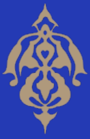

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CONSTITUTIONAL REVOLUTION III. THE CONSTITUTION

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iii. The Constitution

The term for "constitution" in Persia, *qānūn-e asāsī* (lit. "fundamental law"), was borrowed from the Ottoman empire in the 19th century. Throughout the earlier Islamic period *qānūn* had been the common term for financial and administrative regulations laid down by the ruler independent of the religious law (Šarīʿa) of Islam. This notion of independent state law culminated in the great *qānūn*s of the late 15th and early 16th centuries, notably that of Uzun Ḥasan in Persia and those of Moḥammad (Mehmed) the Conqueror, Bāyazīd II, and Solaymān Qānūnī (Lawgiver) in the Ottoman empire (Inalcik, IVa, pp. 558-59; idem, IVb, p. 566). Probably owing to the establishment of Shiʿism as the state religion in Persia at the beginning of the 16th century, the *qānūn* did not become institutionalized there as it had done in the Ottoman empire; Shah Ṭahmāsb I (930-84/1524-76) did, however, issue a decree on the "law of monarchy" (*Āʾīn-e Šāh Ṭahmāsb*). From the beginning of modernization in the Middle East, therefore, *qānūn*, conceived as state law, constituted the precedent for adoption of legal codes in the Western sense. In Persia, too, the term came to denote codes inspired by European legislation and introduced by

the state. The constitution, as the foundation of public law, was naturally regarded as “the fundamental *qānūn*” (for the history of the term *qānūn* as state law, see Inalcik, IVa; idem, IVb; for the conceptual background to Persian constitutionalism, see i, above).

Drafting of the Constitution of 1324-25/1906-07

The First Majles was convened before the promulgation of a constitution. Its members were elected in compliance with the royal decree of 14 Jomādā II 1324/5 August 1906 (see ii, above) and in accordance with an electoral law drawn up by a committee that had included the two sons of the prime minister, Mīrzā Ḥasan Khan Mošīr-al-Molk and Mīrzā Ḥosayn Khan Moʾtamen-al-Molk, and Mortażāqolī Khan Ṣanīʿ-al-Dawla and his brother Mahdīqolī Khan Moḵber-al-Salṭana (Hedāyat, pp. 141-42). The Majles was inaugurated on 18 Šaʿbān 1324/7 October 1906, and the members elected Ṣanīʿ-al-Dawla president on the following day. Ṣanīʿ-al-Dawla immediately announced that the drafting of the internal regulations for the Majles and of the constitution itself would take precedence over all other business (*Tārīḵ-e bīdārī*, ed. Saʿīdī Sīrjānī, I, pp. 406-08). A committee that included the lawmakers mentioned above immediately began work on a draft constitution. Haste was considered necessary, in view of the deteriorating health of Moẓaffar-al-Dīn Shah (1313-24/1896-1907), so that the Majles and the proposed Senate might be institutionalized before he died. A charter was speedily drafted and sent to the monarch; the shah acknowledged its receipt on 29 Šaʿbān 1324/18 October 1906 but procrastinated for weeks and returned it with alterations only on 9 Ḏu’l-Qaʿda/25 December. A new draft, incorporating some of his alterations, was submitted two days later, and the shah signed it on 14 Ḏu’l-Qaʿda/30 December, ten days before his death. In this period the charter was variously referred to as *neẓām-nāma* (charter), *neẓām-nāma-ye asāsī* (fundamental charter), and occasionally *ketābča* (code).

The fundamental charter was not a systematic legal document but rather a hastily assembled set of provisions aimed mainly at establishing the charters and functions of the two parliamentary bodies. Its inadequacy as a national constitution prompted the formation, in mid-February 1907, of a new committee to draft a supplement to the Constitution (Motammem-e qānūn-e asāsī). Its members—such leading constitutionalists as Mīrzā Jawād Khan Saʿd-al-Dawla, Ḥājj Moḥammad-Ḥosayn Amīn al-Żarb, Sayyed Naṣr-Allāh Taqawī, Moḥaqqeq-al-Dawla, Mīrzā Moḥammad Khan Ṣadīq Hażrat, Ṣādeq Mostašār-al-Dawla, and Sayyed Ḥasan Taqīzāda—adopting the Belgian constitution of

1831 as their basic model, had produced a draft by the end of March (Ādamīyat, 1355 Š./1976, p. 408). After a considerable period of debate over its provisions the supplement was eventually ratified by the Majles and signed by Moḥammad-ʿAlī Shah (1324-27/1907-09) on 29 Šaʿbān 1325/8 October 1907. The Constitution of Persia thus consisted of the constitutional law signed in December 1906 and the supplement signed in October 1907 (for the texts, see Karīmī; for an English translation of the basic constitutional documents and several related legal texts, see Browne, *Persian Revolution*, pp. 353-400; for a detailed discussion, see Ādamīyat, 1355 Š./1976, pp. 383-432).

Provisions of the constitutional law. The constitutional law of 1906 consisted of a short preamble and fifty-one articles, at least six of which (Arts. 12, 31-32, 34, 46, 48) corresponded, fully or in part, to articles in the Belgian constitution; at least five (Arts. 13, 18, 23, 25, 42) corresponded to provisions in the Bulgarian constitution of 1879, though none was a verbatim translation (Taqīzāda, apud Navāʾī; Lockhart). The idea of a bicameral legislature, consisting of a chamber of deputies (*majles*) and a senate, was also taken from the Belgian constitution, though the requirement that half the Senate was to be appointed by the shah suggests some influence from the Russian constitution proclaimed by the czar earlier in 1906 (Blaustein and Sigler, p. 270).

The section entitled “On the formation of the Majles” (Arts. 1-14) established the Majles-e šūrā-ye mellī (National consultative assembly), consisting of 162 representatives from Tehran and the provinces, to be elected for two years and to convene in the capital. Article 7 required a quorum of two-thirds of the members for commencement of debate and three-quarters for taking a vote. Article 12 ensured representatives of parliamentary immunity. The deliberations of the Majles were to be public (Art. 13), though elsewhere in the document provision was made for closed meetings under unusual circumstances (Arts. 34-35).

The next section (Arts. 15-31) was entitled “On the functions, limits, and rights of the Majles.” The Majles was given legislative power (Arts. 16, 21), in conjunction with the Senate (Arts. 17, 19), and the right to initiate legislation (Art. 15). Articles 18 and 22-26 reflected one of the major goals of the constitutionalists: assertion of the right of the Majles to approve international treaties and economic concessions and to control both the natural resources of the country and government finances. Article 18 (adapted from Art. 105.3-5 of the Bulgarian constitution) declared the imposition of taxes, the organization of financial affairs, and the annual budget subject to approval by the Majles.

Approval was also required for all transactions involving state property and national resources (Art. 22), for the formation of public companies (Art. 23), for treaties and concessions (Art. 24), for all government borrowing (Art. 25, adapted from Art. 123 of the Bulgarian constitution), and for construction of railways and roads (Art. 26). The Majles was eager to exercise these rights, and one of its first acts was to veto a proposed loan to the government from Great Britain and Russia (Lockhart, p. 377). The Majles also received the right to question ministers (Art. 27), who were not themselves members, though it could only request that the shah dismiss a minister who failed to provide satisfactory answers according to "the laws that bear the royal signature" and was found guilty of violating the provisions of the law (Art. 29). Ministers were answerable to the shah if they relied on a verbal or written command of his as an excuse for failing to discharge their duties according to enacted law (Art. 28; cf. supplement, Art. 64). They had the right to attend sessions of the Majles and to request to speak when appropriate (Art. 31).

Articles 32-38, "On presentations to the National consultative assembly," and Articles 39-42, "On initiation of measures by the Majles," dealt mainly with procedural matters. It was provided that legislation could be initiated either by ministers (Arts. 33, 37) or by a group of at least fifteen Majles deputies (Art. 39).

The final section, "On conditions for the formation of the Senate" (Arts. 43-48), provided that the Senate was to consist of sixty members (Art. 43), half from Tehran and half from the provinces, and was to meet concurrently with the Majles. The shah was to appoint half the senators from each category, and the rest were to be popularly elected (Art. 45). Laws relating to finance were reserved for the Majles, though the Senate was to be informed and could offer advice. Once the Senate had been convened, all other laws would require ratification by both houses (Art. 46). In case of disagreement of the Majles over matters already approved by the Senate, a joint session of the two houses could be convened. Should the disagreement remain unresolved, the Majles could be dissolved by a majority of two-thirds of the Senate, if separately approved by the Council of ministers (Art. 48). The Senate was not actually convened until 1328 Š./1950 (see below).

Provisions of the supplement to the Constitution. The supplement, consisting of 107 articles, extended the coverage of the original constitutional document through inclusion of a bill of rights (Arts. 8-25), systematic division of the powers of government (Arts. 26-28), definition of the legislative powers of

provincial councils (Art. 29), further definition of the rights of deputies (Arts. 30-34), definition of the shah's rights (Arts. 35-59), explicit stipulation of ministerial responsibility to the parliament (Arts. 58-70), and organization of the judiciary (Arts. 71-89). It also included sections on general matters (Arts. 1-7), provincial and municipal councils (Arts. 90-93), finances (Arts. 94-103), and the army (Arts. 104-07).

Most of this law consisted of verbatim or slightly modified translations of articles in the Belgian constitution. As a result, many elements of the contemporary international political culture were introduced into Persia. For example, all Persians were declared equal before the state laws (Art. 8); their lives, property, honor, and domiciles were protected (Arts. 9, 13-17); and they were entitled to due process if accused of crime (Arts. 10-12). The right to privacy of communications (Art. 22-23) and freedom of association and the press (Art. 20-21) were also recognized. The principle of national sovereignty was stated in Article 26: "The powers of the realm emanate from the people." Article 27, derived indirectly from the thinking of Montesquieu, distinguished among legislative, judicial, and executive branches of government. The legislative power was shared by the shah, the Majles, and the Senate, each with the right to initiate legislation (Art. 27). The financial prerogatives originally granted to the Majles were reaffirmed, all enactments concerning government revenues and expenditures falling within its exclusive purview (Arts. 27, 94-96). Furthermore, following the Belgian model, the Majles was given the power to supervise government expenditures through appointment of an auditing commission (*dīvān-e moḥāsabāt*) to inspect government accounts and ensure that they conformed to the budget (Arts. 101-02).

The supplement also included a number of features not found in the Belgian constitution, reflecting subsequent broad changes in the international political culture and in technology, as well as conditions peculiar to Persia and the role of the Shiʿite clergy. From the more recent Bulgarian constitution of 1879, for example, there was a provision for a national educational system (Art. 19; cf. Art. 78 of the Bulgarian constitution; Black, p. 298), reflecting more modern notions of the state as a service organization. The official flag of Persia includes the same colors as the Bulgarian tricolor, with the first two colors reversed (Art. 5; cf. Art. 23 of the Bulgarian constitution; Black, p. 298); green, white, and red bands are arranged horizontally and the traditional Persian lion and sun are in the center. The privacy of letters was guaranteed (Art. 22), and the interception and disclosure of telegrams prohibited (Art. 23; cf. Art. 77

of the Bulgarian constitution; Black, p. 298), reflecting changes in technology, a requirement not without interest in view of the vigorous use made of the telegraph during the constitutionalist agitation.

Articles 60-61, 63, and 67-68 stressed the responsibility of ministers to parliament and were intended to ensure the transition from autocracy to constitutional monarchy. They were drawn up by the committee during a clash with the council of ministers, who, as servants of the shah, refused to consider themselves answerable to the Majles. Articles 61 and 62, like Articles 107 and 153 of the Bulgarian constitution (Black, pp. 302, 308), explicitly reaffirmed the principle of ministerial responsibility to the parliament already implicit in the Persian Constitution. Article 67 empowered the Majles to dismiss any minister or the entire council of ministers with a vote of no confidence. On 16 Rabīʿ I 1325/30 April 1907 the Majles brought down the caretaker cabinet of the acting prime minister, Solṭān-ʿAlī Khan Wazīr-e Afḵam, in order to establish in practice the principle of ministerial responsibility to the parliament. In addition, two prominent features of the old Persian patrimonial system were abolished: Article 63 prohibited use of the honorific title "minister" by those who did not hold office, and Article 68 forbade ministers to accept any other concurrent service.

The drafters of the supplement went to considerable lengths to accommodate Shiʿite Islam as the established religion. There too the Bulgarian constitution provided a partial model for Articles 1 and 21 (corresponding respectively to Bulgarian Articles 37 and 83; Black, pp. 298-99), but most of the relevant provisions were original and must have been added to the draft supplement as a result of pressure exerted by the powerful traditionalist clerical leader Shaikh Fażl-Allāh Nūrī. Nūrī's argument that the Šarīʿa distinguishes legally between Muslims and non-Muslims and that this distinction must be preserved did not prevail, and all citizens were declared equal before the law of the state (Art. 8; Hairi, pp. 232-33), but other significant concessions were made to him and his followers. For example, in the preamble to the constitutional law the purpose of the parliament had been defined: "to promote the progress and happiness of our kingdom and people, strengthen the foundations of our government, and give effect to the enactments of the Islamic law of His Holiness the Prophet." Article 1 of the supplement specifically affirmed that the official religion of Persia was Shiʿite Islam. Article 2 referred to the monarch as the "*šāhanšāh* of Islam" and declared: "At no time must any legal enactments of the National consultative assembly . . . be at

variance with the sacred principles of Islam. . . .” Furthermore, a committee of no fewer than five religious jurists (*mojtahed*s) was to have the power to “reject or repudiate any proposal that is at variance with the sacred laws of Islam. . . . In such matters the decision of this committee of *ʿolamāʾ* shall be followed and obeyed, and this article shall continue unchanged until the appearance of the Hidden Imam.” The duality of the traditional legal system was thus recognized and endorsed, as it had been in the Ottoman constitution of 1876 (Lewis, p. 643). According to Article 27 of the supplement, the validity of all legal enactments was conditional upon their conformity with the standards of Islamic law, and it was further stated that the judicial power “belongs to the Šarīʿa courts in matters pertaining to Islamic law (*šaṛʿīyāt*) and to civil courts in matters pertaining to customary law (*ʿorfīyāt*).” Article 71 defined the administration of Islamic justice (*omūr-e šaṛʿīya*) as the prerogative of the “just *mojtahed*s,” and Article 83 required the approval of the chief religious judge (*ḥākem-e šaṛʿ*) for the shah’s appointment of the prosecutor-general. Nor was the principle of secularism recognized in the bill of rights: The freedom to publish ideas (Art. 18), to form associations (Art. 21), and to learn and teach sciences and crafts (Art. 18) was made contingent on conformity with the interests of the established religion. In practice, however, the Islamic features of the Constitution were increasingly ignored. The provision for the committee of five *mojtahed*s became a dead letter in the Pahlavi period, and the religious courts gradually disappeared.

The foremost goal of the constitutionalists was, of course, to limit the absolute power of the shah. The continuation of the monarchy had been taken for granted in formulating the constitutional law: In Articles 15, 17, and 47 ratification of laws by the shah was mentioned and in Articles 28-29 his authority over his ministers, but there was no systematic definition of the role of the monarch. The definition was supplied in the supplement. The shah was to be the head of the executive (Art. 27) and the supreme commander of the armed forces (Art. 50); he had the right to make official declaration of war and to announce conclusion of peace (Art. 51) but was exempt from responsibility for government (Art. 44). He was, however, granted no explicit right of veto over legislation, and in Article 49 it was ambiguously stated that “the issuing of decrees and orders to give effect to the laws is among the rights of the king, provided he shall never postpone or suspend their execution.” In the crucial Article 35 of the original constitutional law, limiting monarchical power, it was declared that “monarchy (*salṭanat*) is a trust (*wadīʿa*) bestowed upon the person of the king by the nation,” to which the crown prince, Moḥammad-ʿAlī,

had added in his own hand “through divine gift” (*be-mawhebat-e elāhī*; Taqīzāda, p. 392). Despite this addition, the principles of popular sovereignty and limited government (*mašrūṭīyat*) were established.

Provisions of the electoral laws. In the first electoral law, approved by Moẓaffar-al-Dīn Shah on 20 Rajab 1324/9 September 1906, the electorate had been divided into six estates (*ṭabaqāt*): guilds, princes and members of the Qajar family (*šāhzādagān wa qājārīya*), the clergy (*ʿolamāʾ wa ṭollāb*), notables (*aʿyān wa ašrāf*), merchants (*tojjār*), and landowners and peasants (*mallākīn wa fallāḥīn*). The minimum age for voters was set at twenty-five years, and there was a minimum property qualification for the category of landowners. Women and the active military were barred from voting. Popular representation was quite unbalanced, both geographically and socially; Tehran, with perhaps 3 percent of the Persian population, elected more than a third of the deputies (60 out of 156) to the Majles, and the guilds were overrepresented in relation to the other estates. For example, in Tehran the guilds elected thirty-two deputies, the merchants ten, the landowners ten, the clergy four, and the Qajar princes four. In practice Moḵber-al-Salṭana, who supervised the elections in Tehran, interpreted the hastily drawn law, of which he was one of the authors, with considerable latitude, taking “landowners and peasants” to mean “notables and landowners” and going beyond the provisions of the law to allot the Zoroastrian, Armenian, and Jewish minorities one representative each (*Tārīḵ-e bīdārī*, ed. Saʿīdī Sīrjānī, pp. 362-68, 392-96). Furthermore, some provincial governors displayed considerable high-handedness (Navāʾī, p. 39), and Sayyed ʿAbd-ʿAllāh Behbahānī simply appointed a replacement for one of the clerical deputies from Tehran who had decided to resign (*Tārīḵ-e bīdārī*, ed. Saʿīdī Sīrjānī, p. 396). The provincial deputies in some areas were informally elected and only after much delay.

This first electoral law was superseded by that of 12 Jomādā II 1327/1 July 1909, in which the number of representatives to the Majles was fixed at 120, including one deputy for each of five tribal constituencies (Šāhsevan, Qašqāʾī, Ḵamsa, Turkman, and Baḵtīārī) and four religious minorities (Armenians, Assyrian Christians, Zoroastrians, and Jews). The minimum age for voters was reduced to twenty years. Voters had “to own property worth at least 250 tomans, pay 10 tomans in taxes, receive an annual income of 50 tomans, or be educated” (Raḥīmī, p. 109). Elections were to be held by secret ballot in two stages.

The law of 1327/1909 was superseded in turn by the electoral law of 28 Šawwāl 1329/21 November 1911 (for the text, see Karīmī, pp. 60-81), in which universal male suffrage was introduced: The property and educational qualifications were dropped, and voters had only to have resided in the constituency for at least six months before the elections. Elections were to be direct, and the number of representatives was fixed at 136, to be elected from eighty-two electoral districts. Tehran and the surrounding area were allocated fifteen seats, Tabrīz and surrounding areas nine. This law generally remained in effect, with only minor changes, until the end of the Pahlavi period in 1357 Š./1979, except that on 10 Mehr 1313 Š./2 October 1934 the tribal constituencies were abolished (Lambton, p. 656). In 1341 Š./1963 suffrage was extended to women by decree (Farmayan, pp. 103-06).

Revisions of the Constitution of 1324-25/1906-07

In neither the constitutional law nor the supplement was there any provision for amendment. When, in 1304 Š./1925, Reżā Khan decided to depose the last Qajar shah a mechanism for amending the Constitution had to be found. On 10 Ābān 1304 Š./31 October 1925 the Majles terminated the Qajar monarchy and ordered that a constituent assembly (Majles-e moʾassesān) be convened to amend the Constitution to that effect. On 21 Āḏar 1304 Š./11 December 1925, by a single act of the constituent assembly, Articles 36-38 of the supplement were modified and the monarchy entrusted to Reżā Shah Pahlavi (1305-20 Š./1926-41) and his descendants. It was stipulated that the heir apparent have a mother of Iranian origin, and individuals of Qajar descent were disqualified from becoming heir apparent or regent (new Arts. 36-38). Once Reżā Khan had been crowned, however, the Majles began to lose its strength. Opposition deputies were subjected to mounting intimidation, and parliamentary immunity was repeatedly violated in the first years of the 1930s (Hedāyat, pp. 386, 397). Beginning with the Ninth Majles (inaugurated on 11 Esfand 1311 Š./1 March 1933) the shah continually packed the body with his supporters, and it became a rubber stamp for his policies. A law enacted on 14 Ābān 1317 Š./5 November 1938 to permit a marriage of the heir apparent, Moḥammad-Reżā, to Princess Fawzīya of Egypt extended coverage of the term “of Iranian origin” to any mother granted the quality (*ṣefat*) of an Iranian for reasons of the Persian national interest (Lambton, p. 654). No other amendments were made under Reżā Shah.

After his forced abdication and the accession of his son, in 1320 Š./1941, the Majles regained some of its vigor; there ensued a twelve-year period of

political instability, during which twelve prime ministers, seventeen governments, and twenty-three cabinets rose and fell. Not only did the Majles use the power of the purse to control successive governments and obstruct the exercise of executive authority, but also its members increasingly turned to questioning of ministers, inconclusive debates, filibustering, and other obstructive tactics, especially after 1324 Š./1945. Deputies often absented themselves from the Majles, in order to block a quorum. Although in the Constitution the right to appoint the prime minister had been granted to the monarch, it had become customary for him to submit his nomination to the Majles for a formal "vote of inclination" before making the actual appointment (Azimi, p. 201).

It became clear that such attempts to block the exercise of executive power were paralyzing the ability of the state to act and hindering the economic and social development of the nation. The young Moḥammad-Reżā Shah consistently argued that the balance of power between the legislative and the executive branches of government should be redressed through amendment of the Constitution and the convening of the Senate, of which half the members would be his appointees. Moḥammad Moṣaddeq, one of the practitioners of "obstruction" while he was in opposition, adopted a position very similar to that of the shah after he became prime minister in 1331 Š./1952(Azimi, p. 288).

As early as October 1945 the shah recognized that a revision of the Constitution could enhance his royal authority: He mentioned to the British ambassador in Tehran the possibility of a constitutional amendment that would give him power to dissolve the Majles (Bullard, Report to the Foreign Office, 8 October 1945, F.O. 371, E.P. 45451, cited in Azimi, p. 133). By November 1947 he had developed concrete plans for revising the Constitution and establishing the Senate, and he continued to press for these aims throughout 1327 Š./1948. A bill to convene the Senate, which had been submitted to the Majles a year earlier, was passed on 14 Ordībehešt 1327 Š./4 May 1948 (Azimi, pp. 201-07). When, in November, the shah appointed Moḥammad Sāʿed prime minister without calling for a prior vote of inclination by the Majles, the former premier Aḥmad Qawām and his party accused him of violating constitutional procedures, in order to restore despotism. The shah was not deterred, however, and in fact won the influential support of Taqīzāda, one of the original architects of the Constitution. Taqīzāda argued that the constitutional law and the supplement had both been drawn up in

haste and required revision (*Eṭṭelāʿāt*, 10 Esfand 1327 Š./1 March 1949, cited in Azimi, p. 374 n. 30).

After an abortive attempt on his life on 15 Bahman 1327 Š./4 February 1949 the Majles agreed to the convening of a constituent assembly to amend the Constitution; it was elected under martial law and convened in Tehran on 1 Ordībehešt 1328 Š./21 April 1949. Three weeks later the assembly, following the shah's wish, voted to abrogate Article 48 of the constitutional law of 1324/1906. The new Article 48 granted him the power to dissolve the Majles and the Senate, separately or together, provided that he furnished a reason for the dissolution and ordered new elections. An "additional article" (*aṣl-e elḥāqī*), passed by the constituent assembly on Taqīzāda's recommendation, provided for amendment of the Constitution by an elected constituent assembly proposed by majorities of two-thirds in both houses and approved by the shah (Azimi, p. 205). The article also provided for a joint session of the two houses, sitting in congress on one occasion only, to amend Articles 4-8 of the constitutional law and Article 49 of the supplement. This outcome was not exactly what the shah had pressed for. The issue of lowering the quorum specified in Article 7 of the constitutional law, more critical to the routine exercise of executive authority than to the royal prerogative, remained unresolved, and the monarch was not granted the right to veto legislation.

The advantages gained by the shah were soon eroded, however, and he found himself increasingly on the defensive in his disputes with the constitutionalists. In April 1951, after the assassination of the prime minister, Ḥājī-ʿAlī Razmārā, the shah was forced to appoint Moṣaddeq in his place. Under the pressure of Moṣaddeq's programs for reform and nationalization of oil the tensions arising from the tripartite division of legislative power, already considerable under strong prime ministers like Qawām and Razmārā, reached a peak. Much of the political struggle during Moṣaddeq's two-year term took the form of a constitutional crisis, with the archconstitutionalist Moṣaddeq demanding extraordinary powers and his conservative opponents resisting in the name of constitutional order (for details, see Azimi, pp. 257-338).

The era of parliamentary domination came to an end with the coup d'etat of 1332 Š./1953, and the revision of the Constitution no longer had a high priority with the shah. Nevertheless, measures that had been postponed by the constituent assembly could at last be completed. On 26 Ordībehešt 1336 Š./16 May 1957 the two houses of parliament met in congress and amended the

Constitution, raising the number of deputies in the Majles to 200 (new Art. 4) and extending their terms to four years (new Art. 5). The ambiguous Article 49 of the supplement was clarified through addition of a provision that the shah could return any financial bill passed by the Majles for revision but was obliged to give his assent if the Majles confirmed its former decision by a majority of at least three-quarters of those present in the capital. In effect the shah was thus given the right to veto financial bills, but the amendment not only allowed an override of the royal veto but also implied denial of the monarch's right to veto legislation in general. Finally, the new Article 7 of the constitutional law eliminated the requirement of a quorum for commencement of the sessions of the Majles and reduced the requirement for voting to "one half the representatives present in the capital." A simple majority vote of those present at the session was deemed sufficient to adopt or reject any measure (for the text, see Raḥīmī).

In May 1961 Moḥammad-Reżā Shah used the power granted him in amended Article 48 of the constitutional law in order to dissolve the Majles and embark on his program for land reform, subsequently known as the White revolution (Enqelāb-e safīd). On 6 Bahman 1341 Š./26 January 1963 he followed Moṣaddeq's example, which he had considered unconstitutional ten years earlier, and submitted his program to a national referendum. As he continued to increase his exercise of royal power, the Majles once again became a mere rubber stamp. In 1346 Š./1967, in order to strengthen provisions for the eventual succession of his son, the shah convened another constituent assembly. On 18 Sahrīvar/10 September it abrogated Articles 38 (for a second time), 41, and 42 of the supplement. According to the new Article 38, upon the death of the shah the queen (*šahbānū*) was to become regent until the heir apparent had reached the age of twenty years, provided that the shah had not specifically designated another regent; she was to convene a regency council, the composition of which was also specified. The other amendments also concerned the regency: The new Article 42 granted to the shah the power to appoint a regent or a regency council during his absence from the country (Raḥīmī, pp. 228-30). During the Revolution of 1357 Š./1978 the secular opposition proposed establishing such a regency council, and the shah eventually did name one before leaving Persia in January 1979. On 1 Bahman/21 January, only five days after the shah's departure, its chairman, Sayyed Jalāl-al-Dīn Ṭehrānī, resigned, in response to demands by Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini (Rūḥ-Allāh Ḵomeynī; Yazdī, pp. 130-34).

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