radical reformist *Tamaddon*, *Šūr-e Esrāfil*, and *Mosāwāt*. The latter two papers were the source of some of the policies and programs adopted by the new Social Democratic party (Ferqa-ye ejtemā‘iyūn-e ‘āmmiyūn), through published criticism of the exploitation of peasants by landlords and discussions of republicanism (*Šūr-e Esrāfil* 18-19, *passim*; *Mosāwāt* 21, *passim*). The role of this party in the early stages of the Constitutional Revolution is still obscure, but from about 1907 its activities seem to have spread, especially in Tabrīz. The leading activist was [Haydar Khan ‘Am\(ū\)oḡlī](#), a revolutionary from the Caucasus who was influential among the lower classes and probably organized the strike in August 1907 for better pay and conditions for employees of the Tehran electrical plant where he worked. He also appears to have been instrumental in the establishment of a secret committee with connections to the Russian Social Democrats. Two other probable members of the committee were the well-known preachers Malek-al-Motakallemīn and Āqā Sayyed Jamāl-al-Dīn Ešfahānī (Etteḥādīya, 1980, pp. 101, 108-10).

During the summer of 1907 Amīn-al-Soltān had asked the shah to dismiss the more hard-line members of his cabinet, and he continued to build up the so-called “Moderate party” in the Majles. These moves aroused opposition from both radicals and conservatives, however, and his proposals for a new foreign loan to help reorganize government finances were regarded with suspicion.



On 22 Rajab/31 August, having just obtained from the shah permission to cooperate with the Majles, Amīn-al-Solṭān was assassinated (Kasrawī, *Mašrūṭa*<sup>3</sup>, p. 446). The man who shot him, ‘Abbās Āqā, was a moneychanger from Tabriz and carried a note identifying himself as *fedāī* (freedom fighter) no. 41. There have been various theories about who was responsible for organizing the assassination (See [conspiracy theories](#)). According to one contemporary version, members of the secret Tehran committee had voted for his “execution” and assigned the task to a group of which Ḥaydar Khan was the leader and ‘Abbās Āqā a member. This view prevailed among some conservatives, and the governor of Tehran, Mortazāqolī Khan Wazīr-e Maḵṣūṣ, relinquished his post in the conviction that the deed was the work of a radical secret society and fearing a reactionary plot against himself. A second theory, that the assassination had been plotted by the court, was held by Ṣanī‘-al-Dawla, who resigned as president of the Majles in fear of his own life. There are still those who believe, on the basis of Ḥaydar Khan’s memoirs, that the assassination resulted from a single radical plot (Sheikholeslami and Wilson, pp. 25-51). Investigation of British documents, however, suggests that there were two separate plots (Keddie, 1971; Ṣayḵ-al-Eslāmī), though it is not clear which of them was the successful one. The shah was somewhat intimidated by these events, and on 8 Ṣā‘bān/16 September Shaikh Fażl-Allāh emerged from *bast*, probably because financial support from the court had ceased. Some of the courtiers expressed alarm that the Constitutional Revolution had entered a more violent phase (Dawlatābādī, *Ḥayāt-e Yahyā* II, p. 146).

When the supplementary law came before the Majles in the autumn of 1907 it met with comparatively little opposition and was ratified on 30 Ṣā‘bān/7 October. But the Majles was in difficulty; the treasury was empty, taxes were paid irregularly, there was no standing force to maintain order, and parliamentary authority was being undermined by the Tehran *anjomans*, societies formed by various groups within the population (Marling to Grey, no. 230, 10 October 1907, F.O. 416/34). These societies, which had operated in secret before the establishment of the Majles, had subsequently proliferated, a symptom of the gradual breakdown of authority in both the capital and the provinces. In the provincial cities they functioned as councils, frequently taking over from the central authorities. In Tehran the term *anjoman* covered many different types of organization, from gangs of toughs to learned societies to political cliques. Many *anjoman* members belonged to the rootless poor and had little understanding of the principles of constitutional government; they took advantage of the prevailing liberalism to interfere increasingly in the



business of the Majles (Malekzāda, III, p. 82). Whenever anyone tried to speak out against such interference, he would be surrounded by *anjoman* members demanding an explanation (Hedāyat, p. 159). The most powerful was Anjoman-e Ādarbāyjān, a highly organized quasi-military group of about 3,000 members with direct links to the Tabrīz deputies, whose political program it supported (Marling to Grey, no. 39, 28 February 1908, F.O. 416/35). In Tehran each guild had its own society; a central *anjoman* with reformist tendencies was at odds with the guild elders (Dawlatābādī, *Ḥayāt-e Yahyā* II, pp. 116-17; for the role of the guilds, cf. Floor; Yaḡmā'ī, 1357 Š./1978, listing the many guild *anjomans* with which Sayyed Jamāl-al-Dīn Eṣfahānī was linked).

Attempts to wrest control of the Persian armed forces from the shah or to organize new units responsible to the Majles failed, leaving the Majles dependent on the guards provided by the *anjomans*. On 13 Ša'bān/19 November 1907 the *anjomans* sent a joint letter to the Majles requesting formation of a national army (Majles 212, 26 Šawwāl 1325/20 November 1907, p. 2), which seriously alarmed the shah.

The Majles was also plagued by the inexperience and absenteeism of its deputies, and discipline was haphazard. The ministers were disunited, and, as none had the support of a political party in the Majles, they had to rely on the shah, who had appointed them (Eteḥādīya, 1980, pp. 138-40). The one group that had some semblance of organization in the Majles was the *āzādīk'vāhān* (liberals), also known as *tondravān* (extremists) because of their belief that supreme power should be vested in parliament. They could do little while Amīn-al-Solṭān was prime minister, and his efforts to build up a moderate faction had weakened their influence. They therefore sought support outside the Majles, using the *anjomans* and the press to bring pressure upon opposition deputies. Within the *āzādīk'vāhān* there was a small core of dedicated political activists, of whom the most powerful was Taqīzāda. Beyond the establishment of a constitutional Majles, he and his followers shared the wider goal of introducing basic political and social reforms, including a strong legislature and weak executive, control of government finances by the Majles, secularism in government, and freedom of the press, speech, and association. Outside the Majles their spokesmen were Mālek-al-Motakallemīn and Sayyed Jamāl-al-Dīn, the latter especially arguing that equality is justified by the laws of Islam. These various tenets were inspired by those in the program of the Social Democratic party; the link between the two groups was Ḥaydar Khan (Eteḥādīya, 1980, pp. 207, 216-17, 220, 234, 236-37, 240). Otherwise, both in the



capital and in the provinces the power of the central government was generally neutralized by internal conflict and fear, as ministers hesitated to take any action that was unpopular with the Majles (McDaniel, p. 74). The Majles itself was little more than the local government of Tehran, where any opposition to the activities of the *anjomans* was interpreted as support for the shah.

The major problem remained finance. In an attempt to balance the budget, cuts were made in the shah's allowance, and he in turn dismissed a number of low-ranking employees of the court, exploiting their dissatisfaction against the Majles (Dawlatābādī, *Ḥayāt-e Yaḥyā* II, pp. 153-54; Kasrawī, *Mašrūṭa*<sup>3</sup>, pp. 488, 499-500). Tension between the Majles and the shah was further intensified in October, when rumors of a scheme to replace him with his uncle Mas'ūd Mīrzā Żell-al-Solṭān were circulated (Marling to Grey, no. 326 Tel., 4 November 1907, F.O. 371/313). The cabinet, led by Abu'l-Qāsem Khan Nāṣer-al-Molk, was caught between the shah and the growing number of *anjomans* (see Lambton, 1963). In view of the shah's resentment of the limitations placed on his authority, not least over finance, and the Majles' suspicions of him, it was inevitable that the situation would not remain calm for long.

*The constitutional crisis of 1325/1907.* Matters were moving toward a climax in early December, as both the shah and the *anjomans* mustered their forces. The shah was attempting to organize an army composed of his own bodyguard under Amīr Bahādor and tribesmen from Azarbaijan brought to Tehran (Hartwig to Izvolsky 7 J./20 December 1907, *Sbornik*, p. 57). Hearing rumors of this activity, the radical *anjomans* became more vocal in blaming the shah and his hard-line advisers, particularly Sa'd-al-Dawla, Amīr Bahādor, Šāpšāl (the shah's former Russian tutor), and Shaikh Fażl-Allāh, for the country's problems (Dawlatābādī, *Ḥayāt-e Yaḥyā* II, pp. 162-63; Eḥtešām-al-Salṭana, pp. 624-25). At a meeting of the *anjomans* on 1 Ḍu'l-qa'da/6 December Sayyed Jamāl-al-Dīn and Malek-al-Motakallemīn demanded their dismissal.

The shah summoned the cabinet, which, finding itself unable to deal with the crisis, resigned on 8 Ḍu'l-qa'da 1325/13 December 1907 (Dawlatābādī, *Ḥayāt-e Yaḥyā* II, p. 171; Kasrawī, *Mašrūṭa*<sup>3</sup>, p. 503). On the following day a mob of 600-700 toughs from the poorer quarters of Sangelaj and Čāla Meydān, organized by the shah's supporters, attacked the Majles but was repulsed by the *anjoman* forces. The mob then went to Meydān-e Tūp-kāna, where it was joined by camel drivers, muleteers, cannon keepers, servants of the guardhouse, and soldiers of Amīr Bahādor's Sīlākor regiment (Šarīf Kāšānī, I,



pp. 145-47; Dawlatābādī, *Ḥayāt-e Yaḥyā* II, pp. 167-79; Hedāyat, pp. 209-16; Kasrawī, *Mašrūṭa*<sup>3</sup>, p. 505; Abrahamian, 1969, pp. 128-50). In the afternoon the prime minister, Nāṣer-al-Molk, who had already resigned, was summoned to the court. When he arrived he was seized and put in chains and had to be rescued by the British minister (Dawlatābādī, *Ḥayāt-e Yaḥyā* II, p. 172; Eḥtešām-al-Salṭana, pp. 624-27; Taqīzāda, 1368 Š./1989, pp. 50, 66, 69-70; Kasrawī, *Mašrūṭa*<sup>3</sup>, pp. 499 ff.).

The Majles dispersed, and it seemed briefly that the shah had won, for the *anjomans* offered no further resistance. The shah did not press his advantage, however, according to some through lack of resolve but probably because his troops were not reliable (Browne, *Persian Revolution*, p. 163). His main objective may have been to create a crisis, in order to show that the people did not support the Constitution, a view borne out by a telegram from the Russian minister to Tehran, N. H. de Hartwig, describing the crowd in the Meydān-e Tūp-kāna as a vast throng of different sections of the community expressing support for the shah and antipathy to the Constitution and the Majles (Hartwig to Izvolsky, 11 December/24 December 1907, *Sbornik*, pp. 61-62).

On 11 Du'l-qa'da/16 December the Majles regained the advantage; the *anjomans* surrounded it with about 3,000 men, some of them armed (Dawlatābādī, *Ḥayāt-e Yaḥyā* II, pp. 167, 170). This response was largely organized by the Tabrīz deputies and the Anjoman-e Ādarbāyjān, but support also came from the guilds of Tehran and wealthy notables, particularly Żell-al-Solṭān, who had aspirations to the throne (Dawlatābādī, *Ḥayāt-e Yaḥyā* II, p. 168; Mostašār-al-Dawla, p. 47; Marling to Grey, no. 391 Tel., 18 December 1907, F.O. 416/34). The Majles then seized the initiative, demanding dismissal of the shah's hard-line advisers and control of future armed forces. The shah responded by demanding the expulsion of several deputies. By 13 Du'l-qa'da/18 December it was clear that the Majles was the stronger, with a force of 6,000-7,000 supporters, as opposed to the shah's 1,500 (Marling to Grey, no. 283, 31 December 1907, F.O. 416/35). Telegrams from other cities began arriving in support of the Majles; the one from the Tabrīz *anjoman* called the shah unfit to reign (Šarīf Kāšānī, I, p. 147). On 18 Du'l-qa'da/23 December the shah yielded to all the Majles' conditions, requesting only that Amīr Bahādor remain in his post. The militants seemed poised to press their advantage, but the Russians and British agreed that, in order to avoid anarchy, it was important to keep the shah on the throne (Marling to Grey, no. 283, 31 December 1907, F.O. 416/35). Their cooperation reflected the signing of the



**Anglo-Russian convention** of 31 August 1907, in which they acknowledged separate spheres of influence in Persia, the British in the south and the Russians in the north. Their intercession prevented either side in the constitutional crisis from achieving a clear victory. The shah was made to swear an oath to abide by the Constitution (*Tārīk-e bīdārī*, ed. Sa'īdī Sīrjānī, I, p. 143; Taqīzāda, 1368 Š./1989, pp. 51, 70), and the deputies in turn swore loyalty to him; by 21 Du'l-qa'da/26 December the crisis was over.

*The shah's coup d'état of 1326/1908.* Following the failure of his attempted coup, the shah withdrew for a while from active involvement in politics, but the problems of government were exacerbated by divisions between the *āzādīk'vāhān*, consisting mainly of deputies from Azarbaijan, and the *mo'tadelīn* (moderates) within the Majles itself. The latter were an amorphous conglomeration of notables, merchants, and 'olamā' with common immediate interests but no unified political program. Among them were Behbahānī and Ṭabāṭabā'ī, Amīn-al-Ẓarb, **Hājī Moḥammad Esmā'īl**, **Mo'īn-al-Tojjār Būšehrī**, and Hājī Moḥammad-Taqī Bonakdār. They looked upon the Azarbaijani contingent as a group of upstarts who had played little part in the original establishment of the Majles and should not be allowed to take it over (Malekzāda, III, p. 67). Although mutually suspicious, the parliamentary factions had a common bond in opposition to the shah. The president of the Majles, Maḥmūd Khan Eḥtešām-al-Salṭana, was caught between these groups and the shah. His position was weak because his office required him to attempt to achieve some form of compromise with the shah. Like many of the high-ranking bureaucrats, he sought to curb the influence of the reformist 'olamā', particularly Behbahānī, but his habit of arrogating executive powers and his customary peremptory tone antagonized the Tabrīzīs. As a result, Behbahānī, the Tabrīzīs, and the more radical *anjomans* allied themselves against the president. The support of many deputies, including the leading merchants, could not protect him, and at the end of March 1908 he was forced to resign (Eḥtešām-al-Salṭana, pp. 628-33, 641-46; Dawlatābādī, *Ḥayāt-e Yahyā* II, p. 192-94, 218; Šarīf Kāšānī, I, pp. 157-58, 160-62). He was succeeded by Mīrzā Esmā'īl Khan Momtāz-al-Dawla, who was more compliant with the wishes of the radicals and therefore less palatable to the shah, who also resented the failure of the Majles to identify the culprit in an attempt on his life that had taken place in February.

By the end of April mutual suspicion between the shah and the *anjomans* had increased again; the authority of the Majles, bankrupt and increasingly



intimidated by external forces, was minimal. The Qajar family held a series of meetings to induce the shah to cooperate with the Majles. They were attended by 'olamā', notables, deputies, and representatives of the *anjomans*. As Jalāl-al-Dawla was one of the organizers, there were rumors of a plan to bring his father, the pro-British Żell-al-Solţān, to the throne (Dawlatābādī, *Ḥayāt-e Yaḥyā* II, pp. 239-41, 44-52; Šarīf Kāšānī, I, pp. 176-77; Żahīr-al-Dawla, p. 324). Hartwig believed that Żell-al-Solţān had been cooperating with the *anjomans* since December and feared that, without an army, police, or money, the shah would find it difficult to combat the *anjomans* (Hartwig to Izvolsky, 21 May/3 June and 25 May/7 June 1908, *Sbornik*, pp. 174, 180; Zinov'ev, p. 75). The Russian foreign minister, A. P. Izvolsky, was preoccupied by affairs in Europe and unwilling to oppose the Majles and its supporters for fear of antagonizing the British and jeopardizing the Anglo-Russian agreement. At the same time, he realized that the overthrow of the shah and the substitution of Żell-al-Solţān, with his British affiliations, would jeopardize the agreement in Russia itself. In these circumstances he was obliged to wait on events. As a result of the Tehran meetings, the shah was told to cooperate with the Majles or face deposition by the family. He was to dismiss his intransigent advisers, most significantly Amīr Bahādor. The shah yielded, and on 1 Jomādā I/1 June Amīr Bahādor took refuge in the Russian legation. Hartwig feared that the shah had thus lost his most trustworthy protector, that the *anjomans* would try to kill him, and that Żell-al-Solţān might seize the throne (Hartwig to Izvolsky, 21 May/3 June 1908, *Sbornik*, p. 174).

On 4 Jomādā I/4 June Moḥammad-'Alī Shah left his palace for [Bāḡ-e Šāh](#), a residence just outside the city where he would be safe under the protection of the [Cossack Brigade](#). Three days later Jalāl-al-Dawla and two other Qajar princes were arrested after an audience with the shah; they were eventually exiled. Amīr Bahādor joined the shah at Bāḡ-e Šāh, and the telegraph lines to Tehran were cut. Hartwig perceived conditions as more favorable to the shah than they had been in December because many Majles deputies had become alienated from the *anjomans* (*Tārīḡ-e bīdārī*, ed. Sa'īdī Sīrjānī, II, pp. 136-38; Dawlatābādī, *Ḥayāt-e Yaḥyā* II, pp. 253-69; Šarīf Kāšānī, I, pp. 178-79; Hartwig to Izvolsky, 26 May/8 June 1908, *Sbornik*, p. 181).

The Majles looked on the arrest of the princes as a contravention of the Constitution. The *anjomans* rallied in the Sepah-sālār mosque, near the Majles building, and the shah demanded their dispersal. They decided to comply, though Behbahānī objected to such a sign of weakness. The leading merchants



in particular attempted to defuse the situation; three of them seized what arms they could find and hid them (Malekzāda, IV, p. 25). The shah, who had been moving guns and ammunition to Bāḡ-e Šāh, armed his soldiers on 14 Jomādā I/14 June and demanded that eight constitutionalists, including Malek-al-Motakallemīn, Sayyed Jamāl-al-Dīn, and Mīrzā Jahāngīr Khan, be sent into exile, a demand that the Majles declined on 22 Jomādā I/22 June (Dawlatābādī, *Ḥayāt-e Yaḥya* II, pp. 280-82; Šarīf Kāšānī, I, p. 182; Taqīzāda, 1368 Š./1989, p. 71). At 6 a.m. the following morning twenty cossacks were sent to arrest the constitutional leaders but were repulsed by fire from the Sepah-sālār mosque. Reinforcements were brought in under Russian officers, and in the subsequent battle the brunt of the fighting was born by Anjoman-e Ādarbāyjān and some members of Anjoman-e moẓaffarī, with headquarters near the Majles (Sayyāḥ, pp. 596-600). The mosque was forcibly cleared and the Majles building bombarded. The constitutionalists were arrested and Mīrzā Jahāngīr Khan and Malek-al-Motakallemīn executed. Sayyed Jamāl-al-Dīn managed to escape from Tehran but was subsequently murdered in Borūjerd. A sharp decline in popularity of the Majles contributed much to its fall. Dawlatābādī, explaining why the Majles failed to defend itself in June 1908, named lack of public support as a major factor (*Ḥayāt-e Yaḥyā* II, pp. 270-77, 303; *Tārīḡ-e bīdārī*, ed. Saʿīdī Sīrjānī, II, pp. 155-62). It was blamed for the deteriorating financial situation in the country, the decline in law and order, and the corrupt practices of some of its members.

With the shah in control in Tehran, the center of opposition shifted to Tabrīz, where the provincial *anjoman* declared itself the government of Azarbaijan and appealed to the Social Democrats of Baku for help; as a result, 100 armed revolutionaries arrived from the Caucasus. The supporters of the *anjoman*, mainly Shaikhis and Armenians led by two former *lūṭīs* (street toughs) named Bāqer Khan and Sattār Khan, met unsuccessful resistance from the royalists, led by the *emām-e jomʿa* (leading preacher) of Tabrīz and reinforced by Šāhsevan tribesmen. The shah sent a force to Tabrīz under the leadership of ʿAyn-al-Dawla. Meanwhile, on 11 Šaʿbān/8 September, the British and Russians, whose relations had been briefly impaired by the coup of 1908, asked the shah to restore the Majles in order to bring order and accountability to the state finances and to prevent the Russians from being drawn into the situation in Tabrīz, which would imperil the Anglo-Russian agreement. They received an evasive reply (Marling to Grey, no. 309 Tel., 19 September 1908, F.O. 416/37). Shaikh Faẓl-Allāh declared the Majles, and specifically the notions of parliamentary legislation and representation, to be contrary to the Šarīʿa and



argued that the sultanate was one of the twin pillars of Islam (Malekzāda, IV, p. 217; Ṣahīr-al-Dawla, p. 401). The 'olamā' of the 'Atabāt (Shi'ite shrine cities in Iraq), led by Ākūnd Mollā Moḥammad-Kāẓem Ḳorāsānī, who had supported the constitutional movement since its early days, also took up the propaganda battle and sent the shah a telegram implying that he was a tyrant and his government an offense against the absent imam (Barclay to Grey, no. 287, 4 November 1908, F.O. 416/ 38).

Opinion in Tehran, which was sympathetic to the shah's coup in the summer of 1908, had changed by the autumn, mainly because of his failure to restore financial order. The constitutionalists, led by Ṣanī'-al-Dawla and others, re-emerged, and on 26 Du'l-qa'da 1326/20 December 1908 forty people took *bast* in the Ottoman legation. Two days later the number had risen to 250, and they petitioned the shah for restoration of the Constitution (Belgian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, P.L.P. II, no. 375/139, 22 December 1908). On 4 Du'l-ḥejja/28 December the *bāzārs* closed, and January and February were marked by a protracted struggle for influence in the *bāzār*, in which the constitutionalists finally triumphed (*Tārīk-e bīdārī*, ed. Sa'īdī Sīrjānī, II, pp. 270, 272, 295, 311, 314, 335). Meanwhile the force that the shah had sent to pacify Tabrīz gradually overcame resistance in Azarbaijan and besieged Tabrīz itself from January until April, when the shah, seriously in need of funds, finally yielded to British and Russian pressure and permitted a Russian column to relieve the city. On his birthday, 14 Rabī' II 1327/5 May 1909, the shah declared restoration of the principles of the Constitution and set 1 Rajab/19 July as the date for general elections (*Tārīk-e bīdārī*, ed. Sa'īdī Sīrjānī, II, pp. 300-01). In the north a revolt had begun in Rašt on 16 Moḥarram/7 February, organized by revolutionaries, including the so-called Mojāhedīn (freedom fighters) led by Mo'ezz-al-Solṭān (Sardār Moḥyī), his three brothers, and 'Alī-Moḥammad Tarbiāt, as well as Caucasians, mostly Armenian *Dašnak* freedom fighters, led by Yeprem Khan. They worked in alliance with the governor, Moḥammad-Walī Khan Sepahdār-e A'zam, who had had a disagreement with the shah (*Tārīk-e bīdārī*, ed. Sa'īdī Sīrjānī, II, pp. 302-04; Faḳrā'ī, pp. 113-28). The Russian intervention in Tabrīz impelled the revolutionaries, Russian subjects who feared capture, to retreat down the Qazvīn road toward Tehran; the ostensible leader, Sepahdār-e A'zam, followed his army as much as he led it (Taqīzāda, 1368 Š./1989, pp. 80-82; Tonokābonī, pp. 25-26; McDaniel, pp. 88-89). In addition, the revolutionaries had become convinced that positive action would induce the shah to restore the Constitution. A second threat came from the Baḳtīārīs, who had taken over Isfahan in January. When the local population



appealed for help to Najafqolī Khan Şamsām-al-Saltāna (q.v.), the Baḳtīārī *īlḳān*, against the new governor, Mīrzā Moḥammad Khan Eqbāl-al-Dawla, Najafqolī Khan, already encouraged by his brother ‘Alīqolī Khan Sardār(-e) As‘ad to side with the constitutionalists, entered Isfahan. Eqbāl-al-Dawla took refuge in the British consulate, and Najafqolī Khan took over the government (Sayyāḥ, pp. 611-14; Taqīzāda, 1368 Š./1989, pp. 122-24, 326-28). The Baḳtīārīs might have been content with the opportunities thus gained had not Sardār As‘ad, who had just returned from Europe, seen that, by playing a dominant part in the constitutional movement, the Baḳtīārīs might obtain a stronger voice in the central government. In April the rival *īlḳānī* and Ḥājī *īlḳānī* families thus reached an agreement in anticipation of enjoying the fruits of power (Garthwaite, pp. 114-17). As the Rašt forces advanced toward Tehran, the Baḳtīārīs advanced from Isfahan, so that by early July they had 2,000 men at Qom. After an unsuccessful attempt at compromise with the shah the two forces entered Tehran, on 24 Jomādā II 1327/13 July 1909, and three days later the shah took refuge in the Russian legation. Several of his supporters, including Shaikh Fażl-Allāh, were tried and executed by a special tribunal. A supreme Majles (Majles-e ‘ālī) of more than 300 members, drawn from all groups, deposed Moḥammad-‘Alī Shah, placed his minor son Aḥmad Mīrzā (1327-44/1909-25) on the throne, and elected as regent ‘Alī-Rezā Khan ‘Azod-al-Molk, head of the Qajar tribe. Sepahdār-e A‘zam became prime minister and minister of war and Sardār As‘ad Baḳtīārī minister of the interior (*Tārīḳ-e bīdārī*, ed. Sa‘īdī Sīrjānī, II, pp. 486-504; Šarīf Kāšānī, II, pp. 371-78; Taqīzāda, 1368 Š./1989, pp. 122-24, 131-46).

*The Second Majles.* The immediate task facing the government, restoration of order, was substantially accomplished within a few months. A new electoral law was passed: The property qualification for voters was lowered, representation by class and property abolished, and the number of seats for Tehran reduced to fifteen and that of the provinces increased to 101, with one seat each for Jews, Zoroastrians, Armenians, and Assyrian Christians. The Second Majles was convened on 2 Du‘l-qa‘da/15 November. Proceedings began auspiciously with negotiations for withdrawal of the Russian troops, a proposal for a loan of 1,250,000 pounds sterling from the national bank to rebuild the administration, and an arrangement for Swedish officers to reorganize the gendarmerie and American financial advisers to reform the tax system.

The problems facing the new Majles were immense, however. The treasury



was empty, the provincial administration in chaos, the Majles split by dissenting factions, and the Russian army still entrenched in the north. By mid-1910 the Majles was divided into two parties with armed supporters outside. The Democrats, comprising about twenty-seven deputies, came mostly from the north and were led by Taqīzāda (*Moқтаşar*, pp. 51-88). Their supporters outside the Majles were organized by Ḥaydar Khan ‘Am(ū)oglı and Moḥammad-‘Alī Rasūlzāda, who had links with the Social Democrats in Baku. The moderates included the landed aristocracy, traditional *bāzār* groups, and ‘*olamā*’ led by Behbahānī and Ṭabāṭabā’ī. Their real *raison d’être* was to oppose the radicalism of the Democrats, and there is little evidence that they had a party organization. Both “parties” were numerically weak, so that no government could have a solid base of support in the Majles. Furthermore, both adopted policies of obstructive criticism at a time when the Majles was already weakened by financial problems, insecurity, and the lack of a modern armed force. Real power was still in the hands of landowners and higher-ranking bureaucrats, including the Baḳtīārī khans, whose wealth, prestige, and experience were needed in government positions. Few members of these groups sat in the Majles, so that power lay outside it; the administration and the great notables tended to manipulate the Majles and eventually came to dominate it (Ettēhādiya, 1980, pp. 155, 360, 370).

In June 1910 Āḳūnd Mollā Moḥammad-Kāzem Ḳorāsānī telegraphed the government urging the removal of Taqīzāda from the Majles on the grounds that he was irreligious and his activities harmful to the country’s interests (for text, see Afšār, 1359 Š./1980, p. 207; see also Taqīzāda, 1368 Š./1989, pp. 153-56). The ‘*olamā*’ of Najaf, in Iraq, were said to have received from various sources information about Taqīzāda’s radical policies, of which they disapproved. They also sought the expulsion of the foreign *fedā’īs*, on whom the Democrats relied to maintain their influence. On 8 Rajab 1328/16 July 1910 Behbahānī, who was believed to be implicated in Ḳorāsānī’s denunciation of Taqīzāda, was shot by one of the *mojāheds* (freedom fighters; Taqīzāda, 1368 Š./1989, p. 144; Marling to Grey, no. 292 Tel., 18 July 1910, F.O. 416/ 45). Taqīzāda fled the country, and armed volunteers from the guilds of Tehran ambushed Ḥaydar Khan and killed another Social Democrat, ‘Alī-Moḥammad Khan Tarbiāt (Taqīzāda, 1368 Š./1989, pp. 143-44). At that point the Baḳtīārīs began to gain political ascendancy, initially in alliance with the Democrats. They replaced their rival, Sepahdār, with Mīrzā Ḥasan Mostawfī-al-Mamālek and then disarmed the forces supporting both political parties, most particularly the foreign *fedā’īs*. By mid-1911 they occupied many of the most prominent



government positions, a situation tolerated by both the British and the Russians, who regarded their presence in government as balancing that of the militant nationalists, though the Baḳtīārīs were unpopular with the population at large (Garthwaite, pp. 114, 117, 121). In July 1911 the Baḳtīārī government foiled an attempt by Moḥammad-ʿAlī Shah to regain the throne.

In the same period government control in the provinces reached the final stage of disintegration, with tribal elements taking control in Azarbaijan, Lorestān, and Khorasan and withholding their taxes. The breakdown in order, especially in the south, prompted the British to send troops to Shiraz and Isfahan. The American financial adviser Morgan Shuster, who arrived in Tehran on 13 Jomādā I/12 May 1911, made a determined effort to salvage the Persian financial situation. Unfortunately, his careful indifference to foreign opinion antagonized the Russians, and his proposed reforms brought him into conflict with the old Qajar bureaucracy. Furthermore, the Baḳtīārī-dominated government under Şamsām-al-Salṭana was unwilling to comply with his plans for a total reorganization of the finances, including a budget for each ministry (McDaniel, pp. 125, 129, 160). Matters came to a head with Shuster's attempts to confiscate the property of Malek Maṣṣūr Mīrzā Şoʿāʿ-al-Salṭana, a pro-Russian prince, for arrears in tax payments and to appoint a British subject, Major C. B. Stokes, to run the new gendarmerie. The Russians were becoming convinced that Shuster had anti-Russian designs and was undermining their prestige. Following his decision to appoint another British subject, a Mr. Lecoffre, as financial inspector in Tabrīz, Russia occupied Anzalī and Rašt and on 7 Duʿl-ḥejja/29 November issued a three-part ultimatum, requiring dismissal of Shuster, a promise that no more foreign advisers would be brought in without British and Russian consent, and payment of an indemnity for the Russian forces (British Minister to the Foreign Office, "Annual Report for 1911," F.O. 371/Persia 1912/34-1441; Abrahamian, 1982, p. 108). Failure by the Persian government to meet these demands within forty-eight hours led to occupation of much of the country by the British and the Russians. The term of the Second Majles ended on 3 Moḥarram 1330/24 December 1911, and with it the period of the Constitutional Revolution.



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