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CONSTITUTIONAL REVOLUTION IV. THE AFTERMATH
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iv. The aftermath

In the decade 1329-39/1911-21, from the Russian ultimatum and the dissolution of the Second Majles (see ii, above) until the coup d'etat of 1299 Š./1921, the Constitution was put to a series of crucial tests. Although the independence of Persia had been acknowledged in the preamble to the Anglo-Russian Convention of 1325/1907, by which the country had been divided into two spheres of influence, in fact that independence was largely spurious. Russian troops were entrenched in the north, and the Cossack Brigade, the gendarmerie, the treasury, the customs service, and similar government agencies were all run by Westerners. The two existing banks in Persia were owned by Europeans, and European experts were employed in the ministries of interior, finance, war, and justice. Most of the customs revenues were pledged to pay the interest on previous loans from the European banks.

The fundamental problem facing the Majles and the government throughout this entire period was whether or not constitutionalism was possible at all in such conditions of quasi-independence. The constitutional law (*qānūn-e asāsī*)

of 1324/1906 and the supplement (*motammem-e qānūn-e asāsī*) of 1325/1907 did not provide for automatic reconvening of the Majles once it had been dismissed. Article 53 of the third electoral law, enacted by the Second Majles on 28 Šawwāl 1329/22 October 1911 (*Moṣawwabāt*, p. 414), included the only constitutional provisions for election and reconvening of the Majles. Although it provided for two-year terms for the body and specified that new elections should begin three months before the end of each term, it did not contain any provision obliging the government to organize the elections or to reconvene the Majles for a new term. One constitutional safeguard, however, was Article 39 of the supplement to the Constitution, requiring that the shah take his oath of office in the Majles before his coronation.

The *"recess" of the Majles (1330-33/1911-14).* When the deputies of the Second Majles resisted the Russian ultimatum, Russian and British troops were occupying parts of Persia. The regent for Aḥmad Shah (1327-44/1909-25), Mīrzā Abu'l-Qāsem Khan Nāṣer-al-Molk, who had never been a partisan of democracy in Persia, seized the opportunity to close the Majles (2 Moḥarram 1330/24 December 1911); its term had already expired, but the deputies had voted to extend it (Kāšānī, III, p. 702; Mostawfī, *Šarḥ-e zendagānī* II, pp. 359-60). Martial law was declared, nationalist leaders were exiled, and the freedom of the press was curtailed. The Majles was not reconvened for almost three years (Borūjenī, pp. 80-85), and in the interval a number of unconstitutional steps were taken by the government. For example, in 1330/1912 the government negotiated a loan of 200,000 pounds sterling from the Russians and the British, despite the fact that, according to the Constitution (Arts. 16, 18, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26 of the constitutional law of 1324/1906), all loans, concessions, and transactions were invalid unless approved by the Majles (*Moṣawwabāt*, pp. 8-9; see iii, above).

Nāṣer-al-Molk could not postpone the opening of the Majles indefinitely, as Aḥmad Shah was approaching his majority and there was increasing agitation for resumption of elections. On 1 Rabīʿ I 1332/28 January 1914 elections began in Tehran; the editor of one newspaper noted enthusiastically that twelve reporters had been assigned to cover the process (*Raʿd* 21, 12 Rabīʿ I 1332/8 February 1914). Although elections were direct, the process was always slow, for a variety of reasons, including poor communications and frequently uncooperative provincial governors; in this instance the central government, partly under pressure from Russia and Great Britain, seem purposely to have delayed elections in the provinces. The total number of deputies to be elected

was 136, but in this instance elections in the provinces began only three months after the Tehran elections had been completed. A quorum of one more than half the deputies had to be present for the session to be opened. By the time the new shah was to be presented to the deputies, in July 1914, only a few had been elected. Almost a full year after the Tehran elections the Majles was finally able to open in official session, on 18 Moḥarram/7 December, though only about sixty-nine deputies had been elected. Aḥmad Shah was then able to take his oath of office (*Moṣawwabāt*, p. 57).

Composition of the Third Majles. Because of the drawn-out electoral process, the number of deputies in the Majles at any one time is not always apparent, and the sources are often inconsistent in this respect. According to calculations based on the *Moḏākarāt-e Majles*, forty-three deputies served in the Third Majles for ten months and a few days. Of the others fifteen served between seven and nine months, eleven between three and six months, and nine two months or less. Fifteen elected deputies never attended the Majles, resigned before serving, or were unable to take up their seats because the Majles considered the returns from their constituencies to have been manipulated. According to the third electoral law, the number of seats assigned to each province was supposed to be proportional to the estimated population. One observer commented, however, that distribution of voter-registration cards in each constituency depended on previous support of the Majles in that constituency (Demorgny, 1913, p. 71). The government was frequently accused of procrastination, manipulation, and nepotism in conducting the elections, especially when opposition Democratic candidates were involved (van Largenhuysen, p. 54). In fact, allotment of constituencies did vary, probably to suit electoral expediency or the interests of certain candidates.

Tehran and Tabrīz, with their surrounding areas, were assigned the largest number of representatives, fifteen and nineteen respectively. Together these two groups of deputies would have constituted half the number necessary for a quorum in the Majles, but no deputies from Azarbaijan attended this Majles, as the Russian occupying forces had blocked the elections there. The seats assigned to the other provinces were seldom entirely filled (*Moḏākarāt*, pp. 1-5). Five major tribes and four religious minorities were entitled to one representative each (*Moṣawwabāt*, pp. 415-24). All property and literacy qualifications for voters had been lifted by the third electoral law, and a knowledge of Persian was deemed sufficient qualification for a deputy. Although such universal suffrage was in accordance with constitutionalist

ideals, in practice it permitted landowners to control the votes of their peasants, with the result that 49 percent of the deputies in the Majles belonged to the propertied class (Šajīʿī, p. 178). The size of this group and its receptiveness to parliamentary politics, however tainted by abuse of privilege, are marks of the prestige that the Majles had acquired by that time; election as a deputy was already recognized as a vehicle for political advancement and graft. Complaints of favoritism (*pārtī-bāzī*) were voiced in the press, but they were rarely heeded unless the episodes were extremely flagrant; several elections were repeated because of such abuses (*Moḏākarāt*, p. 88; cf. *Raʿd* 32, 16 Moḥarram 1333/5 December 1914, 34, 18 Moḥarram 1333/7 December 1914).

Although voter participation in elections to the Third Majles was low, it was nevertheless higher than that in elections to the Second Majles. The total number of votes cast was approximately 107,475 (*Moḏākarāt*, pp. 4-5) from a Persian population of about 8,422,200 (according to the census, of 1307 Š./1928, taken for purposes of issuing identity cards). In each of five constituencies the number of votes cast was fewer than 500. In Tehran 18,558 registration cards were distributed, and 15,184 people voted in the initial elections. In Article 32 of the supplementary law it was stipulated that deputies who accepted government posts, including ministerial posts, had to resign; the remaining deputies could elect their replacements, or new elections could be held. As a result of such resignations, a second round of elections to the Third Majles was held in Tehran in March 1915; 12,308 cards (for which potential voters had to apply) were distributed and only 10,017 votes cast, suggesting growing indifference in the capital. Voter participation was comparatively high in a few of the provinces, however: 4,268 in Shiraz, 4,434 in Rašt, 4,829 in Hamadān, 6,150 in Zanjān, 6,402 in Kurdistan, and 7,361 in Kermānšāh. The situation in Kermānšāh is particularly interesting, for the province was a stronghold of the Democratic party (see v, below). It is possible that, because of the Russian occupation of Azarbaijan, the center of more radical political activity had largely shifted to Kermānšāh. Only 20 percent of the elected deputies had served in the Majles previously and thus had some experience of parliamentary procedures. Despite this low proportion, the Majles enjoyed considerable authority as the center of reform, of liberalism, and of modernism, representing the core of resistance to foreign encroachment.

Candidates did not campaign on party platforms; rather, the voters elected individuals, many of whom were related to influential landowning families in

the provinces. Nor was any constituency totally under the influence of one party. The constitutional requirement that deputies who obtained government posts must resign helped to prevent development in the Majles of a majority party in support of the government. Furthermore, the parties in the Majles were able to manipulate the elections for replacement deputies. As in the Second Majles, a coalition, Hayʾat-e moʾtalefa, was formed, by Democrats and Moderate Socialists, to support the government, but it was guided mainly by political expedience and was not always dependable. The deputies, especially the Democrats, opposed the establishment of the Senate (see iii, above), so that the Majles remained the sole repository of power vis-à-vis the government. Suggestions by ministers and representatives of foreign powers that a council of state be established to curtail the power of the Majles were futile (Demorgny, 1913, p. 41).

Three political parties and one group of unaffiliated deputies (*bīṭarafān*) were represented in the Third Majles (see v, below); the parties were the Democrats (Ferqa-ye demokrāt-e Īrān, ʿĀmmīyūn), the Moderates (Eʿtedālīyūn, also known as Eʿtedālīyūn-e ejtemāʿīyūn), and the conservative clerical group Hayʾat-e ʿelmīya, which, though not apparently organized as a party, tended to vote as a bloc. The first act of the Democratic leader, Solaymān Mīrzā, after the convening of the session in December 1914 was to demand an inquiry into the actions of the government during the long "recess" (*Moḏākarāt*, p. 40), though there was no response to his demand. The former prestige of the Democrats had been somewhat damaged, however, by the apparent participation of some of their members in the assassination of Sayyed ʿAbd-Allāh Behbahānī in 1328/1910 (Kasrawī, *Āḏarbāyjān*, p. 130), and they were widely believed also to have been responsible, through their intransigence and support of the American financial reformer Morgan Shuster, for the Russian ultimatum. The ideological opposition between the Democrats and Hayʾat-e ʿelmīya was fundamental, and controversies were usually resolved to the advantage of the Democrats. Examples included discussions of women's education, taxes on landed property, and military conscription. Nor were the clerics strong enough as a party to force implementation of Article 2 of the supplement to the Constitution, which provided for a committee of five prominent *mojtahed*s (theologians) to be chosen to scrutinize all enacted legislation in order to be certain that it did not contradict the tenets of Islam. In fact, this article, though occasionally discussed, seems to have been shelved (*Moḏākarāt*, p. 73). On nationalist questions, however, the *ʿolamāʾ* and the Democrats worked more harmoniously, for both parties shared a common distrust of foreign powers.

The *bīṭarafān* included eighteen deputies, who wielded considerable power because their participation in various coalitions often proved decisive (Bahār, I, p. 13 n. 1). Three members of this group represented minorities.

Government and the Third Majles. During this session the deputies generally avoided taking public positions on issues of foreign policy but persevered in the business of government, even during cabinet crises. For example, laws to reform the ministries of finance and justice were enacted, as well as judicial reforms, taxes on real property and tobacco, postal regulations, and military conscription (*Moṣawwabāt*, pp. 515-63; *Moḏākarāt*, passim).

Aḥmad Shah was one of the few Persian monarchs who had been not only trained to assume the position but also educated in the modern Western fashion (Demorgny, 1913, pp. 154-58). At his accession he enjoyed wide popularity and stood as a symbol of Persian independence and unity. Although he was weak, timid, and at times vacillating, he resembled in these respects most of the politicians of his day; when confronted with insoluble problems, they could resign, however, and he could not. As a constitutional monarch, he tried to avoid partisan political involvement, but that was not always possible, for, as head of the executive branch, he had the right and duty to appoint and dismiss ministers.

Prime ministers and other members of the cabinet were actually appointed only after negotiation among the shah, prominent politicians, leaders of political parties, and the Russian and British ministers, who had played an increasing part in choosing the Persian cabinets since 1329/1911; during the first years of World War I the views of the German minister were also taken into account. Naturally all these interests were incompatible. The Germans and their Democratic supporters wanted Persia to join the Triple Alliance; the British and the Russians preferred that the government adopt a policy of friendly neutrality. Meanwhile, that neutrality was being violated from all sides (see below). In such conditions no cabinet was able to endure for very long, especially as none enjoyed strong backing in the Majles. In the decade before the coup d'etat of 1299 Š./1921 there were eight prime ministers and seventeen cabinets. Among the ministers family ties were often the most important bond, triumphing over political allegiances. Most came from aristocratic families and had long familiarity with politics and administration; none seems to have been a serious party member. It was only later that professional politicians in Persia formed parties to further their ambitions.

The successive prime ministers faced the difficult task of balancing the exigencies of constitutional government with the expectations of foreign powers. Some of them, like Mīrzā Ḥasan Khan Mostawfī-al-Mamālek and Mīrzā Naṣr-Allāh Khan Mošīr-al-Dawla, attempted to maintain a policy of genuine neutrality; they were generally popular and held in high esteem by nationalists. Others, like Solṭān ʿAbd-al-Majīd Mīrzā ʿAyn-al-Dawla (q.v.), Moḥammad-ʿAlī Khan ʿAlāʾ-al-Salṭana, and Najafqolī Khan Ṣamṣām-al-Salṭana were strong and much feared but shifted their allegiance according to circumstance. Finally, there were men like ʿAbd-al-Ḥosayn Mīrzā Farmānfarmā, Mīrzā Ḥasan Khan Woṭūq-al-Dawla, and Moḥammad-Walī Khan Sepah-sālār, whose strong foreign sympathies, the first two with the British, the latter with the Russians, brought them little popularity. In general it can be acknowledged that, as professional statesmen, all these men were more exposed to foreign pressures and therefore more aware of the realities than were the Majles deputies. Each held office only as long as he had the consent of the foreign envoys, but he also could not afford to be unmindful of public opinion. For these reasons, the ministers' dealings with representatives of foreign powers were largely conducted in secret, in violation of the Constitution.

In February 1915 a coalition of parties in the Majles gave the prime minister, Mostawfī-al-Mamālek, a vote of confidence. The deputies soon rejected his program, however, and he resigned; although it was not mentioned in the debates, the real reason for his loss of support was his failure to persuade the Russians to withdraw from Azarbaijan, which had given the Turks an excuse to invade Persia (see below; Olson, pp. 65-70). The Majles asserted itself by nominating as his successor Mošīr-al-Dawla, who was disliked by the Allies, as premier. He was duly appointed by the shah. Perhaps for this reason, under his leadership there was greater than usual cooperation between the cabinet and the Majles. Together they took the daring step of repealing the law of 11 Šaʿbān 1329/14 June 1911 by which first Shuster and then his successor, the unpopular Belgian customs administrator Joseph Mornard, had been granted full powers as treasurer-general of Persia (Shuster, p. 84). The government initiated a bill to repeal this law and to assign to the minister of finance full power over the treasury. The deputies then approved it by a majority vote (*Moḏākarāt*, pp. 59-66).

Nevertheless, even a prime minister who had the trust of the Majles could not continue in office without conducting secret negotiations with the Allies. As

the government was in desperate need of money and the Majles would have objected to a new foreign loan, Mošīr-al-Dawla resorted to subterfuge, initiating negotiation with the Allies of a "moratorium" (*estemhāl*); it was agreed that the foreign banks would not collect the interest (the customs receipts) upon their respective earlier loans; instead they would "pay" the government a monthly stipend equal to the revenue from the customs, which had, however, fallen because of a slump in trade (see commerce vi), thus in effect extending a new loan in installments. The entire arrangement was actually at the discretion of the Allied ministers, and the threat of withholding the monthly stipend was used as a lever against the government whenever it was deemed necessary. In fact, in April 1915 the Allies obliged Mošīr-al-Dawla to resign because of his neutral policy and refusal to take effective action against increasing German activity in Persia. They sought to replace him with Mīrzā Jawād Khan Saʿd-al-Dawla, who was in turn unacceptable to the Majles. A compromise was reached with the appointment of ʿAyn-al-Dawla, who formed his cabinet in a way to satisfy all sides. The Democrats, however, mistrusted Farmānfarmā, his minister of interior, and seized upon the pretext of Turkish incursions into Kermānšāh in June 1915 to interpellate him (*Moḏākarāt*, pp. 272-88).

Questions of foreign policy were discussed only in closed sessions of the Majles, an unpopular though, according to the Constitution, not an unlawful practice. When Farmānfarmā was impeached he did not discuss actual events but referred the deputies to such private discussions. Nor did the deputies mention the Turks directly; rather, they emphasized the plight of the people of Kermānšāh, blaming the minister for not having appointed a governor there sooner. Farmānfarmā's defense is indicative of the government's great caution in regard to foreign policy. After a long exposé of the measures taken to expedite the governor-designate to Kermānšāh he pleaded: "How was I to know a certain man called Raʾūf [Raʾūf Bey, the Turkish commander] would come and, no matter how much I entreated him to go, refuse to leave?" (*Moḏākarāt*, p. 278). ʿAyn-al-Dawla tried to retain Farmānfarmā in his post, but the deputies were adamant, and the entire cabinet therefore resigned on 20 Šaʿbān 1333/3 July 1915.

To a considerable extent independence of action in the Majles depended on the freedom of the press (see vi, below), guaranteed in Article 20 of the supplement to the Constitution and the press law (*qānūn-e maṭbūʿāt*) enacted on 5 Moḥarram 1326/9 February 1908 (*Moṣawwabāt*, pp. 257-70). During the

long “recess” the press had been instrumental in maintaining pressure on the government to hold elections. Furthermore, during one entire year *Ḥabl al-matīn* and *Raʿd* covered the provincial elections, exposing the abuses and malfeasance of governors and other officials. If, however, newspapers were too outspoken in their criticism of the government, especially its foreign policy, they could be closed down, even in the face of strong opposition from the Majles. Nevertheless, the nationalist tone of most newspapers in this period was less muted than that of the deputies; journalists often criticized individual deputies for their passivity, usually by means of innuendo. They also complained that the government refused to keep them informed about domestic matters. Attention to foreign policy was focused mainly on news of the war and discussion of the policy of neutrality. Self-censorship was also apparent; for example, when Mošīr-al-Dawla was forced by the British and Russians to resign in April 1915 *Raʿd* (105, 12 Jomādā II 1333/27 April 1915) was published with its editorial column blank.

Persian entanglement in World War I. On 12 Ḏu’l-ḥejja 1332/1 November 1914, after the Ottoman empire had entered World War I on the side of Germany, Persia declared a policy of neutrality (Neẓām Māfī, p. 20). The Russians refused to evacuate Persian territory, however, and the Turks then invaded northern and western Persia, thus involving the country in the war, despite its declared neutrality (Sepehr, pp. 89-100).

The Democrats and other nationalists, historically hostile to Russian and British interference in Persian affairs, supported the Germans and actively assisted German agents against the Allies (Sykes, passim). The gendarmerie, led by Swedish officers, also favored the Germans (Sepehr, p. 109). As a result, German influence in the provinces gradually increased, occasioning a flurry of attacks on Russian and British representatives there. The British then (August 1915) sent a force to occupy Būšehr. The euphoria engendered by the coronation and the opening of the Majles soon waned, as the government proved incapable of halting the ravages of the war in Persia. Newspapers expressed the general malaise and frustration in the country, though the articles were often shallow and sensationalized. They reported the general rise in prices, instances of epidemic and famine, and even rumors of Russian troop movements to Tehran. According to *Ḥabl al-matīn*, the decline in Persian exports had resulted in serious unemployment and hardship (34, 19 Rabīʿ I 1333/5 February 1915; cf. 23, 23 Ḏu’l-qaʿda 1332/12 October 1914; 26, 20 Ḏu’l-ḥejja 1332/19 November 1914; 44, 27 Jomādā I 1333/12 April 1915). The editors

also drew attention to the fact that tribes, especially the Qašqāʾī, the Daštīs and Daštestānīs in the south, and the Sanjābīs in the west, encouraged by the belligerents and the weakness of the central government, were actively participating in the war. The editor of *Raʿd* (114, 28 Jomādā II 1333/12 May 1915; cf. 75, 9 Rabīʿ II 1333/4 March 1915; 82, 23 Rabīʿ II 1333/8 March 1915) commented on the penury of the government, which paid the salaries of employees at the Ministry of interior in straw. There was news of strikes by government officials, which were often directed toward political ends; for example, when officials of the Ministry of war took refuge (*bast*) in the Russian embassy, they brought down the government of Farmānfarmā, in February 1916. There was extensive coverage in all the newspapers of the arrears in pay for the gendarmerie, which was responsible for security in the country (e.g., *Ḥabl al-matīn* 35, 16 Rabīʿ I 1333/1 February 1915; 87, 4 Šaʿbān 1332/19 June 1914; 117, 26 Šaʿbān 1332/25 July 1914).

The manner in which foreign news, especially the war, was covered revealed the biases of the newspapers. The respected *Ḥabl al-matīn* and others were independent, but some were more partisan: *Šūrā* followed the Moderate Socialist line, *Now-bahār* that of the Democrats. Party squabbles were aired in the press, which the deputies found objectionable; the editors in turn accused the deputies of irresponsibility.

The resignation of ʿAyn-al-Dawla's cabinet brought on a protracted government crisis. Finally, on 6 Šawwāl 1313/17 August 1915 Mostawfī-al-Mamālek was asked to form a new cabinet; he included in it Sepah-sālār to satisfy the Russians; Mīrzā Ebrāhīm Khan Ḥakīm-al-Molk to satisfy the Democrats; and ʿAlāʾ-al-Salṭana to satisfy the Moderates. Nevertheless, he never gained the trust of the Allies. As German activities and acts of aggression against the Allies in Persia increased, reports of the government's secret negotiations with the Germans began to circulate (Sepehr, pp. 231-33). The Allies therefore decided to take strong action. It was at this point, in October 1915, that the first installment of the "moratorium" was finally paid (Olson, pp. 57-59). In November 1915 Russian troops under General Baratov marched from Qazvīn to the vicinity of Tehran, with the approval of the British. Their approach caused a panic among Majles deputies, nationalist newspaper editors, German officials, and their sympathizers, who joined in a mass exodus (*mohājarat*) to Qom (Sepehr, pp. 243-44). The shah and the government were dissuaded from leaving by the Allies. Anglo-Russian influence then became paramount in the capital.

The *mohājerīn* continued retreating before the advancing Russian forces. They went first to Isfahan, then, with the gendarmerie fighting a rearguard action, proceeded to Kermānšāh in February 1916. In Kermānšāh they formed a provisional government and a council of representatives (Hayʾat-e nemāyandagān) composed of members from all the Majles parties (Lustig, pp. 240-45). Reżāqolī Khan Neẓām-al-Salṭana, a nationalist statesman reputed to be unsympathetic to the Allies, was elected to head the provisional cabinet (Bahār, II, pp. 17-23). A renewed Russian offensive forced the *mohājerīn* to retreat once again, to Qaṣr-e Šīrīn, on 17 Rajab 1334/10 May 1916.

The deputies remaining in Tehran no longer constituted the quorum necessary to conduct official business; after some negotiation with the *mohājerīn*, with each side inviting the other to join it, the Majles was dissolved, in November 1915, after sitting for only eleven months. It was said that, in order to disclaim responsibility for the move, Sepah-sālār had added the words "by *force majeure*" to the dissolution order (Bahār, I, pp. 8-45). All newspapers in Tehran were closed down by the government, except for the pro-British *Raʿd*, edited by Sayyed Żīāʾ-al-Dīn Ṭabāṭabāʾī, and the pro-Russian *ʿAṣr-e jadīd*, edited by ʿAbd-al-Ḥamīd Khan Matīn-al-Salṭana. Heavy censorship was imposed on the news (Kohan, pp. 652-58), especially about German and Turkish activities and the fate of the *mohājerīn*. The function of informing the public became the responsibility of those provincial newspapers that remained free of foreign domination. More important in this respect were the mosques, which again became centers of political agitation (*Raʿd* 48, 21 Moḥarram 1334/30 November 1915; 50, 23 Moḥarram 1334/1 December 1915).

Government without the Majles. The government continued to function after November 1915, though the Allies were in a much stronger position and continued to interfere in the selection of officials and official policy. Nevertheless, the British and the Russians did not always agree on policy, thus undermining even the governments they helped to install (Olson, p. 25 and passim).

The question of ministerial responsibility remained unresolved. After an unsuccessful attempt to negotiate an alliance with Great Britain and Russia, Mostawfī-al-Mamālek's cabinet fell on 16 Ṣafar/25 December. He was followed by Farmānfarmā, who also conducted secret negotiations with the Allies but was brought down, partly by Russian opposition, in February 1916. He in turn was replaced by the pro-Russian Sepah-sālār, who in August 1916 finally reached an agreement with the Allies, accepting a mixed commission to

supervise a subsidy of 200,000 pounds sterling to be paid to the government and consenting to an increase in the strength of the Cossack Brigade, as well as to the formation of a British force to police the south; the latter force came to be known as the South Persia Rifles (Polīs-e janūb). The agreement meant in effect the virtual partition of the country. At that juncture the shah asserted himself and dismissed Sepah-sālār. In fact, Aḥmad Shah had begun to play a more active role in politics, which exposed him to subsequent criticism (Olson, pp. 149-206).

Woṯūq-al-Dawla was named prime minister with British backing in August 1916. He attempted to ease out of Sepah-sālār's agreement, claiming that the text had been lost, but to no avail. The South Persia Rifles were organized, and the mixed commission began to function. The British wanted official government recognition of the force, but Woṯūq-al-Dawla could make no concession without obtaining something in return. His position was exceptionally difficult, for many of the politicians who had left Tehran had begun to drift back and to agitate for elections; they generally acted as a kind of check upon the government's freedom of action. Some extremists organized the Komīta-ye mojāzāt (Committee of punishment) to assassinate traitors; one of its first victims was Matīn-al-Salṭana, editor of the pro-Russian newspaper *ʿAṣr-e jadīd* (Ṣadr Hāšemī, *Jarāʾed o majallāt* IV, pp. 29-31).

After ten months in office Woṯūq-al-Dawla was succeeded by ʿAlāʾ-al-Salṭana, ʿAyn-al-Dawla, Mostawfī-al-Mamālek, and Ṣamṣām-al-Salṭana in turn; none, however, was able to resolve the impasse. Despite protracted negotiations for a permanent settlement, nothing of substance was achieved. Under the watchful eyes of the reviving political parties and the newspapers, which were beginning to function again, no government could have entered into an agreement with the Allies without achieving some corresponding gain (Bahār, I, pp. 27-28). Every government demanded, as a minimum, the evacuation of Persian territory, a readjustment of the frontiers, a voice in the peace conference to be held at the end of the war, compensation for war damages, a guarantee of Persian independence, the right to form a unified army, and cancellation of the Anglo-Russian Convention. The Allies, on the other hand, were not ready to make some of these concessions (Olson, p. 236).

In 1917 the Bolshevik Revolution meant a temporary removal of Russian power from the Persian scene, and the British government immediately took steps to secure its own interests, including exclusive political, financial, and military control of Persia. In August 1919 an agreement along these lines was

concluded with the government of Woṯūq-al-Dawla, who had returned to office in August 1918. Because of the hostility of the press and public opinion and because of French and American opposition, this initiative failed, however. The British attempted bribery, and the Persian government tried to rig elections to the Fourth Majles (begun in 1336/1918), for without the Majles no agreement could be ratified. Both attempts were unsuccessful. The rigged elections were discontinued and resumed only after the coup d'etat of 1299 Š./1921, led by Sayyed Żīāʾ-al-Dīn and Reżā Khan Mīrpanj (the future Reżā Shah), commander of the Cossack Brigade; even then the Fourth Majles, which was convened in June 1921, remained under a cloud.

Furthermore, although Great Britain had become the sole foreign power in Persia after the war, it had to reckon with the new and formidable appeal of communism 1. Weak cabinets, an uncontrollable Majles, unrestrained political parties, a free press, and rebellious movements in the provinces with the accompanying danger of secession were not conducive to a strong government capable of restraining the influence of radicalism. Nor did the coup d'etat of 1299 Š./1921 solve these problems. It was only with a change of dynasty and the establishment of strong autocratic rule that these elements came under the control of the shah and the government. The Pahlavi regime, which aspired to modernity, reform, and national glory, retained the Majles as a symbol, but what had once been called the *kaʿba* of the hopes of the Persian nation had become an empty shell. Had World War I not taken place, it is possible that constitutionalism might have developed to a limited degree in Persia, despite foreign interference and domination, for the Majles was quite effective in enacting domestic reforms. As it was closed prematurely and violently, however, all efforts at building a workable democracy failed, with fatal consequences for the future of constitutionalism in Persia.

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