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Author(s): Mohammad H. Faghfoory

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**Mohammad H. Faghfoory**

## THE ULAMA–STATE RELATIONS IN IRAN: 1921–1941

The role of the ulama in Iranian politics during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries has been studied extensively. Particularly the rise of the ulama's social influence and power in the Tobacco Movement (1891–1892) and the Constitutional Revolution of 1905–1911 has been investigated at length.<sup>1</sup> Much less attention has been devoted to examining the relationship between the ulama and the state after the Constitutional Revolution, and the role of the religious community in Reza Khan's assumption of power and his subsequent accession to the throne in 1925.<sup>2</sup>

In this paper I shall attempt to examine the role of the ulama in paving Reza Khan's road to power, and the relationships between the state and the religious community before and after the establishment of the Pahlavi dynasty. This article will also examine the correlation between politics and socioeconomic developments, and will discuss the impact of policies between 1921 and 1941 on the ulama's position and social status.

The transformation of a traditional society through a process of modernization is accompanied by a degree of social restratification. New elites emerge, and traditionally powerful social groups lose power and influence and sometimes disappear. This paper will analyze the transformation of the Iranian ulama as traditional social elite owing to political, economic, and social changes.

In this study modernization is generally understood as a process of change mainly caused by the increasing penetration of the world capitalist system into Iran. This penetration forced the state to adapt its economic system and political institutions to forms suitable for the growth of capitalism. The process embodied interrelated political, economic and sociocultural dimensions. Modernization increased the degree of central authority and control. The central authority's expansion required the growth of an efficient transportation and communication system and the rapid expansion of technological skills and modern education. The process known as modernization in Iran manifested itself in all these spheres, and by 1941 had transformed much of urban Iran into a relatively modern society, with new political and economic institutions, aspirations, and sociocultural values.

The modernization of governmental structure, the changes in political and economic systems and functions, and the rise of new elites between 1921 and 1941 were instrumental in the transformation of the ulama and the decline of their political power and social status. Nevertheless, free, rapid, and unquestioning adoption of Western educational, political, legal, and economic systems—as

well as cultural and social values, placing heavy emphasis on nationalism without its proper definition—proved also to be destructive to Iranian society. The net result of the process was confusion and, indeed, an identity crisis. The very cultural identity that the intelligentsia was developing and defending was paradoxically steadily weakened by imitation of the façade of Western culture and civilization.

Modernizers in Iran sought to achieve two basic goals. They sought to transform Iran's economy to a semi-industrialized and commercialized system; they also aimed at expanding the power of the central government over all segments of the society, with the purpose of centralization and unification. In the process, the government sought to eliminate the traditional social forces and ideologies such as the ulama and religion, and to substitute new ideologies and attitudes seen as more compatible with its modernist aims. Economic developments during the period under study produced new social groups whose political orientation and economic philosophy were in sharp conflict with those of the traditional elites. A new elite was formed around the government and the throne; its main goals were to gain recognition and power, and to create a society it considered modern. Consequently, the confrontation between the old and the new elites became inevitable. With the exception of the large landowning class, many traditional elements and classes were eliminated, and many institutions and socioeconomic and political foundations of their power were destroyed.

To analyze the relations between the state and the ulama and to demonstrate the ulama's part in the establishment of the Pahlavi dynasty, the years between 1921 and 1941 should be divided into three stages. The first period, 1921–1925, coincides with Reza Khan's attempts to consolidate his power as prime minister and minister of war. In this period the influence of the ulama increased enormously, due to Reza Khan's obedient attitude toward them, and also to their resistance to the establishment of a republic. In this struggle Reza Khan followed the traditional policy of dividing and bribing influential religious leaders. Also, he reassured the ulama of his respect and promised to consult them in state affairs. When he gave up his intention of establishing a republic, the ulama tended to support his struggle for the throne and legitimated his reign by maintaining that his attempts to reunify the country had to be strongly supported in order to preserve and defend the interests of Iran and Islam (*Be nam-i Islamiyyat va Iraniyyat*). All this brought the ulama back into power and political activity, which they had abandoned after the Constitutional Revolution.

The second stage of the relationship between the ulama and Reza Shah started in 1925 after the latter's accession to the throne. Reza Shah was keenly aware that his position was not secure as long as the ulama remained powerful. However, he was still too weak, and his position too unsettled, to permit him to take any measure against them. Thus, for the time being he honored the ulama during religious festivals, made pilgrimages to the holy Shi'ī shrines, assured them of his loyalty to Islam, and refrained from the enforcement of the newly ratified conscription law, which called on members of the religious community to serve in the military.

The period of peaceful relationship between the ulama and Reza Shah broke down once the new shah consolidated his position. Then began the third stage of

the relationship between the monarch and the ulama. From 1927 onward the government exerted extensive efforts to modernize the administrative and military apparatus, and judicial and educational institutions. Military, fiscal, judicial, and educational reforms removed the ulama from the central position of power that they had continuously occupied in Iran until 1920. The shah replaced them with military officers, bureaucrats, lawyers, teachers, and modern-educated intelligentsia. Not surprisingly, the ulama, once considered to be the conscience of the society, began to resist the challenge to their power and status, promptly being identified by the shah as defenders of backwardness and reaction. Their scattered opposition and resistance were severely suppressed by the government. The ulama were eventually isolated in Tehran and other major cities and lost some contact with their previous supporters who, in one way or another, had benefited from certain aspects of modernization programs.

#### FIRST STAGE: MUTUAL DEPENDENCE AND FRIENDSHIP, 1921–1925

The first stage of the ulama–Reza Khan relationship began with the latter's successful march to Tehran in February 1921/Esfand 1299. When the coup d'état achieved its victory, the ulama still constituted an important force in the society, with which any ambitious politician would have to reckon. At this point Reza Khan's primary goal was to remove from premiership his partner and rival in the coup, Sayyid Ziya al-Din Tabataba'i. He was aware that the ulama's support was needed for this. Hence, Reza Khan exploited Sayyid Ziya's connection with the British and his association and friendship with non-Muslim elements, particularly the Armenians.<sup>3</sup> A journalist supporter of Reza Khan wrote that Sayyid Ziya's newspaper, *Ra'ad*, was supported by the Armenians, and particularly enjoyed the financial backing of Alexander Tomaniance, a well-known Armenian merchant. The same source maintained that Gaspar Epikian and Megerditch, two Armenian journalists, used *Ra'ad* to attack the nationalists, and that their agitation was instrumental in Sayyid Ziya's arrest of Sayyid Hasan Mudarris, the outspoken deputy of Isfahan and a major clerical politician.<sup>4</sup>

These activities helped to unify the bazaar merchants and the religious community in support of Reza Khan against Sayyid Ziya. A meeting was held in Tehran's Shah Mosque. To ensure the security of this gathering, Reza Khan removed Colonel Fazlulla Khan from the post of military governor of Tehran one day before. In his place he appointed General Mahmud Khan Amir Iqtidar, one of his own loyal officers. At the meeting, Aqa Sayyid Ya'qub Shirazi, a leading mullah of Tehran, bitterly attacked Sayyid Ziya as a British agent. The meeting in the Shah Mosque was successful, and generated considerable support for Reza Khan.<sup>5</sup> Later, Aqa Sayyid Ya'qub was awarded by Reza Khan for his services by being elected to the Constituent Assembly, which approved Reza Khan's accession to the throne. Thus, the ulama were prepared to support Reza Khan, who in their view was an independent and patriotic man, against Sayyid Ziya, whose connection with the British and the Armenians was well known. With the ulama's approval and backing, Reza Khan ousted his rival in May 1921. The support of the ulama proved useful in this episode, and Reza Khan was to seek further ties with them.

The religious community had many reasons to support Reza Khan against his rivals. As commander of the only organized military force in Iran, he was the only person capable of establishing order and security. He was seen by the ulama as the champion of resistance against foreign influence and colonialism. Moreover, he was seen as a man determined to restrict the influence and corruption of the Qajar Court. The religious community was searching for a strong man who could redress some of the humiliations they had suffered at the hands of the British authorities in Iraq. With skill and a series of maneuvers, Reza Khan presented himself as the ideal choice.

### *The Crisis of Republicanism*

Prior to Reza Khan's appointment as prime minister, there were rumors that he intended to abolish the Qajar dynasty and establish a republic. Upon his appointment, the rumors were furthered by his attempts to undermine the position of Ahmad Shah. However, the crisis that developed must be understood in order to reveal the real nature of the power struggle between Reza Khan and the Qajar Court. Analysis of declarations, advances, and retreats during the republican crisis makes Reza Khan's sincerity about intending a republican regime seriously questionable. His maneuvers, however, were extremely effective in weakening the position of Ahmad Shah and presenting himself as the only viable alternative.

Reza Khan was well aware of Ahmad Shah's weakness and lack of popularity. He was equally aware of the opposition to republicanism in the Majlis and outside of it. Many deputies were reluctant to violate the very monarchical constitution that had placed them in Parliament. Moreover, through his agents Reza Khan had been informed of the clergy's opposition to the idea of republicanism on the basis of its incompatibility with Islam. He knew that moving directly to the throne would be risky, and circuitous road had to be taken toward this goal.

In the summer of 1924 the republican deputies approached the guild leaders of Tehran's bazaar and urged them to support a republic. The response was not favorable. The republicanists gathered in the bazaar and asked for a strike, but were rejected by the bazaar leaders. Antirepublican sentiments developed rapidly in the bazaar, especially after provocative speeches by two mullahs, Sheikh Mohammad Khalesizadah and Sheikh Husain Lankarani on Esfand 28, 1302/ March 19, 1924.<sup>6</sup> Petitions were signed and collected by merchants, and each guild chose a representative to present the petition to the Majlis. Then the crowd began to march. Upon arriving at Majlis Square, Khalesizadah and other representatives were admitted to the session. Reportedly, these representatives were assaulted and beaten by the republican deputies. In one of the most controversial sessions of the Majlis, Sayyid Hasan Mudarris was slapped by a republican deputy. This incident was interpreted by the conservatives and by religious circles as typifying the attitude of a republican regime toward religion and religious leaders.<sup>7</sup> After the president of the Majlis took note of the situation, he

ended the session and promised to grant a hearing to the delegation the next day, when the bill for the establishment of a republic was to be presented.<sup>8</sup>

The next day, on Esfand 29, 1302/March 20, 1924, the bill was read in the Majlis and created much controversy between republican deputies and opponents of the bill. Of the 117 deputies, only 32 supported republicanism. Fifty-six deputies demanded the abdication of Ahmad Shah and the monarchical leadership of Prince Firuz Qajar, while 29 deputies formed a moderate group leaning toward the conservative right, under the leadership of Mudarris.<sup>9</sup> Mudarris and his faction formed a coalition with the antirepublican faction, and, on the instigation of Mudarris, some of his clients left Tehran for Qum. The anti-republican faction hoped that when Reza Khan introduced the bill to the Majlis, Parliament would not be able to vote on it because of the absence of a quorum. They assumed that such a delay would enable the antirepublican deputies to mobilize their forces outside the Majlis against Reza Khan and his proposal.<sup>10</sup>

Meanwhile, outside the Majlis, opposition to republicanism grew rapidly. On the same day (Esfand 29, 1302/March 20, 1924), Sayyid Hasan Mudarris declared that an attack on the institution of monarchy was an attack on the holy Shari‘a. The bazaar and stores were closed, and a group of angry demonstrators gathered in Parliament Square shouting, “We follow the rules of the Qur’an—we don’t want a republic,” and “We want to follow Islam—we don’t want a republic.”<sup>11</sup> One observer reported that opponents of republicanism included some bazaar merchants, shopkeepers, and even illiterate people who knew the meaning neither of a constitutional monarchy nor of republicanism, but who joined the anti-republican deputies when the ulama announced that republicanism was against Islam.<sup>12</sup> Violence spread and fights broke out between demonstrators and the police after a mullah was beaten by a police officer. Another group of demonstrators gathered behind the Majlis to support republicanism. Apparently, republican demonstrators were rarely able to attract more than a few hundred participants.<sup>13</sup> The social basis of republicanism remained narrow and was limited to insignificant numbers of intellectuals, including teachers, pharmacists, and civil servants.

To prevent further unrest, on Farvardin 2, 1303/March 22, 1924, the Majlis demanded government intervention, and Prime Minister Reza Khan was summoned to Parliament to discuss the situation. His car was surrounded by a mob throwing sand and stones at his vehicle.<sup>14</sup> He finally arrived at Parliament, accompanied by a regiment of the Cossack Brigade, amidst the cries of “Down with the republic” that were dominating the furor in Parliament Square. A certain Sheikh Mahdi Sultan, who was preaching against republicanism, was beaten by Reza Khan, and his order to arrest the mullah was reluctantly carried out. In return, Reza Khan was physically assaulted by the mob. Fighting recommenced between the police and the demonstrators. A few dozen people were killed or injured. Mirza Husain Khan Mu‘tamin al-Mulk, the Majlis Speaker, protested to Reza Khan about his violence against the demonstrators. Reza Khan apologized to the ulama and the deputies, and promised to release all those who had been arrested by the police. Before leaving the Majlis, however, he told the deputies that “now that the nation opposes republicanism, I submit

myself to the will of the nation, but you must make a decision for the future because I can no longer work with Ahmad Shah.”<sup>15</sup> This was a timely threat. To attract the ulama’s attention and express his loyalty to Islam, Reza Khan made a pilgrimage to Qum. From there he issued the following declaration:

Dear compatriots: experience has shown that a government should not oppose the public opinion and will. . . . My aim has always been to protect the grandeur and welfare of Islam and the Muslims, and to safeguard the independence of Iran and sovereignty of the nation. The idea of republicanism has created much confusion and unrest in the country. When I paid my homage to the shrine of Fatimah at Qum (Peace be upon Her), I exchanged ideas with the religious authorities, and we concluded that it would be more beneficial for the country if all efforts should be concentrated on reforms, the strengthening of foundations of the Faith and the removal of all obstacles to the progress and independence of the country [that is, Ahmad Shah].<sup>16</sup>

Reza Khan’s declaration was followed by a telegram to the Majlis issued by the leading ulama of Tehran and the religious authorities of Qum. The declaration said: “Representation for a republic which was not suitable for the country had been made and when the Prime Minister came to Qum, we demanded that he stop his agitation and send a proclamation to all towns. He complied with our request. May God grant that the people of Iran appreciate the value of this act and give full thanks for this concern.”<sup>17</sup> This telegram was signed by Ayatollahs Abul-Hasan Isfahani, Muhammad Husayn Na<sup>3</sup>ini, and <sup>6</sup>Abdul-Karim Ha<sup>3</sup>iri.

Immediately thereafter, Reza Khan left Tehran, declaring his intention of resigning from office and from political activity. His departure again created a power vacuum. Ahmad Shah—the last Qajar monarch—was in Europe, and did not seem to care much about events in Iran.

### *Reza Khan and the Qum-<sup>6</sup>Atabat Conflict*

When Ayatollah Hajj Sheikh Abdul-Karim Ha<sup>3</sup>iri moved from Arak to Qum and settled there in 1920, a new center of religious-political power was founded. Ha<sup>3</sup>iri’s settlement in Qum and the establishment of the hawza-yi <sup>6</sup>ilmiyya (center of religious education) in that town was a political move in nature. The Shi<sup>6</sup>i ulama’s conflict with the British in Iraq had created uncertainty about the future of the Shi<sup>6</sup>i learning centers in Iraq. Creation of an alternative educational center inside Iran was intended to free the ulama from British political pressure and control. Ha<sup>3</sup>iri’s reputation and prestige gave Qum a political weight so that reliance on the ulama at the Iraqi shrines would decrease. Therefore, the religious community of Iran supported Ha<sup>3</sup>iri’s efforts to turn Qum into a major center of Shi<sup>6</sup>i learning and hence to strengthen the influence and power of the local ulama.<sup>18</sup>

Dowlatabadi mentions another reason for Ha<sup>3</sup>iri’s settling in Qum and turning that city into a major learning center. He says this was to quiet Iran’s explosive situation and create obstacles before the spread of communist ideology and other non-Islamic ideas and values. To this end Reza Khan welcomed Ha<sup>3</sup>iri’s settlement in Qum.<sup>19</sup>

When Ayatollahs Abul-Hasan Isfahani and Muhammad Husayn Na<sup>3</sup>ini were expelled from Iraq by the British for their opposition to the British mandate and came to Qum, Reza Khan worked to attract their friendship for his future plans. The presence of Na<sup>3</sup>ini, Isfahani, and Ha<sup>3</sup>iri in Qum also resulted in an intense rivalry between Reza Khan and the Qajar Court. Each tried to attract the ayatollahs to his own side, and both paid periodic visits to them in Qum. In this struggle Reza Khan was more successful, mainly because of his skill in exploiting the situation, as well as Ahmad Shah's reluctance to take any step against the British or mediate on behalf of the expelled ulama. Reza Khan, on the other hand, took advantage of Na<sup>3</sup>ini and Isfahani's desire to return to Iraq and arranged their return to Iraq in a face-saving manner. Reza Khan asked a representative of Amir Faysal of Iraq to come to Qum and to extend an official invitation to them, on behalf of his government, to return to Iraq. Reza Khan also assured the British that the ayatollahs would no longer interfere in Iraq's politics. On their journey to <sup>6</sup>Atabat (Shi<sup>6</sup>i shrine cities in Iraq) a senior officer of the Cossack Brigade (Sardar Raf<sup>6</sup>at) escorted Na<sup>3</sup>ini and Isfahani, and on the way continually reminded them of Reza Khan's devotion to Islam and respect to the ulama. These efforts produced the desired result. Reza Khan became known as defender of the Shi<sup>6</sup>i faith and the ulama. Upon arriving in Iraq, Na<sup>3</sup>ini wrote to Reza Khan thanking him for the military escort and other facilities he had provided. To express further gratitude, Na<sup>3</sup>ini sent Reza Khan a sword believed to have belonged to Hazrat <sup>6</sup>Abbas, a brother of Imam Husayn, along with a revered picture of Imam <sup>6</sup>Ali, the first Shi<sup>6</sup>i imam.

The text of Na<sup>3</sup>ini's letter is significant. It declared Reza Khan's government Islamic and hence legitimate, and called its opponents polytheists (*mushrikin*). The letter said: "it is obligatory for us to inform the people not to deviate from this Muhammadan circle (that is, the government of Reza Khan) which gives currency to Islam. Those who oppose this command will be considered infidel."<sup>20</sup> Following the publication of this letter, rumors spread throughout the country that Reza Khan had dreamed of "His Holiness <sup>6</sup>Abbas" who had honored Reza Khan by granting him his own sword. Thus, in the eyes of many, Reza Khan became a *nazar kardeh*, one who had been blessed by the Holy <sup>6</sup>Abbas! The approval of Na<sup>3</sup>ini brought Reza Khan legitimacy and popular support. His cordial relationship with the ulama of Iraq reached its zenith later, when he made a pilgrimage to Karbala in December 1924.

Reza Khan's reliance on and his attention to the Shi<sup>6</sup>i ulama of Iraq and their expression of support and approval of Reza Khan's legitimacy in such strong language caused resentment and jealousy against them among the ulama of Tehran, Qum, and other cities inside Iran. They saw the sword and the portrait of Imam <sup>6</sup>Ali that Na<sup>3</sup>ini had sent to Reza Khan as a British plot to deceive the populace, and refused to participate in a ceremony in the shrine of Shah <sup>6</sup>Abdul-<sup>6</sup>Azim, at which Na<sup>3</sup>ini's presents were given to Reza Khan. Reza Khan was aware of the resentment of the Iranian ulama. Therefore, after he was assured of Na<sup>3</sup>ini's and Isfahani's friendship, he turned to appeasing the religious community at home.<sup>21</sup>



In order to win the support and friendship of the ulama inside Iran and ensure their loyalty, Reza Khan undertook a series of political maneuvers. In June 1922/Muharram 1341 he arranged a mourning procession in the famous Cossack mosque of Tehran and invited the public to attend and relive the martyrdom of Husayn, the third Shi'ī imam. Reportedly, the participating mullahs were respectfully hugged and kissed by Reza Khan and were paid handsomely at the end of the ceremony. Reza Khan took advantage of this occasion to stress his devotion to Imam Husayn and his cause. In order to win further sympathy from the populace, on the tenth day of Muharram (the day of Husayn's martyrdom) he marched to the bazaar, along with a large number of members of the Cossack Brigade, to participate in the public mourning.<sup>22</sup> These demonstrations greatly impressed the ulama and the ordinary people of Tehran. Such maneuvers made Reza Khan so popular that many opportunist dignitaries began to attend religious gatherings to attract the ulama's attention and win their friendship. An observer noted of Reza Khan's changing attitude toward the ulama: "he paid frequent visits to the ulama and even to lesser mullahs, and paid them generously."<sup>23</sup> When he faced criticism from his modernist friends, he reportedly told them that "this is a temporary friendship and political expediency demands such a friendship."<sup>24</sup>

Along with these maneuvers, Reza Khan took other steps to show off his military achievements. He began to propagate the army's role in providing order and security. In Isfahan, his appointee as military governor increased his support from the ulama.<sup>25</sup> In other cities the public was impressed by the army's performance and the construction projects it undertook. Many leading ulama urged their followers to assist the army in completing these projects. In the city of Urumia, for instance, Aqa Muhammad Mujtahid—the Marj'ā-i Taqlid—provided 20,000 tomans for the construction of a new army garrison. Most of this fund came from individual contributions encouraged by local religious leaders.<sup>26</sup> Thus, by various means Reza Khan succeeded in creating favorable conditions for his final assault on the Qajar throne. The final steps were taken in the Majlis.

### *Toward the Throne*

Reza Khan's intention became increasingly clear. For the New Year ceremonies in Farvardin 1304/March 1925 he was not invited to the Royal Palace, where the crown prince received state dignitaries in the absence of Ahmad Shah. Apparently, Reza Khan was ignored by the court because he had refused to visit the crown prince upon his return from Karbala in December. The relationship between the court and the prime minister grew colder day by day. The newspaper *Panir* reported that Reza Khan had sent a warning to the Majlis and had asked the deputies to choose between him and Ahmad Shah.<sup>27</sup> This warning coincided with the arrival of a telegram from Ahmad Shah addressed to the Majlis. The shah expressed distrust of Reza Khan and instructed the Majlis to elect a new prime minister. To promote public sentiment against Reza Khan, the court

began to organize his opponents and planned a campaign against him during the coming month of Ramadan.

Meanwhile, Reza Khan continued his agitation against Ahmad Shah. Via his agents, he assured the Qajar princes and court dignitaries of their well-being and safety if he were to ascend the throne. Members of the religious community who had remained loyal to Ahmad Shah turned to Reza Khan when a portrait of Ahmad Shah in Paris, wearing a European straw hat and accompanying a group of French women, was distributed in Tehran by Reza Khan's friends. This caused a great deal of anger among the ulama and the public. A telegram from the merchants of Tabriz threatened to separate Azarbaijan from Iran unless the Majlis replaced Ahmad Shah with Reza Khan as the shah.<sup>28</sup> It was under these circumstances that Reza Khan eventually resigned, withdrawing to his estate in Mazandaran (Farvardin 1304/April 1925).

Reza Khan knew of the power vacuum his absence would create. Army units dispatched telegrams to the Majlis demanding Reza Khan's immediate return. Also, the premier's absence created a crisis in the Majlis that ended only when a delegation sent to Reza Khan brought him back to the capital. The delegation included some of the most respected and influential deputies, such as Mirza Hasan Mushir al-Dowla, Mirza Hasan Khan Mostowfi al-Mamalik, Mortaza Quli Khan Bayat, and Dr. Muhammad Mosaddeq. Reza Khan had scored another victory; the Majlis promised to cooperate with him, and, to demonstrate its sincerity, authorized the police to suppress a small group of anti-Reza Khan demonstrators led by Mirza Sayyid Mahmud—a pro-Ahmad Shah mullah.<sup>29</sup>

### *The Fall of the Qajars*

Ahmad Shah, alarmed by these developments, decided to return home. He sent a telegram to Reza Khan informing him of his decision. Reza Khan sent back a formal response expressing his readiness to welcome the shah. He asked Ahmad Shah what route he would be taking, so that measures could be taken to guarantee his security on the journey. Behind the scenes, however, the prime minister was preparing the ground to oust the shah.

He approached influential deputies in the Majlis, and in return for their approving the shah's removal, assured them of their security if he were to become shah. His generals and other allies started to work toward this goal. On October 27, 1925/Aban 7, 1304 a group of Azarbaijanis took sanctuary in the Military College with the army's permission, and demanded the removal of telegraph censorship. Their objective was to obtain official permission to publish telegrams in support of Reza Khan's monarchy. When telegraph censorship was removed the following day, telegrams poured into the premier's office from all over the country. General Mahmud Khan Amir Iqtidar arranged the dispatch of telegrams from Azarbaijan, Sistan, Yazd, Hamadan, Khuzistan, and Kurdistan, all signed by leading ulama and prominent merchants.<sup>30</sup> Dowlatabadi maintains that "the military organized the mob and club-wielders who attacked Reza Khan's opponents wherever they met, and beat and injured many of them." The

hecklers (*dastah-ye huchian*) were paid and led from behind the scenes by army officers. They consisted primarily of mullahs, the unemployed, and the urban poor. For a small payment they were prepared to attack anyone suspected of opposing the prime minister.<sup>31</sup>

Out of these multiple developments Reza Khan emerged much stronger. The last obstacle to the throne was removed when the Majlis elevated him to the position of commander in chief of the army, a post constitutionally vested in the shah. It was stressed that only the Majlis had the authority to remove him from his position.<sup>32</sup> The road was now paved for Reza Khan's accession to the throne. Talk of removing Ahmad Shah and abolishing the Qajar dynasty spread in the Majlis. There seemed to be agreement on this issue, and only technicalities were discussed. Outside the Majlis, with the supervision of the army, many telegrams were sent to the deputies demanding the proclamation of Reza Khan as the new shah of Iran.

Reza Khan's allies in the Majlis arranged the resignation of the Majlis speaker, Muṣṭamin al-Mulk, who was reluctant to accept Ahmad Shah's removal. Instead they elected Mostowfi al-Mamalik, who was an ally of Reza Khan and enjoyed the backing of Ayatollah Sayyid Hasan Mudarris, the powerful deputy of Isfahan.<sup>33</sup> The new speaker rarely participated in Majlis session, reportedly due to his poor health, and in his absence Sayyid Muhammad Tadayyun, a friend of Reza Khan who had once headed the movement for a republic in the Majlis, presided over the parliamentary sessions.

Under these circumstances the question of the abolition of the Qajar dynasty came up for discussion in Parliament. A proposal was presented to the Majlis Speaker, which read as follows:

Dissatisfaction and complaints about the Qajar dynasty have reached a point which threaten our country's security. Since the primary duty of the Majlis is the preservation of the independence and integrity of the nation an end must be put to this crisis. We, the undersigned, request the Majlis to ratify the following bill immediately:

In the name of the prosperity and well-being of the nation, it is proposed that the abolition of the Qajar dynasty be promulgated and a provisional government within constitutional law be granted to H. H. Reza Khan Pahlavi. The final decision on the future government of the country will be the responsibility of the Constituent Assembly.<sup>34</sup>

As expected, the bill passed the Majlis with eighty votes in support and only five votes against. Immediately, preparations began for the election of representatives to the Constituent Assembly. As in the past, telegrams were dispatched to the Majlis in support of Reza Khan, signed mainly by the ulama and the merchants.<sup>35</sup> One telegram, sent by Hayṭ al-ʿIlmiyya of Isfahan, praised Reza Khan as the champion of Islam and national sovereignty. It stated:

Unfortunately, the Qajar monarch's negligence has resulted in the country's backwardness and destruction. They falsely attribute the nation's ills to ulama and Islam, and to our alleged resistance to progress. Now that the bridle of the country has fallen into the able hands of H. H. Reza Khan Pahlavi (Be Allah's shadow upon him), it is appropriate that the religious community take advantage of this opportunity and wholeheartedly support the Islamic dreams of H. H. Reza Khan Pahlavi.<sup>36</sup>

In another telegram Reza Khan was praised for having prevented the spread of "anti-Islamic republicanism which was supported by all anti-Islamic elements and would have led to Bolshevism." Reza Khan was also praised for having destroyed all the enemies of Islam and Ja<sup>c</sup>fari Shi<sup>c</sup>ism.<sup>37</sup>

Whether all these telegrams were dispatched through manipulation, bribery, or the use of force is not important. Circumstantial evidence suggests that a combination of all these means was used to have them sent to the press and the Majlis; in any event they played an important part in paving Reza Khan's way to the throne. Thus, when the elections for the Constituent Assembly were held, Reza Khan was certain of the ulama's full support for his reign. He personally invited influential mullahs to Tehran, particularly those who had been ignored or occasionally harassed by the Qajar police, to participate in the elections. A notable example was Ayatollah Muhammad Reza Kirmani, who was a personal guest of Reza Khan during the elections.<sup>38</sup>

In the subsequent elections to the Constituent Assembly, a large number of the ulama entered the Majlis, and the first session of the assembly was formed under the presidency of Ayatollah Hajj Sheikh Husayn Yazdi.<sup>39</sup> Under the heavy influence of the mullahs and Reza Khan's friends and allies, the Constituent Assembly proclaimed Reza Khan as the new shah and the founder of the Pahlavi dynasty on Azar 24, 1304/December 12, 1925. Among the first people to congratulate the new monarch were Ayatollahs Abul-Hasan Musavi, Ziya al-Din Iraqi, Mahdi Khorasani in Najaf, and Mohammad Saleh Ha<sup>2</sup>iri Mazandarani from Mazandaran. They called Reza Khan's coronation a "new era in the history of Islam."<sup>40</sup>

Thus, a crisis precipitated by Reza Khan under the guise of republicanism resulted in his accession to the throne and the establishment of yet another monarchical dynasty. For many observers Reza Khan's intentions and plans had been clear from the beginning, as the ulama's reactions had been predictable. For instance, the well-known poet Malik al-Shu<sup>c</sup>ara Bahar wrote:

Dar pardah-i jumhuri koobad dar-i shahi  
Ma bi khabar o doshman-i tamma<sup>c</sup> zirang ast.<sup>41</sup>  
[Under the guise of republic he intends to become king  
We are naive and the greedy enemy is crafty.]

The easy retreat of republicanists before the ulama, and the former's provocative and unskillful behavior in the Majlis (that is, the slapping of Mudarris) only facilitated Reza Khan's task and accelerated the ulama's alliance with him.

The ulama's primary opposition to republicanism and their subsequent agreement to and support for Reza Khan's assumption of power as a king had both ideological and practical motivations. Many religious leaders, including Mudarris, considered republicanism as a step toward Bolshevism. Developments in Turkey, the abolition of the caliphate, and reforms undertaken by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk warned the Iranian ulama of the possibility of a similar destiny for themselves. The religious community of Iran was more inclined to support Reza Shah's glorification of ancient dynasties and the founding of a new dynasty than the establishment of a republic and the risk of its consequences. Had they

been able to predict the harsh attitude of Reza Shah, it is more likely that they would have preferred Ahmad Shah or his brother, or even the republican form of government.

#### SECOND STAGE: TRANSITION FROM ALLIANCE TO ENMITY, 1925–1927

Reza Khan's ascent to the throne and the establishment of the Pahlavi dynasty mark the beginning of the second phase of ulama–state relationships. This stage is characterized by a gradual consolidation of the power of the throne and the elimination of forces and groups that had assisted the new shah in his struggle. The support that the ulama and the bazaaris and their allies in the streets had offered Reza Shah made the throne particularly vulnerable to ulama pressure. They hoped that with the establishment of order they could ask for a share of power, and regain some of the privileges they had lost after the Constitutional Revolution. They failed to understand Reza Shah and the nature of the developments that had brought him to power. Had Reza Khan been a civilian politician, his attitude toward the ulama might have been different. But, given Reza Shah's military and modernizing goals, a confrontation between the ulama and the state was inevitable. The question was when, and how, this clash was to take place.

Reza Shah needed time to consolidate his power. For this purpose he also needed the ulama. In his oath of office, which he delivered surrounded by dignitaries and religious leaders, he stated that

with God as my witness, I swear on the Qur<sup>2</sup>an and by everything that is holy to me that I shall dedicate all my strength to the independence of Iran, the integrity of the realm and the rights of the people. . . . I shall work for the propagation of our faith. To this end I implore the assistance of Allah and the cooperation of the ulama of Islam.<sup>42</sup>

In his inaugural speech, Reza Shah set two immediate goals for himself. One was to guarantee society's observation of Islamic principles, and the second was to provide the necessities for the well-being of the nation. Thus, he presented himself as the champion of Islam and an advocate of the nation's prosperity:

I hereby order the government to cut four shahis that have been added to the price of bread in Tehran, so that relief might come to the poor and the needy. Moreover, since the spread of evil practices (*munkirat*) is against the basic principles of Islam, I order that all liquor stores and gambling centers throughout the country be closed. All governors and military authorities are expected to carry out this order without exception and with utmost authority.<sup>43</sup>

In his coronation speech, Reza Shah reiterated his intention to protect Islam, and assured the ulama of his faith in the religion of Allah. These statements well reflect Reza Shah's concern with securing the support of the ulama. He paid frequent visits to the leading mullahs of Tehran, consulting them on affairs of state. A few months after his inauguration, he made his first pilgrimage to Mashhad.<sup>44</sup> The first year of Reza Shah's reign passed without any major clash between the government and the religious community. Both sides attempted to maintain and strengthen friendly relations. Behind the scenes, however, the government was preparing the legal ground for its first direct assault on the ulama's power and social status.

### Conscription Law

The first major clash between Reza Shah and the clergy came in 1927 with the introduction of a compulsory military law. The Conscription Law was passed during the last months of Reza Khan's tenure as prime minister in Khordad 1304/May 1925. In 1927 the law was used as a test of the government's power and the ulama's attitude toward future reforms. The law exempted graduates of foreign and national institutions of higher education, and students of religious schools. The latter's exemption, however, was contingent upon their full-time involvement in the profession, successful completion of their course of studies, obtaining permission for independent judgment (*ijtihad*) in the interpretation of the Shari'a, and, above all, passing an examination conducted by a government-appointed board.<sup>45</sup>

The Conscription Law greatly alarmed the ulama with respect to the growing power of a secular government. Understandably, they began to express their resentment toward this law, issuing declarations and delivering speeches that defined their proper functions and roles. According to one declaration, the duty of the ulama was to preserve the integrity of Islam, to interpret the Qur'an, and to safeguard the religious spirit of the Muslims. Hence, they performed a holy and valuable duty, and had to be exempted from military service, which should be left to people who could offer the state no other valuable service.<sup>46</sup> In another declaration signed by Sheikh Nurullah Nakha'i, Mullah Muhammad ibn Hasan and Hay'at 'Ilmiyya of Isfahan, it was stated

While there are so many unemployed individuals in the cities and villages it is more appropriate to initiate a campaign against illiteracy than forced conscription. To remove public anxiety and concern, please take immediate measures to announce cancellation of this law.<sup>47</sup>

Similar statements were issued by the Hay'at 'Ilmiyya Muhajir in Qum, and religious schools in Isfahan and Shiraz closed in protest. Demands were made by the ulama to bring the question into the Majlis. It responded by noting the law's utility in keeping order and defending the borders of the Islamic fatherland. It added that the legitimate needs and demands of the poor and the religious community would be taken into consideration in implementing the law.<sup>48</sup>

The government tried to provide religious justification for the Conscription Law. In a letter to Sheikh Nurullah, Prime Minister Mukhbir al-Saltana Hedayat wrote:

There is a strong need for maintenance of order and security of the Islamic government. Gentlemen! You may come to Tehran and discuss the details. The government has the power to open the bazaars of Isfahan and Shiraz by the use of force, if necessary. But our concern for the ulama's respect and status entitles us to end the dispute through negotiation. The mob's pressure on the ulama to demand the abandonment of the law is against the nation's independence and consolidation of the status and principles of Islam.<sup>49</sup>

In the conclusion of the letter, Hedayat warned the ulama about Court Minister Taymurtash's intention to bombard Qum. Hedayat's threats and his statement of concern for the ulama's respect produced the desired result, as both the government and the ulama were willing to retreat in a face-saving manner. Finally,

Ayatollah Shari<sup>c</sup>atmadar of Isfahan came to Tehran from Qum and met with the shah, while Taymurtash, along with Hedayat and Imam Jum<sup>c</sup>a of Tehran, went to Qum and met with Ayatollah Ha<sup>z</sup>iri. After lengthy discussions, the ulama demanded that (1) certain articles of the law be modified, (2) a five-member committee of ulama be elected to supervise Majlis legislation, (3) in all provincial centers a religious supervisor—*nazir-i shar<sup>c</sup>iyyat*—be appointed, and (4) all functions that in the past had been within the authority of religious courts remain in their jurisdiction.<sup>50</sup>

In an ambiguous letter, the government gave the ulama assurance of exemption from military service. Reza Shah's letter to the ulama was friendly and forceful at the same time. It read:

As it has been proven to your Highness, my primary concern has always been nothing but to strengthen Islam and maintain the proper respect for religious leaders. I have always been concerned that our good intentions toward the respectable community of the ulama and our efforts to safeguard the sacred principles of Islam would not meet any obstacle. We hope that the ulama will welcome our concern for the interests of the nation and for the preservation of the integrity of Islam, and take sincere measures to our satisfaction.<sup>51</sup>

Although the government was forced to comply with the ulama's demands on the Conscription Law and the conflict was peacefully resolved, this incident marked the end of friendship and mutual cooperation between the ulama and Reza Shah. It was also the last time that the government submitted to the ulama's pressure, as government leaders realized that any further retreat was a tactic recognition of their own weakness and the ulama's power and influence. Reza Shah came to the conclusion that unless strong and effective measures were undertaken to eliminate the influence of the ulama, the authority of the state and his own position would remain weak and unstable.

### THIRD STAGE: MODERNIZATION AND TRANSFORMATION, 1927–1941

When the disputes over the Conscription Law were resolved, an environment of uncertainty dominated future ulama–state relations. The power was, however, in the hands of the state, and the ulama were put on the defensive. Reza Shah realized that any direct assault on the ulama's prerogatives would not serve his modernization objectives and goals. On the contrary, it would render the ulama the champions of Islam and victims of the government's "un-Islamic" policies. The government hoped to picture the ulama as agents of reaction and opponents of reform and progress. Consequently, it tried to force the religious community to take position against reforms.

Beginning in 1927, the government began to modernize the economic, judicial, and educational systems and to overhaul the administrative apparatus.<sup>52</sup> The clerical opposition toward the government and its modernizing efforts was to be suppressed by force, if necessary. The modernization of the socioeconomic system would undermine the foundations of the ulama's power, and the government used force against the clerics to prevent them from organizing active resistance.

Modernization and the process of secularization were accompanied by a strong and growing trend of criticism of Islam as it was practiced in Iran, and

especially of Shi'ism and "clerical fanaticism" (*khoraḥat-i akhundi*). Although no direct attack was launched on Islam as a religion, the nationalists increasingly tended to regard it as an alien faith imposed on Iran by an inferior civilization and a backward ethnic group, that is, the Arabs. Shi'ism came to be identified with backwardness, superstition, and corruption. This was followed by bitter and persistent attacks on the ulama themselves, who were held responsible for the existing corruption and moral degeneration.<sup>53</sup>

Modernization was seen by the ulama as a direct challenge to their status and power. Naturally, they tended to oppose the entire process of modernization. Yet, there was not much visible or effective resistance by the clerical community against the government. Sporadic protest and uprisings in Isfahan, Mashhad, and Qum did not attract the support of the leading ayatollahs and hence did not turn into popular movements. The only challenge to Reza Shah came from Sayyid Hasan Mudarris in the Majlis. But after his arrest and banishment to Khorasan in 1929, open clerical opposition came to an end.<sup>54</sup>

The situation grew more repressive after the death of Ayatollah Sheikh 'Abdul Karim Ha'iri in 1315/1936.<sup>55</sup> According to one report, all madrasas of Tehran, Mashhad, and Isfahan were closed down by the government. The only religious schools "which were permitted to function were the hawzah-yi 'ilmiyya of Qum."<sup>56</sup> Many students of religious schools were recruited by the government, and after proper training, found employment in government offices. The state-controlled annual examination for madrasas eliminated the number of mullahs who had failed to meet the new standards. Not only were the ulama identified with backwardness and reaction, and not only did they fail to adapt themselves to the new environment, but they were also frightened of the government and its brutality. Fear and insecurity dominated the clerical community throughout the country. Athar al-Hujja reports that prominent ulama "feared that Reza Shah would do the same to Islam and the ulama that Atatürk and the Bolsheviks had done in Turkey and Soviet Russia—that is, to sink them in the sea or place them before the firing squad."<sup>57</sup> Under these circumstances, survival and concern for the preservation of Islam became the major preoccupation of the clerical community. For the time being, quietism replaced active opposition.

In addition, other developments—particularly, extensive propaganda by the government to publicize the clerical community's reactionary nature—facilitated the process of isolating the ulama in larger cities. Developments such as the "miracle" attributed by the mullahs to a water fountain (*saqqa khanah*) in Tehran,<sup>58</sup> ulama's opposition to prohibition of discrimination against religious minorities,<sup>59</sup> and their opposition to popular issues such as introduction of music in the school curriculum<sup>60</sup> helped, all in all, to portray the ulama, at least in the major cities, not as the champions of Islam but as symbols of reaction and intellectual backwardness. Government propaganda was quite successful in directing public opinion against the ulama to the extent that, according to some oral and written reports, even buses refused to carry the mullahs, in addition to prostitutes.<sup>61</sup> Thus, in contrast to the crisis over republicanism, by generating social support through a massive propaganda campaign for modernization as well as a show of willingness to use force, the government succeeded in directing public sentiment against the clergy in urban centers. For the time being, the state seemed quite successful in isolating the ulama from the main current of society



and eliminating their power and influence from the national political scene.<sup>62</sup> In light of the prevailing situation in the cities, those mullahs who had greater courage and stronger conviction began to work for underground resistance, and many found refuge in the villages in order to remain immune from the government's repressive machinery. The majority, however, adopted a wait-and-see attitude. As long as the power of the state was strong than the ulama's determination to fight back, no other resistance was shown to Reza Shah's rule by the clerical community.<sup>63</sup>

#### CONCLUSION

Reza Shah's modernization efforts weakened the ulama and temporarily isolated them from the society. But the reforms also created a backlash. It is true that those efforts shook the the foundation of the traditional social structure of Iran, but they failed to transpose the society as a whole into a new era. New social classes emerged, but they never reached the degree of maturity necessary to become a "force" in the true sense of the word. The government, especially, failed to create a politically mature society because of its own absolutist nature. Many reforms did not even touch the traditional foundations of the smaller towns, and the villages remained completely outside the circle of modernization.

Many observers came to the conclusion that the reforms were carried out too fast and too far. The consequences were, as expected, disappointment, frustration, and finally opposition. In the absence of an effective political-religious organization, and because of the power and stability of the government, the ulama resorted to *taqiyya*—that is, they prudently dissimulated their belief in the face of persecution. They tended to hide their animosity toward the regime, while continuing to deny its legitimacy behind the scenes. Some members of the religious community began to think of a need for organizational activities.

Although the ulama were driven into the background in Tehran and other major cities, in the less strictly controlled smaller towns and villages they nevertheless maintained, and indeed enhanced, their power due to effective opposition to state policies, such as female education, the emancipation of women, and the restriction of religious education—unpopular measures imposed through unpopular means in a countryside to which modernization had not yet come.

In the final years of Reza Shah's reign, when the regime grew into a police state, there was much unrest beneath the apparent order and peace. A feeling of spiritual frustration had developed for a decade, a manifestation of which was the emergence of extremist religious groups immediately after Reza Shah's ouster. Indeed, the establishment of religious-political organizations after 1941, such as the *Fidayan-i Islam*, was indicative of new trends in the ulama-state relationship and the former's quest for power. It was only the oppressive and dictatorial nature of the regime that had prevented them from coming into the open before the end of Reza Shah's reign.

NOTES

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<sup>1</sup>On the Tobacco uprising of 1891–1892 consult Fereidun Adamiyyat, *Shurish bar imtiaz name-i reggie* (Tehran, 1360/1981), and Nikki R. Keddie, *Religion and Rebellion in Iran: The Tobacco Protest of 1891–1892* (London, 1966). On the role of the ulama in the Constitutional Revolution see Ahmad Kasravi, *Tarikh-i mashru'eh Iran*, 8th ed. (Tehran, 1349/1970); Hamid Algar, *Religion and State in Iran: 1785–1906* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1972). See also Ann K. S. Lambton, “The Persian Ulama and the Constitutional Reform,” in *Le shi'isme imamite: Colloque de Strasbourg*, May 6–9, 1968 (Paris, 1970); and S. A. Arjomand, “The Ulama’s Traditionalist Opposition to Parliamentarianism,” *Middle Eastern Studies*, 17, 2 (April 1981), 174–90.

<sup>2</sup>See Mohammad H. Faghfoory, “The Role of the Ulama in Twentieth Century Iran with Particular Reference to Ayatullah Haj Sayyid Abul-Qasim Kashani,” Ph. D. Dissertation, University of Wisconsin-Madison, Department of History, 1978, chapter 2. See also Shahrough Akhavi, *Religion and Politics in Contemporary Iran: Clergy-State Relations in the Pahlavi Period* (New York, 1980), chapter 2; and Michael Fischer, *Iran: From Religious Dispute to Revolution* (Cambridge, Mass., 1980).

<sup>3</sup>See Malik al Shu'ara Bahar, *Tarikh-i mukhtasar-i ahzab-i siyasi-i Iran* (Tehran, 1323/1944), pp. 100, 102–3. See also Husayn Makki, *Tarikh-i bist saleh-i Iran* (Tehran, 1324/1945), vol. 1, pp. 206, 212.

<sup>4</sup>Abdullah Mostowfi states that Sayyid Ziya intended to carry out a coup d'état against Reza Khan with the help of Armenians. On these charges and Sayyid Ziya's relations with Armenians see Abdullah Mostowfi, *Sharh-i zindigani-i man* (Tehran, 1325/1946), vol. 3, part 1, p. 362. See also Hasan Hallaj, *Tarikh-i tahavvolat-i siyasi Iran dar qurun-i mu'asir* (Tehran, n.d.) pp. 83–85.

<sup>5</sup>See Bahar, *Tarikh-i mukhtasar-i ahzab*, p. 100. See also Makki, *Tarikh-i bist saleh*, vol. 1, p. 205.

<sup>6</sup>Makki, *Tarikh-i bist saleh*, vol. 2, pp. 330–31.

<sup>7</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 319.

<sup>8</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 330–32. See also Ervand Abrahamian, “The Crowd in Iranian Politics: 1905–1953,” *Past and Present*, 41 (December 1968), 201.

<sup>9</sup>Essad Bey, *Reza Shah* (London, 1938), p. 106.

<sup>10</sup>Makki, *Tarikh-i bist saleh*, vol. 2, p. 332.

<sup>11</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 340.

<sup>12</sup>Yahya Dowlatabadi, *Tarikh-i 'asr-i hazir ya hayat-i yahya* (Tehran, 1331/1952), vol. 3, pp. 350–51.

<sup>13</sup>Makki, *Tarikh-i bist saleh*, vol. 2, p. 320. See also Ervand Abrahamian, “The Crowd,” 201. In his memoirs Hedayat reports that “it is Wednesday and anarchy prevails everywhere in Tehran. It is said that the British oppose republicanism but the Soviets support it. The meeting of the republicanists has turned into a scandal. Anti-republican forces surrounded the Majlis. Everywhere the people tear off the republican flags.” See Mahdi Quli Kah Hedayat, *Khatirat va khatarat* (Tehran, 1344/1965), pp. 363–66.

<sup>14</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 367.

<sup>15</sup>Hedayat says that “this speech reminds us of a similar maneuver by Nadir Shah Afshar in Dasht-i Mughan.” *Ibid.*

<sup>16</sup>Makki, *Tarikh-i bist saleh*, vol. 2, p. 344. Also see Hedayat, *Khatirat va khatarat*, p. 368. Translation of the text of this speech is available in Donald Wilber, *Riza Shah: Resurrection and Reconstruction of Iran* (New York, 1975), p. 79.

<sup>17</sup>Hedayat, *Khatirat va khatarat*, p. 368. See also Abdullah Mostowfi, *Sharh-i zindigani-i man*, 2nd ed. (Tehran, 1343/1964), vol. 3, p. 290.

<sup>18</sup>Muhammad Razi reports that after Ayatollah Ha'iri settled in Qum, the city became a point of attraction for many well-known ulama. Many prominent Ayatollahs came to Qum and held classes in the hawzah-yi 'ilmiyya. Among the most respected of these ulama, according to Razi, were Ayatollahs Reza Masjid Shahi, Isfahani, Abul-Hasan Angaji, Sayyid Hasan Jabal 'Amili, Hajj Muhammad Husayn Kashif al-Qita', and many others. See Muhammad Razi, *Athar al-hujja* (Qum, 1332/1953), vol. 1, pp. 76–84.

<sup>19</sup>Dowlatabadi, *Hayat-i yahya*, vol. 3, p. 289.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid., pp. 289–92. For the text of this letter see Akhavi, *Religion and Politics*, pp. 30–31.

<sup>21</sup>Habl al-matin, as quoted in M. B. Parizi, *Talashi-i azadi: zindigani-i Moshir al-Dowlah* (Tehran, 1347/1968), pp. 427–28.

<sup>22</sup>Makki, *Tarikh-i bist saleh*, vol. 1, p. 272.

<sup>23</sup>Mostowfi, *Sharh-i zindigani-i man*, vol. 3, pp. 240–42. See also Hasan Iʿzam Qudsi, *Kitab-i khatirat-i man*, (Tehran, 1342/1963), vol. 2, p. 48.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid.

<sup>25</sup>Mahmud Khan Amir Iqtidar was once a mullah himself and personally knew many leading ulama of Isfahan. He was also acquainted with their mentality and knew that the mullahs would retreat whenever they faced a strong government. He dealt with them from a position of strength and ruled with an iron hand as the military governor of Isfahan. Also, by pursuing a simple life contrary to that of the wealthy mullahs of the city, he won the sympathy and friendship of the rank and file people in Isfahan. See Dowlatabadi, *Hayat-i yahya*, vol. 3, pp. 294–95.

<sup>26</sup>Abdullah Amir Tahmasib, *Tarikh-i shahanshahi-i aʿlahazrat Reza Shah Pahlavi* (Tehran, 1305/1926), pp. 52–53.

<sup>27</sup>*Rooznamah-i Panir* (a newspaper published in India), as quoted in Bastani Parizi, *Talash-i azadi*, p. 424.

<sup>28</sup>The portrait is printed in Bahar, *Tarikh-i mukhtasar-i ahzab*. The text of this telegram is available in Amir Tahmasib, *Tarikh-i shahanshahi*, p. 95. See also pp. 58–59 and 97.

<sup>29</sup>Dowlatabadi, *Hayat-i yahya*, vol. 3, pp. 365–66.

<sup>30</sup>Amir Tahmasib records the names of many ayatollahs and lesser mullahs who sent telegrams in support of Reza Khan against Ahmad Shah. See *Tarikh-i shahanshahi*, pp. 57–58 and 90–91.

<sup>31</sup>Dowlatabadi, *Hayat-i yahya*, vol. 3, pp. 333–34. See also Ibrahim Khajah Noori, *Bazigaran-i ʿasr talaʿie* (Tehran, n.d.), p. 248.

<sup>32</sup>Dowlatabadi, *Hayat-i yahya*, vol. 3, p. 285.

<sup>33</sup>Habl al-matin, # 8 as quoted in Bastani Parizi, *Talash-i azadi*, pp. 430–31.

<sup>34</sup>Every possible means was used to create fear and insecurity among Reza Khan's opponents. Vaʿiz Qazvini, publisher of a newspaper in Qazvin, was a genuine nationalist and in his writings frequently attacked Reza Khan. In Aban 1304/October 1925 two days before Reza Khan's election as the new shah, Vaʿiz Qazvini was assassinated by a plot engineered by the secret police. The plot was carried out by a famous criminal of Tehran known as Husayn Fishangchi (the Bullet Holder). This terrorism frightened many of Reza Khan's opponents and forced them to remain silent. For details of this terrorist act see Dowlatabadi, *Hayat-i yahya*, vol. 3, pp. 376–79.

<sup>35</sup>Mudhakirat-i Majlis, Aban 9, 1304/October 31, 1925, as quoted in Bastani Parizi, *Talash-i azadi*, pp. 453–54.

<sup>36</sup>Amir Tahmasib, *Tarikh-i shahanshahi*, pp. 91–208.

<sup>37</sup>Ibid., pp. 301–2.

<sup>38</sup>Ibid., pp. 328–29. In a telegram to the Court, Ayatollah Muhammad Reza Zanjani called the day of Reza Khan's appointment as the Shah by the Majlis "the day that the holy religion of Islam was perfected." See *ibid.*, pp. 303–4. For more telegrams sent to the court by the ulama on this occasion see pp. 305–74.

<sup>39</sup>Ali Asghar Hikmat, *Si khatirah as ʿasr-i farkhondah-i Pahlavi* (Tehran, 1355/1976), p. 199. For the list of the deputies of the Constituent Assembly see Amir Tahmasib, *Tarikh-i shahanshahi*, pp. 430–48. Of twenty-five deputies elected for Tehran, seven were from among the ulama. They were Ayatollahs Sayyid Abul-Qasim Kashani, Shirazi, Tehrani, Yazdi, Behbahani, ʿAbdul-Rahim Kashani, and Mullah Assadullah.

<sup>40</sup>Amir Tahmasib, *Tarikh-i shahanshahi*, pp. 628–33. Hikmat provides an interesting report on the coronation ceremony of Reza Khan: "when the crown was brought before the Shah, Ayatullah Haj Mirza Yahya Khoʿie—a member of the five-man committee in the Majlis to supervise legislation—took the crown and wanted to crown the Shah. He wanted to highlight the influence of the ulama on and friendship with the new Shah. Reza Shah was clever. He disappointed Khoʿie and the ulama by taking the crown from him and putting it on his head." See Hikmat, *Si khatirah*, pp. 192–93.

<sup>41</sup>Bahar, *Divan-i ashʿar* (Tehran, 1335/1956), p. 359.

<sup>42</sup>Donald Wilber, *Riza Shah*, p. 107.

<sup>43</sup>The text of the speech is available in Amir Tahmasib, *Tarikh-i shahanshahi*, pp. 394–95.

<sup>44</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 705.

<sup>45</sup>Reza Shah Pahlavi, *Yaddashtha-yi Reza Shah*, translated from the Arabic by M. H. Istakhri (Tehran, 1336/1957), p. 75.

<sup>46</sup>Dowlat-i ʿaliyyeh-i Iran, vizarat-i maʿarif va sanayeʿ-i mustazrafa: Ihsaiʿ-ye-i maʿarif va madaris, 1307/1928, as quoted in Akhavi, *Religion and Politics*, p. 37.

<sup>47</sup>Hedayat, *Khatirat va khatarat*, p. 376. See also p. 367.

<sup>48</sup>Ettelaʿat Year Book, *Havadis-i mohim dar yek rubʿe qarn* (Tehran, Mehr 1329/September 1950), p. 26.

<sup>49</sup>Hedayat, *Khatirat va khatarat*, pp. 376–78.

<sup>50</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>51</sup>Ettelaʿat Year Book, *Havadis-i mohim*, pp. 26–27.

<sup>52</sup>For an account of modernization program under Reza Shah see Amin Banani, *The Modernization of Iran, 1921–1941* (Stanford, 1961).

<sup>53</sup>On anticlerical and nationalistic tendencies see Ahmad Kasravi, *Din va danish*, 2nd ed. (Tehran, 1339/1959); *Din va siyosat*, 2nd ed. (Tehran, 1348/1969); and *Yek din va yek darafsh* (Tehran, 1351/1972).

<sup>54</sup>For a biography of Sayyid Hasan Mudarris and his relations with Reza Shah see Husayn Makki, *Mudarris: qahraman-i azadi* (Tehran, 1357/1978). See also Mahdi Farrok, *Khatirat-i siyasi* (Tehran, 1347/1968), pp. 230–31, and Mostowfi, *Sharh-i zindigani man*, vol. 3, p. 248. For an account of other ulama's opposition to modernization see Razi, *Athar al-hujja*, vol. 1, pp. 28–31.

<sup>55</sup>Razi, *Athar al-hujja*, vol. 1, pp. 48–51.

<sup>56</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 114.

<sup>57</sup>The clerical community justified its passivity and lack of resistance toward the government's policies on the basis of their own weakness and the government's strength. The following poem was the slogan of the ulama after 1929. In several interviews that I conducted in 1976 with Ayatollah Hajj Sayyid Abulfazl Zanjani and several other ulama, the same poem was repeated in response to the above question:

Dar kaf-i sheer-i nar-i khunkhare<sup>2</sup>ie  
ghayr-i taslim o riza koo chare<sup>2</sup>ie.  
[In the hands of a bloodthirsty lion  
what is to be done but submission.]

<sup>58</sup>Regarding this incident, which resulted in the murder of Major Robert Imbrie, the American Consul General, by the mullahs and the mob, see Iʿzam Qudsi, *Kitab-i khatirat-i man*, vol. 2, p. 669, and Dowlatabadi, *Hayat-i yahya*, vol. 3, p. 269. See also Michael P. Zirinsky, “Blood, Power and Hypocrisy: The Murder of Robert Imbrie and American Relations with Pahlavi Iran, 1924,” *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 18 (August 1986), 275–92.

<sup>59</sup>Qudsi reports that “in Yazd and its surroundings the Zoroasterians are expected to salute Muslims. If a Zoroasterian is riding on a horse and a Muslim passes by, he must dismount and remain still until the Muslim disappears. The mullahs encourage this kind of practice to enhance their own status. Is this the way the Prophet—Peace be upon Him—treated the non-Muslims? These un-Islamic practices must be abandoned and people must be educated to learn proper social behavior.” See Qudsi, *Kitab-i khatirat-i man*, p. 104.

<sup>60</sup>The ulama bitterly opposed the allocation of 600 tomans in the annual budget of 1925/1306 for music education in each public school. Muʿtazid al-Islam, a mullah deputy in the Majlis, particularly insisted on abolition of this program. The Majlis simply ignored him and other mullahs' warnings on this issue. See Ettelaʿat Year Book, *Havadis-i mohim*, p. 31.

<sup>61</sup>Even the ayatollahs were not exempt from this practice. Razi describes how Ayatollah Mahdi Hakim was treated by the bus driver on a journey from Qum to Tehran. See *Athar al-hujja*, vol. 1, p. 118. Ayatollah Sayyid Abulfazl Zanjani and Hujjat al-Islam Muhammad Kashani also pointed to this experience in personal interviews that I had with them in the summer of 1976.

<sup>62</sup>In order to create further dissension among the mullahs, the government purchased their support and cooperation through bribing some and granting others positions in government departments.

Qudsi reports that several mullahs were admitted to the Bureau of Registration after adequate training. On some occasions the government acted as arbitrator and mediator to resolve ulama's differences with each other. See Qudsi, *Kitab-i khatirat-i man*, pp. 119, 123.

<sup>63</sup>Ibid., pp. 229–31. See also Razi, *Athar al-hujja*, vol. 1, pp. 70, and 229–31.