"Upsetting the Idea of Centuries"

THE ORIGINS OF THE WOMEN'S MOVEMENT IN IRAN, 1850 - 1925

Master of Arts in Law and Diplomacy Capstone Project

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The Persian women since 1907 had become almost at a bound the most progressive, not to say radical, in the world. That this statement upsets the ideas of centuries makes no difference. It is the fact.

— William Morgan Shuster, *The Strangling of Persia*, 1912

INTRODUCTION

Nineteenth century Iran saw the emergence of a nation-wide conversation about the meaning of progress couched in terms modernization. One outcome of this debate was the Constitutional Revolution of 1905-1911. The constitutionalists' attempts to establish a modern governance system relied on greater participation and support by women in the public sphere. The participation of women in the Constitutional Revolution gave them, for the first time on a large scale, the experience in organizing themselves to demand an expansion of rights and opportunities available to women. This thesis argues that within the larger social debate about modernization in nineteenth century Iran, and attempts to achieve it, an opportunity emerged for the advancement of the status of women.

Those examining the history of women's movement in Iran may find it surprising to see a sudden rise in women's participation at the turn of the century. How was it possible for women to go from experiencing relative seclusion in the nineteenth century, to participating publicly in a political movement at the turn of the twentieth century? How were they able to seize this moment into an opportunity to call for their own rights? This thesis one attempt to explain that phenomenon.

Likewise, those interested in the question about the role and rights of women in present-day Iran would benefit from learning about how the women's rights movements began—that its roots lay in the constitutional revolution, at whose helm were liberal members of the clergy. Furthermore, historical accounts add meaning and context to the identity of women in present day Iran and their efforts to pursue their own rights, and contribute to their country's progress.

Lastly, the question of whether women's emancipation is compatible with Islam is one that continues to be asked in present-day Iran. Some contend that granting women and men

equal rights and liberties is not compatible with Iranian culture, of which Shi'i Islam, they state, is a major part. By extension, the call for the advancement of women is a manifestation of Westernization. This was a question that was addressed in the early women's rights discourse. Participants in the women's movement both contended that granting rights to women was not contrary to the teachings of Islam, and made a clear distinction between the spirit of Islam and misogynistic interpretations of scripture. Some pioneers of girls' education—the cornerstone of the movement's activities—were supported by their cleric husbands, and included religious study in their curriculum.

My own interest in this topic began when I stumbled across the above quotation in William Morgan Shuster's narrative of his year in Iran during the turbulent Constitutional Revolution. As an Iranian female who grew up in the United States, the question of women's advancement in Iran was something that I had assumed had begun with Reza Pahlavi's efforts to modernize Iran after his rise to power in 1925. Curious to learn more, what began as a chapter in a thesis meant to examine the nineteenth-century modernization debate turned into the entirety of the thesis itself. It is hoped that this work aims, in a modest way, honor the work of those Iranian women and men who made bold efforts to, in Shuster's words, "upset the ideas of centuries."

CHAPTER 1
NINETEENTH CENTURY IRAN'S MODERNIZATION DEBATE

What is the power that gives [Europe] so great a superiority over us? What is the cause of your progress and of our constant weakness? You know the art of governing, the art of conquering, the art of putting into action all human faculties, whereas we seem condemned to vegetate in a shameful ignorance…[1]
—Crown Prince 'Abbás Mirzá to Pierre Amédée Jaubert, 1806

Upon his visit to Iran in 1805, the noted French Orientalist Pierre Amédée Jaubert was surprised by the barrage of questions directed toward him by 'Abbás Mirzá, the Qájár dynasty's heir to the throne. Fresh from a series of crushing defeats during the first Russo-Persian war of 1803-15, the young crown prince wondered whether his military losses were indicative of a greater problem: that of modernization. 'Abbás Mirzá's observations reflect the emergence of what was to become a centuries-old debate surrounding modernization and reform in Iran, one that started in earnest with the dawn of the nineteenth century.

Iran's political scene in the nineteenth century was dominated by the authoritarian rule of the Qájár dynasty. If the Safavid dynasty (1501-1722) was influenced by the strategic priority of balancing against the Ottoman Empire and the establishment of Shí'ism as the pillar against the Sunni Turks, the Qájár dynasty (1785-1925) was defined by its need to counter Russian and British influence while experimenting with modernization.

This chapter aims to examine the debate about modernization in nineteenth-century Iran, one that has shaped the political, economic, and social landscape of an ancient civilization—including the rise of feminist thought at the turn of the century. Included in this chapter will be an examination of the environment that initiated the debate; the forces in favor of and opposed to modernization and reform; the "modernization dilemma" that arose from these two camps being

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[1] Monica Ringer, *Education, Religion, and the Discourse of Cultural Reform in Qajar Iran* (Costa Mesa, CA: Mazda Publishers, 2001), 1.

pitted against each other; the "indigenous solution" as a significant response to try to address the modernization dilemma (and hence reconcile Islam and modernization); and, lessons of the modernization debate for present-day Iran. A conclusion that can be drawn from an analysis of nineteenth-century Iran is that despite the vigorous efforts of reform-minded technocrats, the overall goal of achieving progress failed due to a desire on the part of vested interests to preserve the *status quo*. Nonetheless, it paved the way for a wave of change ushered in at the turn of the century—change which included the advent of feminism in Iran.

PLACING IRAN'S DEBATE IN CONTEXT: MODERNIZATION THEORY

While this chapter focuses on the modernization debate that took root in Iran in the nineteenth century, what was occurring in Iran was part of a broader sweep of history. As such, it is useful to situate the debate in the broader context of modernization theory.

The Enlightenment

Modernity has traditionally been seen as emerging when a "rupture" occurs in society, and a break with tradition, which consequently brings about a new set of institutions. The Age of Enlightenment is considered to mark the beginnings of modernity. Taking root in the late seventeenth century with the "Glorious Revolution" in England and the publication of Newton's *Principia*,[2] the Age of Enlightenment's reach extended through Western Europe and the United States through the end of the eighteenth century. While not a unitary movement, the central tenets of Enlightenment thought were the emphasis on reason; a critique of the superstition, dogma, and tradition of the world that they inherited; the emancipation of humanity from

[2] "Introduction," in Peter Hanns Reill and Ellen Judy Wilson (eds.), *Encyclopedia of the Enlightenment*, Revised Edition (New York, NY: Facts on File, Inc., 2004), x.

obsolete orthodoxies and arbitrary rule; and the advancement of knowledge through the scientific method.

Three major developments contributed to the rise of the Enlightenment. The first was the wave of skepticism regarding ancient truths that arose in the seventeenth century. The philosophy of John Locke (1632-1704), with observation and experience as the basis of human understanding, and the Scientific Revolution's emphasis on the scientific method, provided a model by which to challenge orthodoxies that prevented progress. Second, the Enlightenment resulted from the needs for states to modernize their methods of administration and revenue appropriation. The recurrent warfare and empire-building of the eighteenth century, largely financed by loans, proved fiscally unsustainable, forcing sovereigns to re-examine their methods of governing. The Enlightenment's advocates, known as "philosophes," served as diplomats and advisers to governments across Europe, providing new ideas to help states run more efficiently and to expand their revenue bases. A third development was the development of a market for high culture that arose from the growth of literacy and disposable income. The burgeoning middle class provided philsophes with an audience with whom to share heterodox ideas. The expansion of the book trade, the development of a strong printing press, and the growth of intellectual and social spaces (such as salons and coffeehouses) likewise opened a space for the spread of Enlightenment thought among the public.[3]

In the wake of the scrutiny of the world in which Enlightenment thinkers inherited, came the efflorescence of institutional reform, most notably in the economic, judicial, and political realms. The works of Adam Smith in *The Wealth of Nations*; the constitutions that emerged in the United States and France; and the unprecedented critique of the death penalty, torture, and a

[3] "Enlightenment," in Peter N. Stearns (ed.), *Oxford Encyclopedia of the Modern World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).

judicial system that favored the wealthy and powerful over the poor and weak in Cesare Beccaria's *On Crimes and Punishment* are major economic, political, and legal legacies of Enlightenment thought.[4]

By the time the modernization discourse reached Iran, Enlightenment had long since effloresced in Western Europe and the United States. As such, when Prince 'Abbas Mirzá voiced his complaint of Iranian "backwardness"—along with the Iranian secular intellectuals and reformist ministers who followed suit in subsequent years—he was largely comparing Iran with those nations whose institutions had been shaped by Enlightenment thought.

Present-Day Theories of Modernization

In order to understand the demands of pro-modernizers in nineteenth century Iran, it is also useful to examine post-Enlightenment definitions of modernity. Among the earliest conceptions of modernity in the twentieth century was that articulated by Max Weber, who identified *rationalization*[5] as the crux and goal of modernization. He argued that modernization as a process of rationalization exists in four realms: 1) economics, such that the rational pursuit of profit and exploitation of labor has led to modern-day capitalism; 2) law, i.e., the codification and systemization of laws allowing for a calculable environment for economic activity; 3) intellectual and personal life, which has borne new forms of scientific thought and rational self-control; and 4) statecraft: public administration as a bureaucracy with specific ranks, spheres of competence, and educational qualifications.

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[4] Reill and Wilson, ix.

[5] Robert Bellah defines Weber's rationalization as "a process of systematically organizing all social relations so as to make them the most efficient possible means to maximizing wealth and/or power. Its characteristic institutions were the self-regulating market and the bureaucratic state" (Bellah, R., R. Madsen, W.M. Sullivan, A. Swindler, and S.M. Tipton, *The Good Society*. New York: Knopf, 1991, 233. Cited in: Takayama, K. Peter, "Rationalization of State and Society: A Weberian View of Early Japan." *Sociology of Religion* [1998, 59:1], 65-88.)

The definition of "modernity" expanded as twentieth- and twenty-first century sociologists debated its nature and basis. Zygmunt Bauman places modernity's origin in seventeenth-century Western Europe. He describes it as a period of profound socio-structural and intellectual transformation: he calls it a cultural project that achieved its maturity with the advent of the Enlightenment, in addition to being "a socially accomplished form of life"[6] that emerged with the advent of industrial society. Philip Selznick, on the other hand, marks modernity's advent with the rise of the industrial, commercial, urban society in the West from the 18th century. He also highlights the separation of spheres that were previously united—household and work, church and state, religion and community, ownership and management, education and parenting, law and morality, and private and public life—as breaks that emerged during the transition from traditional to modern society.[7] Anthony Giddens defines modernity as a "complex of institutions" that make up a society. Modernity, he states, is defined by the attitude that the world is subject to change through human intervention. Second, it is characterized by complex economic institutions (namely, the market economy and modes of production). Third, it bears a range of political institutions, most crucial of which are democracy and the nation-state.[8]

In the recent decades, however, this discussion has expanded. Sociologists, foremost among them S.N. Eisenstadt, have argued that modernity cannot be confined to one homogenous process. Rather, *multiple modernities* have emerged throughout the world, demonstrating the diversity of the modernization experience. This theory addresses the popular perspective that has long equated modernization with Westernization. Eisenstadt asserts that modernity is a

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[6] Zygmunt Bauman, *Modernity and Ambivalence* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1991), 4.
[7] Philip Selznick, *The Moral Commonwealth: Social Theory and the Promise of Community* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), 4.
[8] Anthony Giddens, *Conversations with Anthony Giddens* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998), 94.

continually advancing phenomenon, and as a response to societal problems, it consists of a multiplicity of cultural programs that vary in different regions, countries, and geographies. It therefore has *not* resulted in a single, homogenous civilization characterized by identical institutions that arose in the first modern societies. Similar to Giddens's assertion, Eisenstadt lays claim to man's autonomy as an individual actor, and asserts that society can be changed actively by individual humans. But he raises the argument that globalization has changed the idea of modernity, insofar as it has precipitated the decline of the nation-state's power over economic and political affairs, and as the locus of the program of modernity.[9]

IRAN'S MODERNIZATION DILEMMA

Nineteenth-century Iran was rife with debate on the nature of modernization, especially under the reign of Muhammad Sháh (1808-1831) and Násiri'd-Dín Sháh (1831-1896). During the nineteenth century, modernization's proponents took a number of robust initiatives, but alongside those calls for modernization were forces aiming to stem the tide of reform. Among the topics of debate were: What did it mean to be modern? How should a country go about modernization, and how quickly or slowly should reform proceed? Who stood to benefit from a modern society, and who stood to lose? Did modernization signify purely imitating the West, or was there room for indigenous reform? And, perhaps most significantly: Was modernization aligned with the tenets of Islam, or did it threaten indigenous tradition, culture, and religion?

The latter question was arguably at the heart of why attempts at reform faced serious challenges moving forward. This resulted in a "modernization dilemma" in Iran, which Monica Ringer defines as:

[9] S.N. Eisenstadt, "Multiple Modernities." *Daedalus*, 129 :1 (Winter 2000), 1-29.

> …the desire to adopt elements of modern [read European] technology and institutions, while at the same time safeguarding Iranian cultural and religious traditions…. At the core of this dilemma lie the issues of culture, tradition and identity. Reformers advocating modernization, and often themselves opposed to cultural Westernization, assumed the difficult task of distinguishing between the two, and thus of legitimating modernization.[10]

Yet it would be simplistic to assume that the will to reform derived from a desire to Westernize, and that those who opposed modernization did so on the sole basis that it was perceived to be anti-Islamic. On the contrary, many of the most vocal reformers were devout Muslims, and likewise, those who opposed modernization were not solely the product of the religious establishment. Rather, what may have been at the heart of the modernization dilemma was the notion of the power to be gained or lost as a result of reforms. In short, who won and who lost was at the core of the national debate. Reformists had to contend with two sources of power whose respective legitimacies, in some ways, were intertwined: the Qájár sovereigns, on the one hand, and the ulamá,[11] on the other.

Intertwined Legitimacies: The Safavid Contract

The linking of legitimacies between Iran's rulers and the 'ulamá dates back to the Safavid dynasty, which established Shí'ism as the official religion of Iran. It was at this juncture that the Shí'i 'ulamá established a theory of government which some have called the "Safavid Contract"[12]: while the 'ulamá would not regard the Safavid monarchy as truly legitimate, in the absence of the Hidden Imám,[13] the monarchy would be blessed as the most desirable form of

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[10] Ringer, 11.
[11] The religious class; specifically, the body of Muslim scholars who have completed formal training in Islamic disciplines.
[12] Vali Nasr, *The Shi'i Revival: How Conflicts Within Islam Will Shape the Future* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 2007), 75.
[13] The Hidden Imám (also known as the *Mahdi* or the Twelfth Imam): Shí'is believe that the line of imams, or leaders of Islam following the passing of the Prophet Muhammad, continued through the tenth century. According to Shí'i belief, in 939 C.E., the Twelfth Imam (Muhammad al-Mahdi) was withdrawn by God into a state of occultation in order to preserve his life. With the return of the Hidden Imam, the world would enter a period of divine justice. This reign of justice would continue until the return of Jesus and, according to Shí'i belief, the end of the world (Nasr, 67).

government. In return, the monarchs would commit to protecting and propagating the Shí'i faith in anticipation of the coming of the Hidden Imám.[14] In the Hidden Imám's absence, the mujtahids (Islamic scholars who were interpreters of the Sharí'a) were regarded as arbiters of social and legal matters. Therefore, a mujtahid's word was to be obeyed over that of the temporal ruler.[15] From that moment, the two institutions–monarchy and clergy–would dominate the socio-economic and political landscape of Iran.

THE MILIEU THAT SPARKED REFORM: BRITISH AND RUSSIAN INTERFERENCE

Of the myriad factors that triggered a more vigorous effort toward reform was the damaging effect of Russian and British rivalry over influence in Iran. Therefore, a major argument for reform in all sectors of society was based on the urgent appeal to free the country of foreign influence. The pro-reformist camp maintained that the rationalization and reform of Iran's institutions—and in some cases, removing control of institutions from the hands of Islamic clerics—was vital for its survival in a Western-dominated world. These cries often fell on deaf ears, as the government's corruption, mismanagement, and poor decisions made it possible for Western countries to take advantage of the weakened state and its resources.

The questions of reform and modernity grew more robust in the country's political and ideological discourse after its humiliating defeats in the Russo-Persian Wars (1803-15 and 1826-28) and the Anglo-Persian War (1856-57). The former resulted in the signing of the Treaty of Gulistán (1813), which stipulated that Iran cede forever its claim to the Caucasian provinces; and the Treaty of Turkamanchai (1828), which forced Iran to yield its power over Armenia and the

[14] Nasr, 72-75.
[15] Nikki Keddie and Mehrdad Amanat, "Iran Under the Later Qájárs, 1848-1922," *Cambridge History of Iran*, vol. 7, ed. P. Avery, G.R.G. Hambley, and C. Melville (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 177.

Caspian Sea to Russia. The Anglo-Persian defeat resulted in Iran's surrendering its claims over the city of Herat.[16]

Russia and Britain's constant interference consequently led to Iran's heavy economic dependence upon the West, triggering the decline of its native industries. The importation of cheaper products that were not subject to tariffs bred a balance of trade that shifted heavily in favor of Britain and Russia, the result of which was disastrous for Iran's local industries.[17] Later in the century, the Qájár monarchs encouraged Western intrusion through numerous concessions and negotiations with British and Russian parties to implement ostensible reforms within Iran. The Reuters Concession of 1872 and the Tobacco Concession of 1891 were undoubtedly the most controversial, both of which provoked severe discontent among Iranians.[18] Interestingly, women of the royal family played a prominent and vocal role in opposing both concessions. For example, following the granting of the Tobacco Concession, royal women led a boycott of tobacco in protest against the Tobacco Concession. In an act of defiance against the Shah and solidarity with the boycott, Anis al-Douleh—the wife of Násiri'd-Dín Sháh—prohibited the smoking of the water pipe in the harem. She later demanded the resignation of prime minister Mirza Husayn Khan due to his role in granting the Reuter concession.[19] The public outcry that resulted from each concession led the Shah to cancel them soon after their respective inceptions.

Russian and British intervention had two diverging outcomes. On the one hand, it engendered a widespread mistrust of modernization among many Iranians, who often linked

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[16] Gene R. Garthwaite, *The Persians* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2005), 192.
[17] Alessandro Bausani, *The Persians: From the earliest days until the twentieth century* (London: Book Club Associates, 1975), 168.
[18] The Reuter concession, instigated by Prime Minister Mírzá Husayn Khán and granted by Násiri'd-Dín Sháh to Baron Julius de Reuter, was to be a seventy-year concession giving Baron de Reuter the rights to develop Persia's natural resources, create a national bank, and to construct railways, irrigation works, and other infrastructure throughout Persia. The tobacco concession, secretly granted by Násiri'd-Dín Sháh to Major Talbot in 1891, would have given him a monopoly over the buying, selling, and manufacturing of tobacco in Persia (Bausani, 169).
[19] Guity Nashat, "Introduction," *Women in Iran from 1800 to the Islamic Republic,* ed. Lois Beck and Guity Nashat (Champaign, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2004), 14.

modernization with Westernization, and hence a loss of culture. For example, the Iranian government was reluctant to improve communications systems, fearing that it would further open the country to Europeans and would threaten their sovereignty.[20] Yet it also awakened among some the urgency for reform: that Iran's weakness in the face of foreign intervention was due to the fact that it was far behind the West in the realms of education, economy, governance, the rule of law, and the military.

Modernization as a Response to Western Encroachment

In the early years of the nineteenth century, Qájár sovereigns recognized the need for military reform and technological advancement for the purposes of territorial preservation and self-protection. The first response to this concern was the *Nezam-i-Jadíd*, Crown Prince 'Abbás Mirzá's program of defensive military reform. Under this program, which began in 1810, 'Abbás Mirzá called upon European military, medical, and technical experts to train his military.[21] In 1811, he dispatched the first of several groups of students to European universities so as to further glean insight from European knowledge and technology. Among the contributions these students made, upon returning to their country, was establishing the printing press, introducing modern sciences, and acquainting Iranians with conceptions of political reform, most crucially the concept of constitutional democracy and representative government.[22]

It became clear, however, that representative governance would not be feasible without an educated populace. In light of the fact that much of Iran's citizenry was uneducated, an attempt to do so would be premature. As a result, a number of educational reforms were initiated which prompted the creation of schools whose aim was to train technocrats and teach the modern sciences. The first and most prominent attempt in this regard was the establishment of Iran's

[20] Ann K.S. Lambton, *Qajar Persia: Eleven Studies* (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1987), 209.
[21] Ringer, 7-8.
[22] Lambton, 202.

first institution of higher education, the Dáru'l-Funún, by Amír-i-Kabír, a reformist prime minister under Násiri'd-Dín Sháh. An examination of his attempts at reform, which ultimately ended up being blocked by the Sháh himself, serves to illustrate the nature of the modernization dilemma in Iran.

Two Ministers' Modernizing Approach to Western Encroachment: Amír-i-Kabír and Mirza Husayn Khán

Two of the most notable reform-seeking ministers during the Qájár period arose during the rule of Násiri'd-Dín Sháh, both of whom also saw their demise at the hand of the very sovereign who appointed them. The first, Amír-i-Kabír, was named Prime Minister in 1848, until his furtively-executed death decreed by the Sháh in 1852.[23] The other, Mírzá Husayn Khán, was appointed in 1872, and ousted by Násiri'd-Dín Sháh a year later.[24]

Amír-i-Kabír

In the annals of Iranian history the name of Mirzá Taqí Khán, known as "Amír-i-Kabír" (1848-1852), has been associated with modernization, and he is recognized as one of the first vigorous reformers of his country. Amír-i-Kabír's progressive inclinations were a combination of a desire to see his country advance, a familiarity with Western notions, witnessing Russia's progress first-hand, and the Ottoman Empire's emphasis on discipline. Two formative experiences stand out as inspiring his ideas for reform. First, in 1828-29, he spent eighteen months spent in Moscow as a member of a Persian mission sent to Russia. There, he witnessed Russia's progress when visiting schools, military academies, scientific institutions, and factories.[25] Second, Amír-i-Kabír spent fours years in the Ottoman Empire a representative of

[23] Keddie and Amanat, 182.
[24] Ibid, 185-89.
[25] Guity Nashat, *The Origins of Modern Reform in Iran, 1870-80* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1982), 18.

the Erzurum Conference to settle border disputes between the Persians and Ottomans.[26] During his stay, the Ottomans were undergoing a period of vigorous military and administrative reform in what was known as the Tanzimat era. Amír-i-Kabír was influenced in particular by the reforms' emphasis on the secularization of Ottoman institutions, and this was later reflected in his efforts to remove Iran's clerical influence upon the state.

In many respects, Amír-i-Kabír embodied the notion of the modernization dilemma. He was a devout Muslim who respected Iran's Islamic institutions and values, and viewed his mission to modernize Iran as a religious duty; in other words, that Iran's national strength was linked with the well-being of Shí'i Islam. Nonetheless, Amír-i-Kabír also viewed the clerical establishment with suspicion and as a possible obstacle to his plans for reform. In this regard, he encapsulated the centuries-old debate within Iran between modernity and traditionalism, as his reformist instincts would now have to contend with his respect for tradition.[27]

His first notable reform was in the political and cultural arena. Amír-i-Kabír ordered the hiring of Austrian and Italian experts to reform Iran's military but was met by opposition from both the British and Russians. He then tackled the issue of putting Iran's fiscal house in order through tax reform.[28] The judiciary was strengthened and put under the control of government as a means to weaken the clergy. He also improved Iran's health system by implementing a law providing free public smallpox inoculation nationwide, and building the first government hospital and modern pharmacy.[29]

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[26] Abbas Amanat, *Pivot of the Universe: Nasir al-Din Shah Qajar and the Iranian Monarchy, 1831-1896* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 74.
[27] Fereydoun Adamiyat, *Amir Kabir and Iran* (Tehran: Kharazmi Publishing, 1961), 423.
[28] Afshin Molavi, *The Soul of Iran: A Nation's Journey to Freedom* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2005), 196.
[29] Shireen Mahdavi, "Shahs, Doctors, Diplomats and Missionaries," *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, 32, no. 2 (2005): 174.

Amír-i-Kabír's most notable reform was the establishment of Dáru'l-Funún, Iran's first higher education whose objective was to promote the dissemination of modern knowledge; notably, knowledge that was outside of the clergy's domain. It was also intended to produce a cadre of technocrats who would be able to carry out administrative reforms, as well as meet the diplomatic needs of Iran's increased contact with Europe. The Dáru'l-Funún opened in 1851 and taught courses in military science, engineering, mathematics, drafting, mining, physics, pharmacology, and medicine. Its departments were later absorbed by the University of Tehran when it was established in 1934.

Among Amír-i-Kabír's other fundamental reforms was the creation of Iran's first official newspaper, *Ruznámeh-ye Váqaye'-e Ettefáqiyyeh*. His two major purposes in establishing a newspaper was to enhance the level of knowledge among his countrymen concerning matters inside Iran and outside, and to print translations of scientific articles that appeared in Europe, the Ottoman Empire and Asia.[30] The translation and publication of books also fell to Amír-i-Kabír and another of his legacies. As part of his efforts to educate his countrymen, he created a translation bureau to translate books articles from European, Ottoman, Egyptian, and Indian newspapers.[31]

Amír-i-Kabír's crusade to weaken the power of the clergy as a means to advance his modernization agenda was partly responsible for his downfall. His policy on religion was based on two principles: to weaken the power of the clergy, and to deny them interference in government affairs in order to lessen their influence in the social and governmental spheres.[32] In a letter addressed to the British consul in Tabriz, he wrote that restricting the clergy's

[30] Ringer, 69.
[31] Husayn Mahbubi-Ardakani, *Tarikh-e Mo'assesat-e Tamaddoni-ye Jadid dar Iran* (Tehran: Tehran University Press, 1975), 251. From Ringer, 70.
[32] Lambton, 198,

engagement in political activity was necessary for his reform measures' success. He compared Iran's situation with that of the Ottoman Empire, stating: "it was only when the Ottoman government destroyed the dominance of the mullahs that it was able to revive its importance."[33] Three actions in particular provoked discontent among the 'ulama: fiscal reform, the restriction of *bast* (sanctuary or asylum), and the opening of the Dáru'l-Funún.

When Amír-i-Kabír rose to power, he concentrated on asserting the power of the central government. One means by which he did so was through fiscal reform, which initially involved reducing salaries and pensions. This affected the religious classes, some of whom had been given allowances under the government. As a result, they urged the 'ulamá to interfere, the most notable outcomes of which were the disturbances fomented by the Imám Jum'a of Isfahan, resulting in the murder of the deputy governor, and the plots hatched in Tehran to overthrow Amír-i-Kabír.[34] Second, under the reign of Muhammad Sháh, some efforts had been made to limit the rights of sanctuary, which in effect attacked the privileges of the 'ulamá, as sanctuary was mostly sought in mosques, shrines, and the houses of the 'ulamá. Given that Muhammad Sháh had failed to limit this practice, Amír-i-Kabír pursued it more vigorously, and his successors continued to do so after his death.[35] Finally, as mentioned earlier, the opening of the Dáru'l-Funún threatened the 'ulamá's position, given that it emerged as an alternative to the religious educational institutions under their control.

Amír-i-Kabír paid a price for his reformist instincts. Threatened by his rising influence, and encouraged by the dissatisfaction his reforms cultivated among groups wielding power

[33] Adamiyat, 50.
[34] Lambton, 287.
[35] Ibid, 289-90.

(including the 'ulamá), Násiri'd-Dín Sháh ordered the murder of Amír-i-Kabír at a public bath near Káshán, where he had spent his last days after being forced into exile.[36]

Mirza Husayn Khán

Following Amír-i-Kabír's death, the notion of reform was swept aside for approximately two decades within the court until the rise of Mírzá Husayn Khán. Husayn Khán was appointed as Minister of Justice by Násiri'd-Dín Sháh in 1871, and was named prime minister a year later.

Similar to Amír-i-Kabír, Mírzá Husayn Khán's years in Europe and Istanbul motivated his desire for reform in Iran. As a youth, he spent several years studying in France, which instilled in him an admiration of European civilization. For example, when he became prime minister, he made European clothing the official style of dress for all government employees.[37] Likewise, Husayn Khán spent twelve years under the influence of Western ideas while living in Istanbul, during which he sent a series of dispatches to Persia conveying the urgent need for reform. In these dispatches, his expressed his view that the Ottoman Empire's European-style reforms should serve as a model for Persia. Furthermore, while Násiri'd-Dín Sháh had expressed interest in reform in the decade after Amír-i-Kabír's death, by the 1860s, the Sháh had largely become disillusioned by or suspicious of reformers. As such, Husayn Khán's dispatches also conveyed his frustration at the governments' inaction in enacting reform. For example, in a dispatch to the foreign ministry of Iran, wrote:

> I know that what I wish for my country cannot be achieved overnight, and must be attained gradually. But the reason for my sadness is that no only have we made no effort in this direction yet, but that we do not even believe there is anything wrong with our state, or that our affairs need improvement.[38]

[36] Abbas Amanat, "The Downfall of Mirza Taqi Khan Amir Kabir and the Problem of Ministerial Authority in Qajar Iran," *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 23, no. 4 (1991): 592.
[37] Nashat, *The Origins of Modern Reform in Iran, 1870-80*, 27.
[38] Hamid Algar, *Religion and State in Iran, 1785-1906: The Role of the Ulama in the Qajar Period* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1969), 60-1.

Husayn Khán's dispatches to the Sháh betrayed his use of appealing to the Sháh's sense of pride. For example, in one dispatch, he wrote that while foreigners had displayed interest and optimism in Iran's future during his first years in Istanbul, he noted that this had changed in recent years:

> These nations have become disappointed with us and lost hope in the progress of our nation. They consider us devoid of civilization, they are no longer seeking our friendship and do not consider us worth of equality with the countries of Europe. In short, they consider us worthless, and whoever says the contrary is telling a lie.[39]

Politically, Husayn Khán aimed to centralize the power of the government, with the goal of curbing the Qájár governors' and 'ulamás' arbitrary power.[40] Mírzá Husayn Khán's attempts at cultural reform included exposing the Sháh to Western developments, which was manifested in 1873 with Násiri'd-Dín Sháh's first trip to Europe.[41] His economic and judicial reforms worked to curb the arbitrary judicial power of the 'ulamá, local lords, and governors over their subjects, by confining judicial power to the ministry of justice. He aimed to fight corruption within the armed forces, attempting to make the military more bureaucratic less personally-driven. The focus of Mírza Husayn Khán's views regarding education reform, similar to Amír-i-Kabír, was limited to improving leadership—i.e., that education reform was necessary in order to ameliorate Persia's crisis of leadership. Therefore, he believed that trained government cadres were necessary to treat the ailments afflicting Persia.[42]

Mírzá Husayn Khán's reforms were ultimately ineffective. As expected, Násiri'd-Dín Sháh, Qájár governors, and the conservative 'úlamá were displeased with his attempts to curb their power. After only a year in office, he was expelled from his post in 1873.[43]

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[39] Ann Lambton, "Persian Society under the Qajars," *Journal of the Royal Central Asian Society* (April 1961), 165.
[40] Keddie and Amanat, 186.
[41] Ibid, 188-89.
[42] Ringer, 10.
[43] Keddie and Amanat, 189.

FORCES OPPOSING MODERNIZATION

What held attempts at modernization back? At the root were vested interests in maintaining the *status quo* that preserved their power. Those particularly interested in maintaining the *status quo* were the Qájár sovereigns, especially Násiri'd-Dín Sháh, and the 'ulamá. The latter perceived that the proposed reforms would have taken away their power in important institutions, namely the legal and educational systems.

Násiri'd-Dín Sháh's Lack of Commitment

Násiri'd-Dín Sháh, whose rule dominated Iran throughout much of the nineteenth century, vacillated in his support of modernization in Iran. There were two major reasons why Násiri'd-Dín Sháh lacked commitment to, or sometimes opposed, reforms. First, any change in the current system would have threatened his own power, as he stood to lose power under a rationalized bureaucratic system. As such, he sometimes undermined or failed to support reforms and reform-minded ministers from whom he stood to lose power and authority. The Sháh's ouster of the reform-minded Mirzá Husayn Khán, and his execution of Prime Minister Amír-i-Kabír, were motivated both by threats to personal power and by vocalized discontent from traditional elites and the 'ulamá, who stood to lose from their reforms. Second, Násiri'd-Dín Sháh had to contend with traditional sources of power and opposition who likewise stood to lose power from reforms. For example, the Sháh was sensitive to the clergy's fear of losing power, given that his legitimacy rested on continued support by the clerical establishment. Because opponents of reform couched themselves as defenders of Islam, and therefore of Iran, the Sháh hesitated to support reforms. Furthermore, he believed that his nation's survival

depended on ensuring a balance of power between Britain and Russia in Iran, and therefore continued taken up by previous sovereigns of playing the two powers off of each other.[44]

Despite all this, Násiri'd-Dín Sháh delighted in the West, as evidenced by the travelogues chronicling his three visits to Europe, and was eager to refute the notion that Iran was "uncivilized and barbarian."[45] Besides betraying an embarrassing level of superficiality (Abbas Milani notes, for example, that "the question of women permeates, often in a tragicomic manner, much of the fiber of the text"[46]), Násiri'd-Dín Sháh's travelogues also reflect a somewhat simplistic awe for the novelty of European innovations and ideas.[47]

Clerical Grounds for Opposition to Reforms

While some clerics were friendly toward reform, the clergy by and large opposed the modernization efforts, which were perceived to be secular in nature and which therefore threatened those clerics who derived power from the *status quo*. Opposition was not rooted in how reform impinged on Iran's Islamic values, but on how the program of modernization would restrict and curtail the power of the clergy.[48] Maintaining the status quo became a fundamental goal of a majority of clerics and any attempt by the monarchy at reform was met with suspicion and skepticism. Given the Qájárs' dependence on the 'ulamá for legitimacy, the level of clerical opposition therefore influenced the monarchs' commitment to reforms.

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[44] Ringer, 259.
[45] Bakhash, 134.
[46] Abbas Milani, "Nasir al-Din Shah in Farang," in *Lost Wisdom: Rethinking Modernity in Iran*, ed. Abbas Milani (Washington, D.C.: Mage Publishers, 2004), 57.
[47] George Curzon describes that upon Násiri'd-Dín Sháh's returns from his various European excursions, he would become entranced with certain new-fangled inventions or modern notions, but would never stay focused long enough to follow them through. "Nothing comes of any of these brilliant schemes," Curzon wrote, "and the lumber-rooms of the palace are not more full of broken mechanism and discarded bric-a-brac than are the pigeon-holes of the government bureaux of abortive reforms and dead fiascoes" (George N. Curzon, *Persia and the Persian Question*, vol. 1 (London: Frank Cass & Co. Ltd), 398-9).
[48] Algar, 258; and Willem Floor, "Change and development in the judicial system of Qajar Iran (1800-1925)," *Qajar Iran*, ed. Edmund B. Bosworth and Carole Hillenbrand (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1983), 113.

Modernization involved the emergence of something "quintessentially 'new'"[49] rather than reviving disintegrating or imperfect institutions. Among the most prominent proposed reforms were the secularization of the judiciary and the educational system, universal literacy, the training of a civil service, fiscal reform in the form of taxation, and, eventually, a constitutional government. Many of these reforms had the effect of wresting certain powers and responsibilities from the clergy, and were therefore met with opposition. For example, governmental employees and political elites had been primarily educated at religious schools and seminaries. An attempt to reform the educational system by establishing institutions to train technocrats (such as the Dáru'l-Funún) would pose a threat to the clerics' control over the education establishment.[50] Similarly, the proposed judicial reforms would extend the jurisdiction of 'urfí courts (courts of customary law administered by civilian authorities) at the expense of shar' courts (courts of religious law administered by the 'ulamá), and thus would have implications for functions traditionally held by 'ulamá.[51]

In order to understand the nature of the 'ulamá's opposition to reform, it is helpful to look at the case of Mirza Husayn <u>Kh</u>án's proposed reforms as prime minister. His aim to strengthen central government would have necessarily curbed the power of the 'ulamá, which had heretofore claimed independence from the state. He stated: "As for the mullas, I swear that they were never treated with as much respect as they were in the day of my [prime ministership]. But I did not permit them to interfere with the affairs of the government."[52] For example, Mirza Husayn <u>Kh</u>án's judicial reforms included the establishment of several specialized courts, which included a legislative court institute regulations equally applicable to every case and to all

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[49] Ringer, 8.
[50] Mohammad Tavakoli, "The Constitutionalist Language and Imaginary," in *Iran's Constitutional Revolution*. <http://iranianstudies.ca/Const_Revolution/background.html>.
[51] Bakhash, 3 and 83.
[52] Nashat, *The Origins of Modern Reform in Iran, 1870-80*, 48.

classes. He also intended to formulate laws pronouncing the equality of all Iranian citizens—Muslim, Christian, Jew, and Zoroastrian. This would have symbolized to the ‘ulamá the right of the central government to legislate and, implicitly, the central government’s closer control of the ‘ulamá by virtue of restricting the jurisdiction of the religious courts.[53]

Given the ‘ulamá’s daily access to the wider population, the clergy had an effective platform by which to discourage reform. One of the most effective means they did so was through the Friday prayer sermon, whereby the Imám Jum’a of a city—the most important religious dignitary—would rally the crowds against such reforms as the modernization of the school system. The famous Muslim preacher Yazdi, for example, instigated riots that led to some reformist schools being destroyed. Likewise, in 1903, religious authorities in Najaf issued a fatwa forbidding Muslims to attend schools that included foreign language instruction.[54]

It should be noted however that there were lower-ranking members of the ‘ulamá who did participate in the nineteenth century reform movement.[55] In addition to these clerics, a number of activists and thinkers arose who aimed to reconcile modernization and Islam. The following section will discuss some of the most notable of those proposing an “indigenous solution,” highlighting the ways in which they argued that Islam and modernization were in fact mutually reinforcing.

[53] Ibid, 47-8.
[54] Nashat, *The Origins of Modern Reform in Iran, 1870-80*, 267.
[55] Monica Ringer highlights in particular the participation of Malek al-Motakallemin, Jamál al-Dín Vá’ez, Hadi Najmabadi, and Mírzá Hasan Roshdiyyeh in the educational reform movement (Ringer, 265).

THE "INDIGENOUS SOLUTION": RECONCILING MODERNIZATION, TRADITION, AND ISLAM

The last two decades of the nineteenth century witnessed a rise in thinkers who attempted to address the modernization dilemma, i.e. the perceived tension between modernization and tradition. I will use Monica Ringer's term "indigenous solution" to describe the body of literature proposed by these thinkers.[56] The common thread of the proposed "indigenous solution" was that reforms would strengthen Iran and hence invigorate Islam and honor the Qur'án. They argued that reforms could be selectively adapted to suit Iranian culture and traditions and did not necessarily imply the wholesale adoption of European institutions and culture. While their urgings did not bear fruit in the nineteenth century, they influenced the discourse that culminated in the Constitutional Revolution of 1905-7, which was ultimately successful in garnering the support of members of the 'ulamá.

Mírzá Yusef Khán Mostasharu'd-Dowleh

In his essay titled "Yek Kalameh" ("One Word"), published in 1871, Mírzá Yusef Khán Mostasharu'd-Dowleh sought to prove that Islam embodied the principles underlying European constitutional law, and concludes that Europe's progress could be attributed to government based on the rule of law. He urged the adoption of twenty-one essential principles of French law to serve as the basis of Persian law. These principles included: equality before the law, security of life and property, freedom of press and assembly, government by the will of the people and through elected representatives, separation of the legislative and executive powers, security of tenure for judges, trial by jury and the prohibition of torture, the right to work, free education for those unable to afford it, progressive taxation, and the publication of an annual budget by the

[56] Ringer writes of their position: "They addressed problems of cultural adaptation in an attempt to arrive at a viable synthesis—in effect an indigenous solution" (Ringer, 221).

government. Yusef Khán then argued that these principles were in line with Islamic precepts, stating:

> If you study the contents of the codes of France and of the other civilized states, you will see how the evolution of the ideas of nations and the experience of the peoples of the world confirms the *shari'a* of Islam, and you will understand that whatever good laws there are in Europe, and through which these nations have achieved the highest levels of progress, your Prophet set down and established for the people of Islam 1,280 years ago.

He asserted, for example, that legislative assemblies could be justified on the basis of a hadíth requiring leaders to consult others in matters of administration. He justified separation of powers by maintaining that in Islamic history, certain responsibilities were assigned to mujtahids and muftis, while valís and governors were given other duties. Progressive income tax was legitimized as another form of the requirement to pay *zakat.*[57]

Abu Taleb Behbehani

Abu Taleb Behbehani's 1877 reform text, "Minhaj al-A'la" ("The Lofty Way"), emphasized a constitutional monarchy in light of the absolutist government's failure to uphold liberty, freedom, security, and justice. A former government official who had lived in Egypt and the Ottoman Empire, and who had been familiar with some of the Tanzimat reform writings, Behbahani linked Iran's advancement with the well-being of Islam. He argued that a failure to reform would be to the detriment of Iran, and therefore Islam, and urged reforms in education, the law, and the sciences. While his proposed reforms in the educational system include traditional subjects such as *fiqh* (religious principle), *kalam* (speech), and ethics, Behbehani maintained that an emphasis on *fiqh* in the present educational system had subsequently caused other sciences to be neglected. This was to the detriment of Islam, he argued—as without advances in governance, astronomy, agriculture, commerce, industry, and crafts, Iran (and

[57] Bakhash, 38-41.

therefore Islam) would suffer. With regard to reforms in the law, he stressed that any adopted laws (*qanun*) must be in harmony with the principles of Sharí'a, and that *qanun* and Sharí'a are indeed compatible. Furthermore, he asserted that European legal system was not Christian *per se*, stating that there is no such thing as Christian law. Instead, the establishment of personal security, justice, and freedom as protected by the state were at the heart of Europe's advancement. The implementation of these principles was therefore imperative for Persia's advancement.[58]

Hajj Zayn al-Ábedín Marágheh'í: The Travel Diary of Ibrahim Beg

Published anonymously some time between 1895 and 1902, Hajj Zayn al-Ábedín Marágheh'í's highly influential novel, *Siyahatnameh-ye Ibrahim Beg* (*The Travel Diary of Ibrahim Beg*) is a fictional account of the travels of an expatriate Persian named Ibrahim Beg. Born and raised in Cairo, Ibrahim Beg grows up listening to his father's wistful stories of his homeland, and instills in his son a love for his native country. Upon visiting Persia, however, Ibrahim Beg is struck by the poverty, corruption, oppression, and religious hypocrisy that afflict the country.[59]

Through the words of Ibrahim Beg, Marágheh'í made a case for modernizing while maintaining cultural integrity. He suggested a careful and selective adaptation of European institutions, maintaining that modernization was distinct from Westernization. In terms of legal and government reforms, he stated that a European-style constitution was not contradictory to Islam, and that given that a constitution's intent is to protect the country, it therefore protects the Sharí'a as well. Like Mírzá Yusef Khán Mostasharu'd-Dowleh, Marághehí also argued that the fundamental principles of a European-style constitution are of Islamic origin and hence should

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[58] Ringer, 223-6.

[59] Zayn al-Ábedín Marágheh'í, *The Travel Diary of Ibrahim Beg*. Translated from the Persian by James D. Clark. (Costa Mesa, CA: Mazda Publishers, 2006).

be embraced by the Persian people. Finally, Marágheh'í, through the words of a wise man in the novel, used Japan as an exemplar of adapting European-style educational and political with the effect of strengthening indigenous customs and religion.[60]

Abd al-Rahím Talebof

Among Abd al-Rahím Talebof's central points was the need for a strong rule of law in order to preserve Persian, and hence Islamic, integrity. He asserted that absolute monarchy resulted in oppression and injustice, and therefore, a constitutional monarchy was needed. There was room for Sharí'a in this system, maintaining that just as body and soul cannot exist without one other, Iran likewise needed both religious and temporal legal systems. The establishment of a constitution would therefore be of benefit to Iran, as it would help maintain national honor and therefore empower the Sharí'a and preserve the honor of the Qur'án. He also asserted that European social and political institutions should be selectively adapted to the needs of the country. In addition, modernization would result in Persians becoming more independent (hence relying less on foreign imports), and thus he urged the strengthening of indigenous capacities and self-reliance.[61]

The attempts by these "bridge-builders" to lessen the chasm between modernity and traditionalism would not impact nineteenth century Iran in the manner that its adherents had hoped for. Nonetheless, they lay important groundwork for the intellectual rationale leading to Iran's Constitutional Revolution, a watershed moment in Iranian history that marked the advent of women's participation in their country's social and political discourse.

[60] Ringer, 229-30.
[61] Ibid, 231-8.

CHAPTER 2
THE STATUS OF WOMEN IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

The nineteenth century debate on modernity did not, for the most part, consider the status of women. Centuries-old practices that subordinated the rights and position of women to men persisted throughout the 1800s. Yet while the conversation on modernization and reform did not seriously discuss the status quo regarding females, some women began to question the status quo regarding their rights and position. Thus, just as the modernization debate paved the way for the Constitutional Revolution of 1906-11, so too were the seeds of women's advancement sown in the latter half of the nineteenth century.

The purpose of this chapter is to examine the salient features of women's status in nineteenth-century Iran, beginning with a discussion of the general features that characterized the lives of Iranian females. After considering the general status of women in the nineteenth century, this chapter will turn to a discussion of Iran's first feminists: Táhirih, whose commitment to the Bábí religion caused her to be put to death; Bibi Khanum Astarabadi, known for her treatise *The Vices of Men*, a response to a widely-read commentary penned by a Qajar prince called *The Correction of Women*; and the Qajar princess Taj al-Saltaneh, whose famed memoirs are filled with feminist content. These three women came from three different backgrounds, but all insisted, in different ways, on the need for women's advancement in Iran, and may have paved the way for a shift in thinking in Iran about the status of women. Finally, the chapter will discuss protests as one of the ways in which women were permitted to participate openly in the public sphere in the latter half of the nineteenth century. These protests are important to note because they likely set a precedent for the manner in which women participated in the Constitutional Revolution.

THE GENERAL STATUS OF WOMEN IN NINETEENTH CENTURY IRAN

Mansoureh Ettehadieh writes that a woman in nineteenth century Iran "was considered as half a child who needed to be looked after all her life."[62] Whether or not this held true for all Iranian women, nearly all women faced far more restrictions than men. For urban women, their daily lives were characterized by seclusion, and were limited to the home and centered on taking care of their children and husbands. Rural women had a bit more freedom, and were able to work alongside their husbands in the fields. Some (mostly lower- and middle-class women) had the opportunity to engage in paid work, but these were usually menial jobs. Education was only open to a select few women.

Veiling and Seclusion

Women's relative obscurity and seclusion began under the Safavid dynasty, with the declaration of Shí'i Islam as the official religion of Iran in 1501. Mujtahids,[63] who constituted the religious establishment of the newly Shí'i state, solidified this view as set forth in Quránic interpretations regarding the status of women.[64] Some of the reasons for women's forced seclusion was a desire to keep women guarded from contact with men and the increased importance placed on women's work inside the home.[65] These factors, combined with the gradual rise of urbanization of Iran during the Qajar period, intensified women's veiling and seclusion during the Qajar period.[66]

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[62] Mansoureh Ettehadieh, "The Origin and Development of the Women's Movement in Iran, 1906-41," in *Women in Iran from 1800 to the Islamic Republic* (Champaign, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2004), eds. Lois Beck and Guity Nashat, 85-6.
[63] Interpreters of Islamic law.
[64] Shireen Mahdavi, "The Position of Women in Shi'a Iran: View of the *'Ulama*" in *Women and the Family in the Middle East: New Voices of Change*, ed. Elizabeth Warnock Fernea (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1985), 255.
[65] Guity Nashat, Introduction to *Women and Revolution in Iran* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1983), ed. Guity Nashat, 9-10.
[66] Shireen Mahdavi, "Women and Ideas in Qájár Iran," *Asian and African Studies* 19 (1985): 187.

While elite women dressed richly inside the home, out of the home, women of all social groups wore similar dress: a *chádor*, or dark mantle that covered their heads and fell to their knees, with a white veil sewn to the mantle at their forehead, covering their face.[67] One way of punishing a woman was to display her uncovered in public.[68]

Some urban women met their needs with the outside world through "brokeresses," most of whom were Jewish women. These women wore chádors but did not veil their faces, and they were able to walk through the streets and speak with male family members. They brought items to the house to sell to women, found husbands for girls, and were often the only source of news to household women. Some brokeresses were used to conduct clandestine liaisons in exchange for large sums of money, but were also entrusted by wealthy families to conduct other deals.[69]

Seclusion and veiling was not as strictly enforced among rural women, largely due to the role they played in their communities' economies. The rural economy necessitated women's participation in a variety of work outside the home—namely, agricultural work, making dairy products, and textile production. Women in the Gilan province rarely veiled their faces and often tucked their garments thigh-high when engaging in agricultural work, such as weeding and rice-cutting.[70] Tribal women in the Fars province did not wear the veil.[71] By the mid-nineteenth century, rural women were seen unveiled and working alongside men in the fields.[72] Guity Nashat suggests that the European market may have had an effect on rural women's participation in the labor force and, hence, their greater freedom in relation to urban women. With a rise in

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[67] Augustus Henry Mounsey, *A Journey Through the Caucuses and the Interior of Persia* (London: Smith, Elder & Co., 1872), 158-9.
[68] Vanessa Martin, *The Qajar Pact: Bargaining, Protest, and the State in Nineteenth Century Persia* (London, UK: I.B. Tauris, 2005), 96.
[69] Badr ol-Moluk Bámdád, *From Darkness Into Light: Women's Emancipation in Iran* (Hicksville, NY: Exposition Press), translated by F.R.C. Bagley, 13-14.
[70] Martin, 96.
[71] Ibid.
[72] Lady Mary Leonora Woulfe Sheil, *Glimpses of Life and Manners in Persia* (London: John Murray, 1856), 144.

European demand for Iranian agricultural products and handicrafts (particularly rugs)—the latter which were mostly produced by females—and as incomes grew from this demand, this may have affected the degree to which women had to abide by the practice of seclusion.[73]

Segregation of Sexes

Urban homes were divided into two sections: the outer apartments (*biruni*) were for the male head of household and the male servants, and the inner apartments (*andaruni*) for the wives and maids. Ladies passing through the (men's) outer quarters were required to do so quickly, dressed in a chádor covering their entire body.[74] Given that unrelated women lived in most households, men and women ate separately.[75] Village homes did not have the *andaruni* and *biruni* of urban homes, for the most part, and women and men were therefore not segregated in the home.[76]

In the harems[77] of the ruling class, eunuchs were often employed and served as intermediaries, carrying messages between both sides of the household. When the master of the house wanted to enter the inner apartment, custom dictated that he should cough several times and say *Yá Alláh* ("O God") before crossing the threshold with his eyes cast down.[78]

The segregation of the sexes was likewise mandatory in public. For example, regulations in Tehran required that, on busy streets, it was illegal for men and women to walk on the same side of the street after 4:00 p.m. If a woman was required to cross to the other side in order to reach her home or another place she had to go to, she had to get permission from a police

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[73] Nashat, Introduction to *Women and Revolution in Iran*, 15-16.
[74] Bamdad, 12-13.
[75] Guity Nashat, Introduction to *Women in Iran from 1800 to the Islamic Republic* (Champaign, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2004), eds. Lois Beck and Guity Nashat, 16.
[76] Nashat, Introduction to *Women in Iran from 1800 to the Islamic Republic*, 17-18.
[77] I.e., the permanent wives and temporary wives of the ruling class, who lived in a secluded quarter of the home (A. Shapur Shahbazi and Anna Vanzan, "Harem," in *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, 6 March 2012 <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/harem>.
[78] Bamdad, 12-13.

officer.[79] Similarly, men and women—even if related—were forbidden from riding in the same droshky, a type of horse-drawn cab used for passenger transport in Tehran. No exceptions were made, even in cases of emergency.[80]

Nonetheless, an exception to the rules of segregation were made on the occasion of the anniversary of the Imam Husayn's martyrdom, the most important Shí'i holiday, when wives were allowed to sit alongside or behind men in recitations commemorating his death. They were expected to wail and beat their heads and chests passionately on these occasions.[81]

Marriage Practices

Shí'i Islam recognized two types of marriage: permanent (*nikáh*) and temporary (*mut'a* or *sigheh*). Most marriages were of the former; only rulers and some princes wealthy men took temporary wives. The Shí'i practice of "temporary marriage" is based on an interpretation of a single line in the Qurán: "Then as to those whom you profit by [marrying] [*istam-ta'tum*], give them their dowries as appointed."[82] But according to Shireen Mahdavi,

> There is great difference of opinion over this verse, as some Shi'a interpreters actually read or add words to the verse that the standard Sunni interpreters do not accept. The issue revolves partly around the meaning of the Koranic word *istamta'tum* (from which the word *mut'ah* is derived) whose connotation is related to the idea of "seeking pleasure." After this word, an expression denoting time (*ila ajal musamma,* 'or a specified period') is sometimes added as a variant reading of the Koranic verse.[83]

While marriage was a woman's major life option at the time, she was not considered an equal partner in the institution. Child and forced marriages were normal practice. To voice opposition to such practices would place an individual at risk of being accused of being an atheist and

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[79] Zorah Khanoum Heidary, "The Actual Feminism," *Equal Rights*, November 13, 1926, 315. Cited in Eliz Sanasarian, *The Women's Rights Movement in Iran: Mutiny, appeasement, and Repression from 1900 to Khomeini* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1982), 14.
[80] Bamdad, 16.
[81] Ibid, 13.
[82] Qur'án, surah IV verse 24. Quoted in Mahdavi, "The Position of Women in Shi'a Iran," 263.
[83] Mahdavi, "The Position of Women in Shi'a Iran," 263.

enemy of Islam.[84]

While a man could marry at any age, a woman was considered old when she reached menopause.[85] The practice of polygyny allowed for men to have up to four permanent wives at a time. Interpretations of the following Qur'ánic verse have been used to justify polygyny, though many have argued that the verse in reality does not lend itself to justifying the practice:[86]

> Marry as many women as you wish, two or three or four. If you fear not to treat them equally, marry only one. Indeed you will not be able to be just between your wives even if you try.[87]

According to Islamic law, men have the right to divorce wives, in which case men would have custody of children (neither did women have custody of her children when her husband died).[88] It was not uncommon for a woman to be thrown out of the home but refused divorce.[89]

A woman's life was so focused on marriage that a mother prepared for her daughter's marriage from birth.[90] According to the observations of an American missionary to Iran, "To remain unwedded seems to a Persian woman a sin, a thwarting of the divine purpose of her nature."[91] While the statement may suffer from the limitations of an outsider's perspective, it is nonetheless bolstered by other facts and evidence regarding the realities of marriage and family life for Iranian women at the time.

Marriages were usually arranged, with each family investigating the financial worth and moral rectitude of the young man and women. A young man's sister and mother (or other female

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[84] Sanasarian, 14.
[85] Guity Nashat, "Marriage in the Qajar Period," in *Women in Iran from 1800 to the Islamic Republic*, 43.
[86] See, for example: Mahdavi, "The Position of Women in Shi'a Iran," 262; and Nawal el-Saadawi, *The Nawal el-Saadawi Reader* (New York, NY: St. Martin's Press, 1997), 80
[87] Qur'án, surah IV, verse 3, in: el-Saadawi, 80.
[88] Mansoureh Ettehadieh, "The Origin and Development of the Women's Movement in Iran, 1906-41," in Beck and Nashat, 86.
[89] Martin, 97.
[90] Guity Nashat, "Women and Pre-Revolutionary Iran: A Historical Overview," in *Women and Revolution in Iran,* 19.
[91] Samuel Graham Wilson, *Persian Life and Customs*, 3rd ed. (New York: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1895), 261.

relatives) would call upon a young woman's home, usually learning about her through a marriage broker. The young woman would be brought into the room and put on display, and the callers would eye her and exchange a few words to make sure she was not deaf or mute, and usually removed a part of her head scarf to make sure that she was not balding. They would then return home and give their assessment to the young man about his potential bride.[92] In marriage, a groom was often permitted a glimpse of his bride's face before marriage.[93]

After marriage, a woman received a new name, usually containing the word áqa (i.e. "mister"), which enhanced her dignity and prestige. But, she was usually called by the name "Mother of [Son's name]," e.g. Naneh Hasan [Hasan's mama].[94]

Household Life

Many wealthy and middle-class families lived in extended patriarchal households, headed by the oldest male family member. His decisions were to be obeyed by all, and he was responsible for mediating minor family disputes (38). That said, children treated both mothers and fathers with great respect. C.J. Wills, who served as a physician in Iran in 1870s, wrote in his memoirs:

> An undutiful son or daughter is hardly known in the country…. No act of serious import is ever undertaken without the advice of the mother; no man would think, for instance, of marrying contrary to his mother's advice; and by the very poorest the support of their parents would never be looked on as a burden.[95]

Even Fath Ali Shah would, when visiting his mother, bow to her and only sit upon obtaining her permission. That said, technically, the father was the ultimate source of authority in the family. In the event of his death or absence, the eldest son was next in line as household head.[96]

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[92] Bamdad, 11.
[93] Charles James Wills, *Persia as It Is*, (London: Sampson Low, Marston, Searle & Rivington, 1886), 55.
[94] Bamdad, 22.
[95] Charles James Wills, *The Land of the Lion and the Sun* (London: Ward, Lock, & Co., 1891), 314.
[96] Nashat, 39.

Women were responsible for managing household activities, including the finances. Meal preparation took much of a woman's time. She would send her servants to stores for provisions. Poor women purchased food supplies from street vendors that sold their supplies door-to-door.[97]

Education

The overall literacy rate during the nineteenth century was around five percent, and the rate among women was lower;[98] one source states that by 1925, only three percent of Iranian women were literate.[99] There were several factors discouraging women to receive an education. First, despite the stipulation in the Qur'án that it is a duty of both Muslim men and women to receive an education, many clerical leaders emphasized that female literacy was contrary to the teachings of Islam and would pose a threat to society.[100] When a female was educated, she was usually only able to read—this to prevent them from writing love letters to men.[101] Second, even if she was able to receive an education, the lack of opportunities for paid work open to women discouraged them from continuing their schooling after marriage.[102] Given the fact that marriage was seen as a female's most viable economic option, and that to remain unmarried was seen as a violation of her life purpose, many families (particularly those with the means to educate their children) did not take girls' education seriously.[103]

Nonetheless, a minority of girls and women had the opportunity to receive an education. Education was relatively common among female members of families of the ruling class,

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[97] Nashat, "Women and Pre-Revolutionary Iran," in *Women and Revolution in Iran*, 20.
[98] Martin, 98
[99] Pari Shaykh al-Islami, *Zanan-i Ruznameh Negar va Andishmand-i Iran* [Iranian Women Authors and Scholars] (Tehran: Shaykh al-Islami, 1972), 90-91. Cited in Sanasarian, 12.
[100] Sanasarian, 13-14.
[101] Ettehadieh, 85-6
[102] Nashat, "Women and Pre-Revolutionary Iran," in *Women and Revolution in Iran,*19.
[103] Nashat, Introduction to *Women in Iran from 1800 to the Islamic Republic*, 16.

aristocracy, high officials, ‘ulamá, and merchants. Religious education was prioritized, followed by Persian classical literature.[104] Women and girls from elite families learned how to read and write from fathers or husbands or, in aristocratic homes, from reliable elderly private tutors.[105] Bamdad writes that the knowledge imparted to elite women “had a more frilly and recreation character than the subject matter taught in the old-style *maktabs*,” or religious schools to which the ‘ulamá and non-aristocratic merchants sent their daughters.[106]

Mirza Baji, the secretary to Amin Aqdas (one of Nasir-i-Din Shah’s wives), was one such women who had been educated in the *maktabs* as a child. She conducted correspondence with notables on the Amin Aqdas’s behalf.[107] Daughters of ‘ulamá families were also, when they were young, able to study alongside male family members. As they grew older, they were able to join classes held by religious scholars—but were expected to sit behind a screen.[108]

In the harems of the Qajar shahs and contemporary grandees, there existed a *mulla-báji* or *mirzá-bájí*, a female religious instructor who gave the harem’s women lessons on religion, and organized and facilitated their performance of ritual duties. She also, if she was able, taught them to read and write. Some of these women were famous for their accomplishments, especially in calligraphy. For example, Mirzá Máh-Sharaf Khanúm, known for her penmanship, wrote most of the government’s decrees in her own hand.[109] Lady Mary Sheil, the wife of a British minister in the court of the Shah, noted that literacy skills were “so common [among women in the royal family] that they themselves conduct their correspondence

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[104] Ibid, 15.
[105] Bamdad, 19; Martin, 98; and Sheil, 146.
[106] Bamdad, 19.
[107] Mahdavi, “Reflections in the Mirror: How each Saw Each Other: Women in the Nineteenth Century,” in *Women in Iran from 1800 to the Islamic Republic*, 75.
[108] Nashat, Introduction to *Women in Iran from 1800 to the Islamic Republic*, 15.
[109] Bamdad, 20.

without the customary aid of a meerza, or secretary."[110]

Paid Work

Some women were able to work outside the home, though these jobs were limited to lower- and middle-class women. Most women who worked were domestic servants or wet nurses who worked for low wages (in the late nineteenth century, most female servants received the low wage of three *tomans* a year); their wages were mostly given to their families.[111] Others were employed as teachers of small children, midwives, and bathhouse attendants; women also engaged in spinning, carpet weaving, textile weaving, and embroidery.[112] They were maltreated and had little protection in society.[113] Rural women, while contributing to the economy through farm and other labor, did not receive direct wages.[114]

There is evidence that in the early nineteenth century, there were females who worked as dancers and "votaries of pleasure" (most likely prostitutes), who paid among the highest taxes to the government. In his 1807 travelogue of his tour of the city of Shiraz, Edward Scott Waring wrote that these "votaries of pleasure" "exercise their professions under the immediate patronage of the governor; their names, ages, &c. are carefully registered, and if one should die or marry, another instantly supplies her place."[115]

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[110] Sheil, 146.
[111] Guity Nashat, "Marriage in the Qajar Period," in Beck and Nashat, *Women in Iran from 1800 to the Islamic Republic*, 40.
[112] Mansoureh Ettehadieh, *Inja Tehran ast* (Tehran: 1377), 262; and Nilufar Kasra and Khorsow Mutazed, *Siyasat va Haramsara: Zan dar 'Asr-i Qajar* [Politics and the Harem Institution: Women During the Qajars] (Tehran: Elmi Publications, 2000), 41. Cited in Martin, 98.
[113] Ettehadieh, "The Origin and Development of the Women's Movement in Iran," in Beck and Nashat, *Women in Iran from 1800 to the Islamic Republic*, 86.
[114] Guity Nashat, "Marriage in the Qajar Period," in Nashat, *Women in Iran from 1800 to the Islamic Republic*, 40.
[115] Edward Scott Waring, *A Tour to Sheeraz, by the Route of Kazroon and Feerozabad* (London: W. Bulmer and Co., 1807), 80.

Property Ownership

While Sharí'a law gave women the right to own and control property, only one percent of women in Iran owned houses in the nineteenth century, with an even smaller percentage owning shops.[116] With regards to inheritance, daughters received half of their brothers' inheritance share. A woman with children inherited one quarter of her husband's estate, while a widowed woman without children received one-eighth of his inheritance.[117]

Participation in Legal System

It is commonly believed that in the late nineteenth century, the law considered women immature and childlike in conducting their legal affairs. However, it was not uncommon for women to use the legal system to their advantage, and to stand up for their rights.[118] In her examination of legal contracts made by women and registered in the office of a prominent religious figure in Tehran, Mansoureh Ettehadieh found that while women enjoyed freedom of action in commercial activities, they faced more constraints when dealing with legal issues pertaining to their personal lives. According to these contracts, women could buy, sell, or rent homes and other types of property, and could lend and borrow money.

Conversely, the law often treated women as minors when it came to their marital relations, as marriages were treated as contracts as registered in religious courts.[119] That said, while a woman was subordinate to her husband under Islamic law, her wealth was separated from her husband's assets. The bridewealth paid by the groom belonged completely to the wife, and this provided poor women a safeguard against divorce. Men had to pay the unpaid portion

[116] Ettehadieh, *Inja Tehran ast*, 261. Cited in Martin, 96.
[117] Martin, 96
[118] Ibid, 97.
[119] Mansoureh Ettehadieh, Elham Malekzadeh, Maryam Ameli-Rezaei, and Janet Afary, "Uncovering Women and Gender in Qajar Archives of Iran," in *Contesting Archives: Finding Women in the Sources*, eds. Nupur Chaudhuri, Sherry J. Katz, and Mary Elizabeth Perry (Champaign, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2010), 157-8.

upon divorce.[120]

IRAN'S FIRST FEMINISTS

While the women's movement did not begin in earnest until the second decade of the twentieth century, there existed several women during the nineteenth century who openly questioned the status of women in Iran. Among the most prominent of these women are Táhirih, the Qajar princess Taj al-Saltaneh, and Bibi Khanum Astarabadi. These women came from different social classes and circumstances, but all are notable for having been among the first of their sex to openly express feminist ideas.

Táhirih (Qurratu'l-Ayn)

The story of the rise of women's emancipation in Iran nearly always begins with the story of Táhirih (1817/8-1852). Widely regarded as Iran's first feminist, Táhirih was unique in her outspokenness and her courage in a time and place where women were secluded from public life and held far less rights than men. Her fame extends to the present day, and while she is mostly regarded with admiration, according to Minoo Derayeh, "For the Muslim chroniclers of her time, she was promiscuous and a heretic. Even scholars writing a hundred and fifty years after her tragic execution, malign her."[121] As recent as the year 2000, Khosrow Mutazed and Nilufar Kasra, called her "an adventurous, seditious, and murderous woman."[122]

Born Fátimih but known by the title of "Táhirih" (the Pure One), she was born in Qazvín, Iran some time between 1817 and 1818, to a prominent mujtahid.[123] As a child, she exhibited great intelligence and an exceptional thirst for knowledge, outdistancing her brothers' progress.

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[120] Nashat, "Marriage in the Qajar Period," in Nashat, *Women in Iran from 1800 to the Islamic Republic*, 40-1.
[121] Minoo Derayeh, *Gender Equality in Iranian History: From Pre-Islamic Times to the Present* (Lewiston, NY: The Edwin Mellen Press, 2010), 104.
[122] Kasra and Mutazed, 41. Cited in Derayeh, 104.
[123] Hoda Mahmoudi, "Tahira: An Early Iranian 'Feminist,'" in *Women and the Family in Iran* (Leiden, Netherlands: E.J. Brill, 1985), 77.

Her achievements were so exceptional that her father, one of the most learned mullás in Iran, taught her himself and later hired a teacher for her.

At a young age, most likely thirteen, Táhirih was married to her cousin, whose father vehemently opposed the burgeoning Bábí religion in Iran. This would prove to be a challenge when she later became the first woman to become a Bábí. The Bábí faith was founded by Siyyid 'Alí Muhammad, titled the Báb ("the Gate"). According to the teachings of the Báb, the time had arrived to prepare people for the advent of an era characterized by justice and harmony. Bábís were actively persecuted by the Iranian government and clergy for the perceived radical nature of the Báb's teachings—including those that granted women and men equal rights—and for the Báb's claim to have fulfilled the prophecies surrounding the return of the Twelfth Imám.[124]

Táhirih's marriage was an unhappy one, and she later left her home to spread the message of the Báb. While at Badasht, the setting of a ten-day council of the Báb's followers in 1848, Táhirih famously appeared in public unveiled.[125] This act has been declared by many scholars as the "beginning of the emancipation movement of Iranian women."[126]

Táhirih lived for five years under house arrest in the home of the mayor of Tehran, due to her presence at a government attack on a group of Bábís. The mayor's wife quickly grew to respect to her, and her influence grew to the extent that throngs of women would visit the home

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[124] Shí'is believe that the line of imáms (leaders of Islam following the passing of the Prophet Muhammad), continued through the tenth century. According to Shí'i belief, in 939 C.E., the Twelfth Imam (Muhammad al-Mahdí) was withdrawn by God into a state of occultation in order to preserve his life. With the return of the Hidden Imám, the world would enter a period of divine justice. This reign of justice would continue until the return of Jesus and, according to Shí'i belief, the end of the world.

[125] Mahmoudi, 82

[126] Derayeh, 105; Mangol Bayat, *Mysticism and Dissent: Socioreligious Thought in Qajar Iran* (Syracuse: Syracuse University, 1982), 115; Sima Bahar, "A Historical Background to the Women's Movement in Iran," and Guity Nashat, *Women and Revolution in Iran*, 19; and Mahmoudi, "Tahira"; among others.

to benefit from Táhirih's knowledge.[127] Táhirih would reportedly speak to them, among other things, of the abject position assigned to women in Iran, and the freedom and respect bestowed upon them by the teachings of the Báb.[128] Násir-i-Din Shah sent a letter to her giving her the opportunity to have freedom in exchange for recanting her faith, to which she boldly responded:

> Kingdom, wealth and ruling be for thee,
> Wandering, becoming a poor dervish and calamity be for me.
> If that station is good, let it be for thee,
> And if this station is bad, I long for it, let it be for me![129]

Upon reading this, the Shah is reported to have commented on her spirit and courage, saying: "So far, history has not shown such a woman to us."[130]

In 1852, at the age of thirty-five, Táhirih was put to death in a garden outside the city of Tehran, at the order of the king. She was strangled to death, and her body was lowered into a well. Before she was killed, Táhirih turned to the guard in whose custody she had been placed and declared: "You can kill me as soon as you like, but you cannot stop the emancipation of women."[131]

Bibi Khanum Astarabadi, "The Vices of Men"

Bibi Khanum Astarabadi[132] (1858-1921) was an educated woman from a traditional middle-class family. In her famed treatise "The Vices of Men" (*Ma'ayib al-rijal*) she responds to the widely-circulated work "The Correction of Women," published anonymously by a Qajar prince. Written in 1894, his treatise reflects prevalent views about the ideal women as submissive and obedient, and whose primary duty is to serve her husband, the all-powerful

[127] Nabíl-i-Azam: *The Dawn-Breakers: Nabíl's Narrative of the Early Days of the Bahá'í Revelation* (Wilmette, IL: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1996), 621-22.
[128] A. L. M. Nicolas, *Siyyid 'Alí-Muhammad dit le Báb* (Paris: Librairie Critique, 1908), 446–47. Cited in: Nabíl-i-Azam, 622 note 30.
[129] Martha Root, *Tahirih the Pure* (Los Angeles, CA: Kalimát Press: 2000), 69.
[130] William Sears, *Release the Sun* (Wilmette, IL: Baha'i Publishing Trust, 1957), 184.
[131] Shoghi Effendi, *God Passes By* (Wilmette, IL: Baha'i Publishing Trust, 1979), 75.
[132] Also known as Bibi Khanum Vazirof.

patriarch.[133] The author wrote, "A woman who provokes her husband to anger… on the Day of Judgment her tongue will be pulled out from the back of her head, [she will be] beaten by chains of fire, and fire will be in her mouth."[134]

In her essay, Bibi Khanum challenges the treatise's claims point-by-point. She writes of (in her opinion) the defects of Iranian men, and admires, by contrast, the lot of women in Europe, who enjoyed far more privileges and rights than Iranian women.[135] While she never visited the West, her husband was a messenger at the British embassy in Tehran. His accounts of life there, along with travelers' narratives, may have informed her opinions. In response to the author, she writes, for example:

> It is extraordinary that the writer… considers himself and men in general to be gods and women to be slaves and servants…. Does he not know that in the West they look after women like "bouquets of flowers"? According to geography, history, and travelers' accounts, in the West all aristocratic educated women are learned in many subjects, sit at the table with unfamiliar men, and when dancing hold hands and dance together. But the customs of the Muslim religion are different. The women of Iran are all occupied with housekeeping and housework, especially peasant women…. Yes, we women are deprived of work, business, and learning."[136]

Bibi Khanum later opened up one of the first schools for girls in Iran, in 1906.[137]

The Memoirs of Taj al-Saltaneh, a Qajar Princess

The famed memoirs of Taj al-Saltaneh (1884-1936), a daughter of Nasir-i-Din Shah, are one of the few accounts written by a woman in the period. As a youth, Taj al-Saltaneh was educated in the harem by private tutors, and was one of the most knowledgeable females from the Qajar household. She was educated in Western literature and read the works of Western

[133] Derayeh, 121.
[134] Mahdavi, "Reflections in the Mirror," in Nashat, *Women in Iran from 1800 to the Islamic Republic*, 75.
[135] Cameron Michael Amin, *The Making of the Modern Iranian Woman: Gender, State Policy, and Popular Culture, 1865-1946* (Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 2002).
[136] Cited in Mahdavi, "Reflections in the Mirror," in Nashat, *Women in Iran from 1800 to the Islamic Republic*, 75-6.
[137] Derayeh, 121.

philosophers such as Jean Jacques Rousseau.[138] Taj al-Saltaneh was married at the age of thirteen, and her unhappy marriage ended in divorce. Despite the fact that she was the king's daughter, her husband was granted custody of her children, according to Sharí'a law. This event reportedly drove her to unsuccessfully attempt to take her own life on three occasions.[139]

Her memoirs are filled with feminist content, and are an open critique of the patriarchal society in which she lived. She wrote about her forced marriage at the age of thirteen, her husband's extramarital affairs, her secret abortion, and discussed her views on veiling, prostitution, and loveless arranged marriages. She lamented the deplorable and unhappy state of those who worked for her father and her brother, who succeeded her father to the throne; the wide class differences in Iran; and expressed a belief in freedom and equal rights for all Iranians.[140] On women in particular, she wrote:

> I am sad and depressed that members of my sex, the women of Iran, are not aware of their rights and are not fulfilling their duties as human beings. In complete futility and void of purpose, they sit in the corners of their houses and spend all the hours of their life acquiring bad habits."[141]

Taj al-Saltaneh argued that many of Iran's problems came from the practice of veiling. For example, she tied Iran's economic woes to the veil. She maintained that it was not uncommon for urban working-class men to have trouble supporting their families—which often had several women. These women sometimes turned to prostitution to support themselves, she wrote, but if the practice of veiling were removed and employment opportunities were open to women, this would be of benefit to both the woman herself, and to the family.

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[138] Ibid, 108.
[139] Ibid, 107.
[140] Bamdad, 33.
[141] *Taj al-Saltaneh: Crowning Anguish*, trans. Anna Vanzan and Amin Neshati. Ed. Abbas Amanat (Washington: Mage, 1993), 12.

Regarding marriage among the upper classes, Taj al-Saltaneh argued that their relationships were alienated and distant. Men and women married without having seen or known each other, and it was not uncommon for men to marry for social position and wealth. As a result, they often sought emotional fulfillment in other ways—men, through mistresses and by spending time away from home, socializing and drinking; women, through gatherings with other women; by hiring servants and female companions; and by spending her husband's wealth on expensive furniture, clothing, and jewelry. But, she wrote, "if women were unveiled and, as in all civilized nations, men and women could see each other, want each other, and join in a permanent union of love," this would be preferable.[142] By contrast, Taj al-Saltaneh maintained that rural women were happier, as their marriages rested on the foundations of compatibility and mutual attraction. She wrote:

> I saw men and unveiled women working together. No idle person can be found in the villages. I sought a maid from among them. Not one of these peasants agreed to give up her free life in the fields. All these peasants and farmers are decent and honorable people; not one woman prostitute lives in the village, since no man and woman would marry unless they are compatible with each other. Moreover, since the women are unveiled, the couple can choose one another. After marriage they till the land together day and night.[143]

And:

> The family relationship is healthier in the villages, the reason being that in the village both men and women work. We see that prostitution exists in the cities and it does not exist in the villages.[144]

While Taj al-Saltaneh never went abroad, she was highly influenced by European ideas. She was instructed in the ideas of the Naturalists, and read European novels, and began rejecting Iranian customs and ideas for European ones. She began to wear European clothes and went

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[142] Taj al-Saltaneh, *Khatirat-i Taj al-Saltanah* [Memoirs of Taj al-Saltaneh], eds. Nezam Mafi and Sa'dvandiyan, 101-102. Quoted in Janet Afary, *The Iranian Constitutional Revolution, 1906-1911: Grassroots Democracy, Social Democracy, and the Origins of Feminism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), 196.
[143] Ibid. Quoted in Afary, 197.
[144] Ibid. Quoted in Bamdad, 109.

bareheaded in a time when women wore veils in Iran. She abandoned Muslim prayers and drank wine.[145] Likewise, she admired the cause of European women's rights activists who demanded suffrage and equality, which she learned about through reading and from information she gathered from the king and members of his court. Comparing urban Iranian women with the lives of European women, she wrote:

> Iranian women have been taken away from the human species and are considered chattel and beasts. Hopelessly they continue the same [existence] from sunrise to sunset…. Oh, I wish there was a possibility for me to take a trip to the West. I would have said to those women's rights activists: while you have honourably and prosperously been defending your rights and have achieved your goals victoriously, take a look at Iran, and see how in houses with walls as high as three to five [meters], creatures with broken heads and arms, some yellowish and pale, some naked, and some waiting and in tears all night and day… are in chains of captivity.[146]

PUBLIC ACTIVITY

While the lives of women were largely limited to the home, they had the chance to go out in public when visiting bazaars, attending the mosque, paying visits to family, and visiting public bathhouses.[147] Bathhouses were one of the few places outside the home that women were able to congregate and socialize outside the home. They would stay there for a long time, sometimes a whole day, chatting and spreading news. A popular proverb, "use the bath water to make friends," originated from the popularity of bathhouses, meaning that one could gain friendships and acquaintances by pouring pitchers of water over each other's shoulders.[148]

The nineteenth-century travelogues of European men visiting Iran reveal that women, at times, were generally less guarded than is sometimes imagined. For example, Edward Scott Waring, a British civil servant traveling to Iran, wrote, "The curiosity of the females, who lived

[145] Mahdavi, "Reflections in the Mirror," in Nashat, *Women in Iran from 1800 to the Islamic Republic*, 76.
[146] Taj al-Saltaneh, 87-94. Quoted in Derayeh, 109.
[147] Martin, 99
[148] Bamdad, 14-15.

in the adjoining house to mine, afforded me the frequent opportunities of not only seeing, but also of conversing with them. …this was usually in the presence of their husbands, who did not evince the last repugnance to my seeing their wives."[149] Robert Binning, another British civil servant, remarked that village and lower-class urban women were not shy about speaking with strangers. Women of other classes, he suggested, were likewise not as shy as they were assumed to be: for example, his landlord's mother and sister would speak with him unveiled, as, often, were neighboring women, who would come up and stare at him.[150]

Early Examples of Public Political Activity

Some early activity, mostly confined to perceived injustices directed toward their male relatives, existed among rural and urban women, and usually contained an element of drama. Among the notable examples is the call of the widow of Husain Khan Galidar to avenge the death of her husband by sending the veil throughout the district in which she lived; this caused two to three thousand individuals to arise and volunteer for the task. Likewise, when a former tribal chief, Sartip Muhammad 'Ali, was abducted in the city of Kermanshah by a rival, his female relatives immediately appealed to the governor and the chief mujtahids of Kermanshah to have him restored. This likewise elicited an outcry among the people of the city, who pressured the mujtahids to petition the governor to take action.[151]

However, there are also examples in which women made efforts to collectively voice their opinion in the interest of their community or nation. These are important to note because they served as a prelude to the large-scale participation of women in the constitutional revolution at the turn of the twentieth century.

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[149] Edward Scott Waring, *A Tour to Sheeraz, by the Route of Kazroon and Feerozabad* (London: W. Bulmer and Co., 1807), 61.
[150] Robert B.M. Binning, *A Journal of Two Years' Travel in Persia, Ceylon, Etc.*, volume 2 (London: W.M.H. Allen and Co., 1857), 393.
[151] Martin, 100.

Bread Riots and Political Demonstrations

The earliest evidence of women's riots dates to the mid-nineteenth century, though Vanessa Martin suggests that it is possible that they took place (albeit less frequently) in the early part of the century.[152] These protests were called "bread riots," so termed because women, who were responsible for managing household food supplies, often engaged in protests during times of bread shortages. But they usually resulted from dissatisfaction at broader economic challenges, such as famine, a downturn in the local economy, or fiscal mismanagement by authorities. Thus, women's protests or "bread riots" often served as a catalyst for revolts by the wider community, spreading to merchants, the 'ulamá, lower-class men, and the guilds.[153]

Tobacco Concession and Protests

As mentioned earlier, British and Russian interference in Iran stemmed from the country's strategic position relative to their respective interests. By the nineteenth century, Russia's territory had expanded so that it now bordered Iran; British interest in Iran was largely due to its proximity to India. Their efforts to obtain concessions in Iran throughout the nineteenth century provoked discontent among many Iranians who feared the consequences of increased foreign power in Iran.

Popular discontent reached its climax in 1890, when a British citizen was granted full control over Iran's tobacco production, sale, and export. When two Iranian newspapers broke the story—one of which urged Iranians to form a united Islamic front against the government and the concession—Iranians responded through protests and boycotts.[154] Women, both ordinary and in places of influence, were at the forefront of these activities. For example, one

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[152] Ibid.
[153] Ibid.
[154] Ibid, 111.

documented demonstration in Tehran was composed of women and young children marching to the square in which the Shah's palace was situated. When the demonstrators reached the square, women loudly addressed Nasir-i-Din Shah in derogatory terms.[155] Likewise, the women of the Shah's harem protested the concession by smashing their own waterpipes and boycotting the use of tobacco. When the Shah smoked the waterpipe in the presence of his favorite wives, ordering them to do the same, they refused.[156] Eventually, owing to popular outcry, the Shah was forced to cancel the concession in 1892.

Zaynab Pasha

One outstanding woman at the helm of the Tobacco Concession protests was Zaynab Pasha of Tabriz. Unlike the other examples of outspoken female activists at the turn of the century, Zaynab Pasha was unique because of her doubly disadvantaged position in Iranian society: not only was she female, but she was from the peasant class. Nonetheless, her bold leadership at the forefront of the Tobacco Concession protests in Tabriz earned her the title "Pasha," which is a male title that is originally an Ottoman Turkish term meaning "general." The first protests in Iran began in Tabriz, when merchants in the bazaars closed their stores as an expression of their rejection of the concession. When some merchants were forced by government pressure to re-open their businesses, a group of veiled women clad in black robes—reportedly led by Zaynab—and armed with rifles, clubs, and bags of rocks, attacked the stores, the soldiers present at the bazaar, and the merchants who had crossed the picket line.[157]

Zaynab Pasha likewise played a part in the Constitutional Revolution in the first decade of the twentieth century. She attacked and stoned houses and storage facilities of those who had

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[155] Ibid.
[156] Bamdad, 9.
[157] Derayeh, 112.

hoarded food during a large-scale famine, and, along with seven women commanders, distributed that food among the poor. After the revolution's success, Zaynab reportedly made a trip to the city of Karbila, home of the most revered Shí'i shrine, where she disappeared.[158]

Abdul-Hossein Nahid writes of her:

> Zaynab was the explosion of the painful and frustrating pressure on Iranian women. She was the first to confront the tradition of the time and take up arms in order to seek justice for herself and her people. She visited coffee houses like men used to; fearless, she joined the men and smoked a water-pipe. It seems like she encouraged women to battle against the multiple layers of injustice imposed upon them.[159]

CONCLUSION

Despite the concern for reform and modernization in nineteenth century Iran, the lives of most women—indeed, the lives of most Iranians—did not change significantly throughout the 1800s. But among elites, there emerged the seeds of changed perceptions of gender roles, and for some, traditional views of women were gradually being replaced or modified by views that were influenced by Europeans. This marked the beginning of a paradigm shift that influenced shift in women's roles throughout the twentieth century.

As the status of women would change in the century to come, so too would Iranian society experience seismic shifts in the first decades of the twentieth century. The next chapter will examine the crucial role women played in the Constitutional Revolution of 1906-11, and the subsequent origins of a women's movement in the decade that followed.

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[158] Ibid, 113-14.

[159] Abdul-Hossein Nahid, *Zanan-i Iran dar Junbish-i Mashruteh* [Iranian Women in the Constitutional Revolution] (Saarbruken: Germany, Navid, 1989), 53; quoted in Derayeh, 114.

CHAPTER 3
THE CONSTITUTIONAL REVOLUTION: OPENING A SPACE FOR WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN THE PUBLIC SPHERE

In 1905, a constitutional movement rocked the nation of Iran. A country that had for centuries been ruled under an absolute monarchy was, seemingly overnight, swept with demands for a constitution and representative governance. These demands were made largely in response to the Qajar dynasty's perceived injustices and mismanagement of the country's affairs, and in 1905, culminated in a Constitutional Revolution. By 1907, the constitutionalists' demands were realized with the establishment of a constitutional monarchy and a parliament.

Yet it was not only the country's governing system that had been upset by this movement. Also seemingly overnight, the boundaries of woman's participation in the public sphere changed. With the revolution came an environment that welcomed women's support of the constitutionalists' cause. Though women's participation was initially limited to the Constitutional Revolution, their demands for their own social and political rights stemmed from their involvement in the movement.

While the literature about women's activism in Iran in the first two decades of the twentieth century is sparse, it reveals the courage and audacity of women that entered the public sphere to first call for reform in Iran, and eventually, to advocate for their own rights. This chapter aims to answer the questions: Why did a space open up for women's public participation at the turn of the century? And what did their participation in the constitutional movement look like? To explore these questions, this chapter will first look at the Constitutional Revolution, and then discuss women's participation in the revolution.

THE IRANIAN CONSTITUTIONAL REVOLUTION (1905 – 1911)

As discussed in Chapter 1, Iranian intellectuals made efforts to work with the Qajar court to bring about reform throughout the 1800s. But by the early twentieth century, Iran continued to suffer politically and economically, exacerbated by Qajar sovereigns' wastefulness, corruption, and repression. Their numerous concessions to Western countries, particularly Russia and Britain, deepened discontent among the masses of Iranians.

Initially, the Iranian intellectuals believed that in order for the country to advance, it should rid itself of the evils of "royal despotism, clerical dogmatism, and foreign imperialism."[160] But they experienced setbacks in working with the Qajars to enact reform, partly because of pressure from clergy members who opposed the secularization of Iranian institutions proposed by reformists. As a result, by the late 1800s, the intelligentsia switched its tactics by siding with the clergy, which was highly influential among the masses of Iranians. The two groups' shared opposition of foreign concessions in Iran facilitated their working together, though they differed in that the clergy more broadly feared the beginnings of Westernization in Iran.[161]

Another group eager to change the status quo were the bazaar merchants, who had been hurt by Western influence on the market, the Qajar rulers' repressive measures, and high taxes. As antigovernment sentiments rose through the l890s, these three groups—bazaar merchants, clergy, and intellectuals—had an advantage in working together to call for the formation of a constitution and to limit the monarchy's powers.[162] While the death of Nasir-i-Din Shah in 1896, and the subsequent rise of his son Muzzafar-i-Din to the throne, caused conditions to improve slightly—he allowed for more freedom of speech and association—the new Shah continued his

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[160] Iran *Times*, August 29, 1980, 9. Cited in Sanasarian, 16.
[161] Sanasarian, 16.
[162] Ibid; and Afary, 23.

father's practice of granting foreign concessions. The three groups worked together to call for the successful boycott of tobacco as a result of the Tobacco Concession of 1891-92,[163] what Janet Afary calls a "dress rehearsal for the Constitutional Revolution of 1906."[164]

By 1905, rising food prices, tariffs on merchants, and continuing foreign concessions gave rise to strikes, petitions, and demands to the king, all of which were ignored. A number of antigovernment preachers were arrested in 1906 and another religious leader was killed, leading to rising protests and demonstrations calling for the establishment of a constitution and restraints on the Shah's power. By August of that year, Muzzafar-i-Din Shah gave in to their demands and consented to the establishment of a parliament ("Majlis") and a written constitution.

It was during the writing of the constitution in 1906 that ideological tensions escalated between reform-minded and conservative revolutionaries. The liberal faction was mostly composed of educated middle and upper-middle class Iranians, who called for universal equality for all Iranians, regardless of religious background; the building of secular state schools; and favored adoption of European modes of life.[165] By contrast, the movement's conservative wing—made up of landowners and conservative clerics and landowners—opposed the political system's secularization. As a result, the constitution turned out to be "an odd amalgamation of contradictory concepts, including Muslim religious law, secularism, and Western constitutional precepts."[166] Furthermore, despite the crucial participation of women in the Constitutional Revolution, it denied female citizens—along with criminals and the insane—the right to vote or to be elected to the Majlis.[167]

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[163] An agreement between the Shah and a British company which would given the company a fifty-year have monopoly over Iran's tobacco industry. See Chapter 1 for a discussion of the Tobacco Concession.
[164] Afary, 17.
[165] Shaykh-i-Islami, *Zanan,* 124-26. Cited in Sanasarian, 17.
[166] Sanasarian, 19.
[167] "The Electoral Law of September 9, 1906," Articles 3 and 5. Cited in Edward Granville Browne, *The Persian Revolution* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1910), 356.

The Majlis opened on October 7, 1906. It was agreed that it would sit in two-year sessions, would be entitled to propose legislation, and would act as the final authority on the country's laws, budget, and financial policy.[168] As the masses of Iranians continued to be influenced by the 'ulamá, the voting public elected only a minority of nationalists and secular ideologues made up a minority to the parliament.[169]

Muzaffar-i-Din Shah signed the constitution on January 1, 1907, a few days before his death on January 7. His son, Muhammad-'Ali, was crowned Shah of Iran in January 1907, and despite being a signatory to the constitution, he made his opposition to the Majlis known. He abolished the constitution, bombed the Majlis building, and arrested and killed many constitutionalists.[170] Most crucially, he successfully ordered the Majlis to be shut down; the Majlis did not reconvene until July 1909. As some conservative clerics shifted their allegiance against the constitutionalists, a civil war emerged which pitted constitutionalists against royalists. The conflict continued until the royalists were defeated in 1909, culminating in the dethroning of Muhammad Ali Shah, who was replaced by his eleven-year-old son Ahmad Ali.[171] Due to the Shah's young age, the Majlis regent Azad-al-Mulk took the reigns of the country.[172] Tensions between the conservative clergy and literal intellectuals continued until the episode of the Russian Ultimatum in 1911, uniting the camps against Russian and British invasion of Iran.

The Russian Ultimatum of 1911

In May 1911, the Majlis appointed an American named William Morgan Shuster as the Treasurer-General of Iran in order to put the country's finances in order. Its decision to seek

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[168] Vanessa Martin, "Constitutional Revolution: Events," *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, 28 October 2011 <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/constitutional-revolution-ii>.
[169] Sanasarian, 17.
[170] Martin, "Constitutional Revolution."
[171] Sanasarian, 17.
[172] Martin, "Constitutional Revolution."

American assistance stemmed from Iranian distrust of Russian and British influence, but upon Shuster's appointment, the Russian government grew worried about American influence in Iran. When Shuster appointed a British officer as a financial inspector for the northern city of Tabriz—a move that the Russians claimed was in violation of the Anglo-Russian Convention of 1907—the Russian government issued an ultimatum: within forty-eight hours, the Iranian government should expel Shuster, commit to ceasing the employment of foreign advisors without prior British and Russian consent, and compensate the Russians for use of forces. Should it fail to do so, it would face Russian military occupation. The ultimatum stirred up outrage in Iran, causing schools and shops to shut down. The Iranian government failed to meet these demands in the forty-eight hour period, leading British and Russian forces to occupy much of Iran.

Under pressure from Britain and Russia, in December 1911, the Majlis regent Naser ul-Mulk expelled Shuster from Iran against the Majlis's will. Soon thereafter, Naser ul-Mulk closed the Majlis, which nominally placed Iran back under the rule of the Qajar monarch, Ahmad Shah. Given that the Shah was only eleven years old, Naser ul-Mulk ruled over Iran for several years.[173] The term of the second Majlis ended on December 24, 1911, and so too ended the period of the Constitutional Revolution. The Majlis did not reconvene for another three years.

While the Majlis remained in existence through the end of the Qajar dynasty, the coup staged by the military general Reza Khan—who later crowned himself Reza Shah and who ushered in the Pahlavi dynasty that was to rule Iran until 1979—marked the beginning of the Majlis's weakening in Iran. Reza Shah retained the Majlis, but his autocratic rule meant that it mostly served as a symbol of modernity and reform in Iran and was less involved in decision-

[173] Parvin Paidar, *Women and the Political Process in Twentieth-Century Iran* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 60.

making and enacting domestic reforms.[174]

WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN THE CONSTITUTIONAL REVOLUTION

The roots of modern Iranian feminism, some have argued, were established during the Constitutional Revolution.[175] This began with women's participation in the constitutional movement, but gradually evolved into organized demands for greater social and political rights for females. In the early years of the revolution, women from all strata of society worked to place pressure on the Shah to establish a constitution and parliamentary form of governance in Iran. As they entered the public sphere to participate in a political movement, gradually, women awoke to the possibility of using the opportunity of public participation to openly question their status. Calling their participation to the Constitutional Revolution "the beginning of a new era for women in Iran," Parvin Paidar states that women's contribution to the revolution

> …legitimised the integration of women and men in the society, established the necessity of women's education, raised sensitive issues such as family and veiling as a public and national concern, and created the opportunity for women to organise and establish a women's movement with the long-term aim of women's emancipation. The pattern of women's participation in the Constitutional Revolution and the variety of forms it assumed established the pioneering nature of women's activities during this period. Moreover, the link postulated between women and the nation constituted the bedrock of the gender issues raised, and determined the integrated nature of participation. These indicated the existence of a women's movement with its own specific features.[176]

The Opening of an Opportunity for Women's Public Participation

Given their relative exclusion from the public socio-political sphere in the nineteenth century, what gave rise to the opportunity for women's public political participation at the turn of

[174] Martin, "Constitutional Revolution."
[175] Afary, 178.
[176] Paidar, 76-77.

the century? How did it suddenly become possible for Iranian women to leave the seclusion of their domestic environments and take to the streets?

The primary reason was more practical than ideological: namely, women's participation in the constitutional movement added weight to the constitutionalists' cause. Given the fact that constitutionalist leaders needed as much support as they could garner, it became acceptable for women to break the social code of female seclusion. The men who were at the helm of the revolution—notably, the liberal constitutionalist clergy members who led the movement—encouraged female relatives and women in general to participate in public protests. Beyond simply needing bodies in the streets, constitutionalist revolutionaries also wished to prove to Western powers that the movement was both inclusive and progressive. Eliz Sanasarian explains, "No group, no matter how limited in number, could have become involved on behalf of itself, while under strict confinement, especially if it had never been exposed to anything outside the domestic world."[177] In other words, it was the blessing of men—namely, liberal constitutionalists and clerics at the helm of the revolution—that opened a space for women's public participation in the Constitutional Revolution.

Women's Early Participation in the Early Years: 1905-06

With the dawn of the Constitutional Revolution in 1905, groups of women from various social backgrounds joined men in public action. During this period, a small but dedicated group of women who supported the Constitutionalists largely played a supporting role to the movement's male leadership.[178] Their actions started with street riots, which provided moral support to the constitutionalists and encouraged men to demand freedom. They acted as couriers to transfer messages and arms between revolutionary hideout, and formed *anjumans* (semi-secret

[177] Sanasarian, 19-20
[178] Mangol Bayat-Phillip, "Women and Revolution in Iran, 1905-1911," in *Women in the Muslim World*, ed. Lois Beck and Nikkie Keddie (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1978), 299.

societies) for the purposes of both supporting the revolutionaries and enlightening women.[179] In Tehran, a few women even took up clubs and acted as bodyguards of the prominent constitutionalist clerics. Many of these clergy members would later be the ones who, after the constitutionalists'' aims had been achieved, would oppose granting women rights and educational and economic opportunities.[180]

One of the early warnings to Muzaffar-i-Din Shah was handed to him by a woman named Mrs. Jahangir, whose nephew was an editor for the constitutional newspaper *Sur-i Israfil*. As the Shah descended from his carriage, she broke from the circle of guards surrounding him and handed him a letter. The letter was from the Revolutionary Committee of Tehran, warning him that if he did not set up a "Majlis of the representatives of the nation to spread justice as in all civilized nations of the world,"[181] he would be killed. During the years of Constitutional Revolution, Mrs. Jahangir's house served as a meeting place and an arms cache for radical constitutionalists.[182]

Women likewise defended constitutionalists physically against the forces of the Shah. In 1905, a group women reportedly created human barriers and protected the 'ulamá who had taken sanctuary at the Shah 'Abd al-'Azim Shrine from the armed government forces. During the summer of 1906, when nationalists obtained sanctuary at the garden of the British legation, several thousand women assembled to join the strikers, but were prevented from doing so by British authorities.[183]

After the granting of the constitution in August 1906, women's participation in the nationalist movement grew more organized. One key development was the founding of

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[179] Nashat, *Women and Revolution*, 22.
[180] Derayeh, 114.
[181] Afary, 371.
[182] Ibid, 371.
[183] Ibid, 178.

anjumans, or grassroots councils or societies, in Iran. A number of these were *anjumans* organized by and mostly composed of women, devoted to various national and women's causes. The advent of *anjumans* in the country galvanized women into collective action for causes devoted to the nation and to the advancement of their sex.[184] Among their most notable achievements were the founding of girls' schools and periodicals devoted to women's issues. But in their early years, members of women's *anjumans* focused on the strengthening of the new political system in Iran. They engaged in public protests and demonstrations against foreign intervention; led boycotts of foreign industries; surpassed men in the sacrifices they made to contribute to the parliament's planned national bank; and submitted personal letters to national periodicals on issues related to the parliament and the national interest.

One example was that of a letter written to an influential periodical (*Neda-ye Vatan*, or Proclamation of the Homeland) on behalf of an underground women's *anjuman* called *Ihtihadiyeh Ghaybi Zanan* (Union of Invisible Women). Penned a year after the parliament's election, the letter's writer expresses frustration at the parliament's inactivity and boldly suggests that women take the helm of the parliament. She wrote:

> It has been fourteen months since the constitution was established…. It seems that our representatives consider the parliament to be a place to party. Parliament is a place to make laws. Where are your laws? Where is your Senate? Where is the Ministry of Justice?... By this petition we are demanding your resignation. Leave all the affairs in the hands of women for forty days. Do not feel insulted. Without us, you will not exist; without you we will not

[184] Janet Afary suggests that the Iranian *anjumans* may have been modeled after the industrial worker and peasant councils of the Russian Revolution (Afary, 38). The women's *anjumans* for which there is documented evidence are: (1) The Anjuman for the Freedom of Women (1907), one of the first women's societies; (2) the Secret Union of Women (1907), which had strong revolutionary tendencies. This society advocated for the poor and challenged Majlis delegates on this issue; (3) the Anjuman of Women operated during the first and second constitutional periods (1906-11). The first Majlis discussed a statement of this *anjuman*, during a brief period in which it took up the issue of recognizing women's *anjumans*; (4) the Anjuman of Ladies of the Homeland (1910) played a prominent role in the December 1911 demonstrations in response to the Russian ultimatum; (5) the Association for the Welfare of Women in Iran (1910) and (6) the Anjuman of the Ladies of Iran (1910) helped to raise funds for schools, hospitals, and orphanages. Several women's *anjumans* played an active role in the activities following the Russian ultimatum of 1911; notably, the Union of Women, the Council of the Women of the Center, and the Anjuman of Women's Efforts (Afary, 184).

> exist. We will correct the law, the law-enforcement organizations, and appoint governors... We will destroy the roots of tyranny and oppression.[185]

Response to Muhammad-'Ali Shah's 1908-09 Coup

Women's *anjumans* were among those groups that resisted Muhammad-'Ali Shah's attack on the Majlis. During this period, women intensified their philanthropic activities. They began night schools whose purpose was to educate the masses in their duties of patriotism and citizenship; demonstrating in the streets; provided refuge to Majlis deputies; and helping to hide volunteer revolutionary soldiers.[186] Some revolutionaries took more bold action, and there is evidence that some of these acts were made by women. For example, in the days before the fall of the Majlis, when the Shah's troops occupied the streets of Tehran and were arresting leading constitutionalists and sympathizers, a pro-royalist cleric was delivering a speech in the city's central square that denounced the revolutionaries. Suddenly, a woman emerged from the crowd, took out a pistol from under her veil, and shot him. She was immediately put to death by the mob that had gathered to listen to the cleric.[187]

Some women even joined the ranks of volunteer soldiers. After one battle in the Azerbaijan province, for example, twenty female bodies—disguised in men's clothing—were identified among the dead.[188] In the city of Tabriz, women who wanted to participate in the in the battles against the Shah's forces were turned back;[189] nonetheless, on one occasion, a wounded soldier in that city was found to be a woman.[190]

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[185] Derayeh, 115-16.
[186] Bayat-Phillip, 302.
[187] Ibid; Sanasarian, 20; and William Morgan Shuster, *The Strangling of Persia: Story of the European Diplomacy and Oriental Intrigue that Resulted in the Denationalization of Twelve Million Mohammadens—A Personal Narrative* (New York: The Century Co., 1912), 193.
[188] Sanasarian, 20.
[189] Ettehadieh, "The Origin and Development of the Women's Movement in Iran, 1906-41," 89.
[190] Janet Afary, "On the Origins of Feminism in Early 20th-Century Iran," *Journal of Women's History* 1, no. 6 (1989), 74.

The Russian Ultimatum of 1911

Women were likewise at the forefront of activity during the tense days following the Russian Ultimatum, in which the Russian government demanded the expulsion of William Morgan Shuster, the American diplomat serving as Iran's Treasurer-General. As they did for the national bank's cause, women collected money and contributed jewelry to help the government pay its debts to Russia. But they also participated in more public and, at times, violent acts of protest. When it was rumored that the Majlis deputies had decided to concede to Russia's demands, three hundred women, some wielding pistols, reportedly stormed the Majlis building in protest. In his published narrative of his time in Iran, Shuster wrote:

> Out from their walled courtyards and harems marched three hundred of that weak sex, with the flush of undying determination in their cheeks. They were clad in their plain black robes with the white nets of their veils dropped over their faces. Many held pistols under their skirts or in the folds of their sleeves. Straight to the [Majlis] they went, and, gathered there, demanded of the President that he admit them all…. The President consented to receive a delegation of them. In his reception-hall they confronted him, and lest he and his colleagues should doubt their meaning, these cloistered Persian mothers, wives and daughters exhibited threateningly their revolvers, tore aside their veils, and confessed their decision to kill their own husbands and sons, and leave behind their own dead bodies, if the deputies wavered in their duty to uphold the liberty and dignity of the Persian people and nation.[191]

The *Times* of London also reported on Iranian women's public demonstrations against the Russian ultimatum:

> The patriotic demonstrations continue. A curious feature is the prominent part taken in them by women. At a large meeting of women held in the great Mosque of Sipah Salar addresses were delivered by female orators; it is said that they were very eloquent. One lady announced that, although the law of Islam forbade it, the women would nevertheless take part in a holy war. They were particularly strenuous in insisting on a Russian boycott.[192]

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[191] Shuster, 197-8. According to Mangol Bayat-Philipp, an Iranian source confirms Shuster's account, stating that the women marched to the Majlis and ordered deputies to "prefer death in honour to life in slavery" (Bayat-Philipp, 303, quoting Mehdi Malekzadeh, *Tarikh Enghelab Mashrutiat Iran* [The History of the Constitutional Revolution], vol. 2 [Tehran: Ebn Sina, 1949], 93-4).

[192] "The Crisis In Persia: Patriotic Demonstrations by Women," The *Times* of London, December 5, 1911, 5.

Among the most active *anjumans* during the tense days of the Russian Ultimatum was the National Ladies Society. On December 1, it held a public meeting outside the Majlis building while the parliament was in session. Thousands of veiled and cloaked women turned up to the meeting, who successively took turns at the rostrum to make speeches in favor of national independence, social justice, and in defense of the constitutionalist regime. The crowd that gathered chanted, "Independence or death!"[193] The next day, they walked to the home of an eminent Majlis deputy, where one member made an impassioned speech lamenting Russian interference and the "self-indulgent rulers and venal ministers" of Iran that made such interference possible; and of her countrymen's duty to defend Iran's honor.[194]

In the days that followed, many of the Society's members sold their jewelry and ornaments in order to assist the government in paying off its debt to Russia. They likewise persuaded teashops to close in order to curb consumption of imported sugar, and succeeded in convincing passengers of foreign-managed horse-drawn trams[195] to go by cab instead. Some even took to standing with their children on tramway tracks with their children as a symbol that they would prefer to die with their children than see their homeland succumb to Russian demands.

The National Ladies' Society likewise took it upon itself to communicate with Majlis deputies and with outside actors, including foreign governments.[196] On December 5, 1911, for example, the National Ladies' Society[197] wrote a telegram to the women's suffragist society of England after attempts to contact foreign governments via telegraph. The telegram stated:

[193] Bamdad, 35.
[194] Ibid, 36-7.
[195] The main means of public transport in Iran at the time.
[196] Bamdad, 36-7.
[197] The London *Times*, which printed the telegram in its December 7, 1911 issue, stated that the telegram was written on behalf of the "Persian Women's Society." This seems to be their translation of the group's name in Persian, *Anjoman Mokhaddarat Vatan*, which has since been translated as the "National Ladies' Society."

> The Russian government by an ultimatum demands us to surrender to her our independence; the ears of the men of Europe are deaf to our cries; could you women not come to our help?[198]

In response, the Women's Social and Political Union wrote:

> Your touching appeal received. Unhappily, we cannot make the British government give political freedom even to us, their countrywomen. We are equally powerless to influence their action toward Persia. Our hearts deeply moved by sympathy with Persian sisters and admiration for their militant patriotic deeds.[199]

Several days later, the Society sent a telegram to the Majlis deputies, reminding them of their obligation "to determine the nation's laws, to keep watch on the policies of the ministers, and to supervise the activities of the governments' agents."[200]

In response to the National Ladies Society's activities, the Russian Legation of Persia issued a circular that asked the Society to question their position on the constitutional government, asking them to question whether the constitutional government had actually brought about changes in the status of women. The Legation seemed to suggest that because women had not gained rights under the government, they should not support the system's preservation.[201] The National Ladies Society responded that while they were discontent with their inferior status, they blamed imperialistic powers' intervention in Iran, and the ensuing political turmoil, for their position. They wrote:

> We are not content with our status and position. We are the victims of unruliness and lack of law…. We hope that our position will be improved through the enactment of a code of equality, because human worth and dignity are secured by the spread of law and in no other way.[202]

The Society's response likewise sheds light on their position in relation to Western women. They stated, "We consider the position of European women preferable because they possess

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[198] "Appeal from the Women," The *Times* of London, December 7, 1911, 5.
[199] Ibid.
[200] Bamdad, 37-8.
[201] Ibid, 38-9.
[202] Ibid, 39.

skills, but not for any other reasons."[203]

CONCLUSION

In a time and place when women were largely confined to the seclusion of their homes, Iranian women's large-scale politicized action during the Constitutional Revolution was unprecedented. Despite their efforts, the revolutionaries and the Majlis largely failed to publicly recognize the part that women played in the revolution. And for the most part, men's attitudes about the status of women did not change. Nonetheless, as Mangol Bayat-Philipp has written, the Constitutional Revolution was a "fertile ground for [women's] experimental struggle for emancipation."[204] As the following chapter will discuss, the decade after the revolution's closure witnessed a rise in women's efforts to promote the education of females, and in their activities to win other rights for their sex. While they received little support from the Majlis, to whose establishment they had contributed through their participation in revolutionary era, their work was instrumental in initiating the change in status and rights that women and girls in Iran would experience in the decades to come.

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[203] Ibid.
[204] Bayat-Phillipp, 306.

CHAPTER 4
THE WOMEN'S MOVEMENT FROM THE CONSTITUTIONAL REVOLUTION THROUGH 1925

While initial calls to rethink the status of females in Iran emerged during the nineteenth century by such women as Táhirih, Taj al-Saltaneh, and Bibi Astarabadi; it was during the Constitutional Revolution that "Iranian society experienced an organized attempt by women to change their social conditions."[205] Once women had gained experience rallying in the streets and learned how to organize themselves, and once the goals of the Constitutional Revolution had been achieved, some began to question their own status and develop an interest in their own rights.

Despite the hopes and expectations of those female participants of the Constitutional Revolution, the new regime legitimized political patriarchy in the very constitution for whose establishment they had fought when it denied them the right to vote or stand for election. Undeterred by this setback, Iranian women refocused their efforts on expanding and securing rights for their sex. Activist women began to organize themselves in *anjumans* and started to establish girls' schools, orphanages, adult education classes, health clinics, and a variety of other institutions. They received no financial support from the newly-formed government, which specifically barred women from the political process.

While most of the women at the helm of the burgeoning women's movement were upper and upper-middle class women who had been active in the revolution, Eliz Sanasarian offers that a characteristic of Iranian feminists' stances on various issues "was their classless character…. Note that even though Iranian feminists were mainly from the upper classes, they were exposed

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[205] Ali Akbar Mahdi, "The Iranian Women's Movement: A Century Long Struggle," *The Muslim World* 94 (October 2004), 427.

to degrading conditions similar to their counterparts in the lower classes, such as child marriages and divorce. This could explain the classless nature of their ideological stands."[206]

As the movement evolved, its main issues areas were: (1) political participation (namely, suffrage), (2) health, (3) the education of women and girls, and (4) changes in marriage and divorce laws (particularly related to child and forced marriages and unequal divorce laws). They relied heavily upon Iran's burgeoning newspaper industry to express their viewpoints and eventually, individual women and women's *anjumans* began founding their own periodicals.

The discourse on women's rights was centered on three areas: (1) basic human rights, (2) the betterment of the nation, and (3) a happy marriage and family life. Most women's rights advocates emphasized that their efforts were not anti-Islam; rather, their criticism was directed toward the religious establishment and its misinterpretations of Islamic scripture. While their efforts received much resistance, especially from conservative clerics, a number of male allies supported their work. The following chapter will discuss the women's movement's initial areas of activity, as well as the nature of the discourse on women's rights in Iran in the decade following the Constitutional Revolution, prior to the rise of Reza Shah Pahlavi in 1925.

POLITICAL PARTICIPATION AND SUFFRAGE

Despite the crucial participation of women in the Constitutional Revolution, Iran's first constitution omitted rights for females. Most significantly, it denied women—along with criminals and the insane—the right to vote or to be elected to the Majlis.[207] The basis for this legislation was the misconception among religious authorities that Shi'ism does not have legal

[206] Sanasarian, 46.
[207] "The Electoral Law of September 9, 1906," Articles 3 and 5. Cited in Browne, 356.

grounds for women to be legislators or participate in elections.[208]

As determinedly as they had pushed for political change in Iran, so too did women respond against their disenfranchisement in the constitution for which they had so determinedly labored. They began to agitate for a supplementary section of the constitution that would recognize women's political rights. Members of women's *anjumans* sent petitions and letters to the parliament. On several occasions, groups of women marched to the parliament building demanded the passage of a supplementary law. Nonetheless, when a new electoral was finally passed in 1909, it still did not grant rights to women. It continued to deny them suffrage, banned them from being elected and serving as legislators, and prevented the possibility of changing these laws.[209]

From among the thousands of women who backed the revolution, a significant number decided to challenge this issue. In 1911, they found a champion in a parliamentary deputy named Vakil al-Ru'aya. In August, Ru'aya introduced to the parliament floor a debate on woman's suffrage in Iran. On August 22, 1911 *The Times* of London's Tehran correspondent reported:

> The [parliament] was quietly discussing the Bill for the next election… and had reached the clause declaring that no women shall vote. Discussion on a proposition so obvious seemed unnecessary, and the House shivered when [Vakil al-Ru'aya] mounted the tribune, and declared roundly that women possessed souls and rights, and should possess votes.
>
> Now Vakil [al-Ru'aya] has hitherto been a serious politician, and the House listened to his harangue in dead silence, unable to decide whether it was an ill-timed joke or a serious statement. The orator called upon the [clergy] to support him, but support failed him. The Mujtehid,[210] whom he invoked by name, rose in his place, and solemnly declared that he had never in a life of misfortune had his ears assailed by such an impious utterance. Nervously and excitedly he denied to women either souls or rights, and declared that such doctrine would mean the downfall of Islam. To hear it uttered in the

[208] Derayeh, 116.
[209] "The New Electoral Law of July 1, 1009." Cited in Browne, 386-88.
[210] Muslim jurist qualified to interpret Islamic law.

> Parliament of the nation had made his hair stand on end. The cleric sat down, and the [members of Parliament] shifted uncomfortably in its seats. The President put the clause in its original form, and asked the official reporters to make no record in the journals of the House of this unfortunate incident.[211]

The *mujtahid* in question was Mudarris, a well-known cleric and deputy to the Majlis. A transcript of the debate reveals that he stated the following in response to Vakil al-Ru'aya's statement:

> Since the beginning of my life, many things… have happened to me. None of them has shaken my body. Today my body was shaken… women should not have been mentioned among those who do not have the vote. That would be like saying that they are not of the insane, or idiots…. But as to our answer… if we reflect, we see that God has not endowed them with the ability to be electors…. They are of the weak ones, their minds do not have the capacity. Moreover, in our religion, Islam, they are under supervision: "Men are in charge of women."[212]… Our official religion is Islam. They are in our charge. They will have absolutely no right to elect. *Others should protect the rights of women.*[213]

Other deputies—both clerics and secular—revealed more ambivalent sentiments. In response to a letter from a woman on the matter of suffrage, the conservative Majlis deputy and cleric Ayatollah Tabatabai wrote that while he agreed to women's education and learning the domestic sciences, their involvement in politics was not necessary.[214] The secular Zuka ul-Molk stated on the parliament floor that while many deputies like himself wished for an expansion of women's right to political participation, at the present time, this was not possible; and "the reasons for this were so self-evident as to need no justification."[215] While Vakil al-Ru'aya and other supporters of women's suffrage persisted in their position in future parliamentary debates, the socio-political mood was not ready for such changes, and attempts to secure suffrage for women did not succeed, despite the fact that the constitution stated, "The people of the Persian Empire are to

[211] "Women's Rights in Persia. Appeal for the Suffrage in the Mejliss," *The Times* of London, August 22, 1911.
[212] The quotation is from Qur'án 4:34.
[213] Afsaneh Najmabadi, "Zanha-yi Millat: women or wives of the nation?" *Iranian Studies* 26 no. 1-2 (1993): 55.
[214] Paidar, 67.
[215] Najmabadi, 55.

enjoy equal rights before the Law."[216] Not for another half-century, in 1963, would women be granted the right to vote.[217]

EXPRESSION THROUGH NEWSPAPERS AND ESTABLISHMENT OF WOMEN'S PERIODICALS

The burgeoning newspaper industry—made possible by the freedom of press articulated in the constitution—was a major channel through which individuals and *anjumans* expressed their quest for freedom, equality, and identity. Through petitions in the forms of letters, poems, and essays, women openly voiced their displeasure with the parliament's relative inactivity and advocated for women's rights. They likewise took advantage of this new environment by publishing their own newspapers. These papers were only available through subscription, and unlike papers published by men, were not sold through street vendors.[218]

Among the first letters sent to the parliament was on behalf of an individual woman, submitted only a few months after the body's formation. On December 30, 1906—one day before constitution was signed by Muzaffar-i-Din Shah—*Majlis,* the newly-established newspaper of the parliament, published a petition presented to the parliament and drafted by an individual woman. It called for the allowance of greater social participation by women and for female education. In her letter, she argued that the denial of education to females was the chief reason that Iran had lagged in its social and economic progress. As the newly formed parliament had already taken steps to establish schools for boys, she argued that it should do the same for girls. The parliament's response, published in the newspaper, revealed that the majority of the delegates disagreed. The only education that women had a right to demand, it stated, was one

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[216] "The Supplementary Fundamental Laws of October 7, 1907." Cited in Browne, *The Persian Revolution*, 374.
[217] H. F. Farmayan, "Politics during the Sixties. A Historical Analysis," in E. Yar-Shater, ed., *Iran Faces the Seventies*, New York, 1971. Cited in: Said Amir Arjomand, "Constitutional Revolution: iii. The Constitution." *Encycopaedia Iranica*, October 28, 2011 <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/constitutional-revolution-iii>.
[218] Ettehadieh, 91.

that would prepare them to raise children and to tend to domestic duties. Nor should females expect the right to involve themselves in politics and the affairs of government, which were the prerogative of men.[219]

Women's Periodicals

In the context of a time and place where few women were literate, the publication of women's newspapers and magazines was "a revolutionary act."[220] These periodicals, owned and operated by individual women and by *anjumans*, addressed a range of issues of concern to women and the nation at the turn of the century, and called for women's rights and change in their social condition. Whether the newspapers were feminist or nationalist in focus, all recognized women's inferior position in Iran. The differences in their stances were in "the cause and remedy for change in that condition." Some blamed foreign domination, while others emphasized internal factors (namely, the clergy's influence in Iran).

The first women's periodical was called *Danesh* (*Knowledge)* and reportedly began publication in 1910.[221] Published by an oculist named Dr. Kahhal, its content was largely mild, and its first issue included a statement that it would focus its content on domestic affairs, not on political or national issues.[222] It focused on matters of hygiene, medicine, family, and childcare. At times, however, *Danesh* addressed challenges that women faced that were more controversial: of sexual harassment of women in public spaces, the problems of unwed mothers and their abandoned babies, and the lives of urban middle-class women who were treated as slaves by their husbands.[223]

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[219] Afary, "On the Origins of Feminism," 69-70.
[220] Sanasarian, 30.
[221] Ibid, 32.
[222] Janet Afary surmises that this may have been the result of a compromise made with state authorities in order for it to be allowed to published (Afary, 200).
[223] Afary, 200-01.

With the close of the Constitutional Revolutionary era, women's periodicals began to discuss a wider range of issues related to women's lives, and placed less emphasis on patriotism and constitutionalism. Newspapers received articles and letters from women in the provinces and from men. References to the West grew, including coverage of the women's movement in Europe and the Western educational system. Along with covering such topics as manners, childcare, health and hygiene, and home economics, they also raised such issues as the rights and legal status of women, child marriage, supporting home manufacturing, the need to have medical examinations before marriage, and sending women to study midwifery abroad.[224]

Shekoufeh ("Blossom," 1913), *Zabán-i-Zanán* (Women's Voice, 1919), *Álam-i Nesvan* ("Women's Universe," 1920), and *Jahán-i Zanán* ("Women's World," 1921) were other notable women's magazines published in the post-revolutionary era. Some newspapers faced opposition when publishing material perceived to be controversial by the authorities. *Námeh-ye Bánoáan* (*Women's Letter,* 1920*)*, a magazine edited by Shahnaz Azad, was closed down three days after the first issue was published because of the following statement: "The shroud of superstition and traditional confinement have blocked the vision of women and men in this country." This statement was interpreted to be a criticism of the veil. It was allowed to resume publication once the magazine issued a statement that the shroud did not signify the veil for women. In the years that followed, Azad and her husband were constantly persecuted, arrested, and exiled.[225]

Orientation Toward Islam

Despite the fact that the denial of their rights sometimes stemmed from misconceptions surrounding the status of women in the Qur'án, most women and groups calling for rights were

[224] Ettehadieh, 92-93.
[225] Sanasarian, 33.

reluctant to criticize Islam. They instead directed their criticism toward men and conservative clerics, highlighting the inconsistencies between their claims and the scripture itself.

For example, the charters of two *anjumans*—the Patriotic Women's League and the Association of Revolutionary Women—emphasized the need to preserve Islam's teachings. The author of an article published in *Álam-i-Nesvan* in 1929 wrote, for example, "[I]f we claim that the Creator made no distinction between the two sexes, then we are interfering in God's business."[226] *Zabán-i-Zanán* published articles in support of Islam but critical of Iranian society, while *Jahán-i-Zanán* emphasized that being a good Muslim did not mean suppressing women's rights.[227] Likewise, the curriculum of girls' schools opened by activist women included religious instruction. Letters in support of girls' education emphasized that Muhammad himself had made it a duty for both men and women to study.[228]

There may have been a few reasons for this. Eliz Sanasarian argues that "to criticize Islam would have missed the main point, the societal and male-endorsed oppression of women… why should they be expected to [reject Islam]? Did Western feminists reject Christianity?"[229] In other words, what was at the root of gender inequality in Iran was not the teachings of Islam itself, but the manifestation and practice of centuries-old misogynistic interpretations of the Qur'án.

Another likely explanation is that support for Islam was a protection device. The work of feminist activists was sensitive and upset centuries-old notions of social order; to openly speak out against the religious establishment threatened the survival of any group or aim. Periodicals

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[226] Taj Homa, "Tasavi-ye zan va mard" [Equality of women and men], *Alam Nesvan*, 9th year, no. 6, Aban 1308/November 1929, pp. 255-56. Cited in Sanasarian, 47.
[227] Sanasarian, 47.
[228] Ettehadieh, 91.
[229] Sanasarian, 47.

and groups that brought up the issue of the veil, for example, came under severe attacks, were usually banned and the editor or writer was persecuted.[230]

Health

Insufficient services and attention to women's health concerns motivated some groups to take up this issue. Among the health challenges facing Iranian women were high mortality rate among mothers and children due to a lack of doctors, unsanitary conditions for childbirth, and superstitious practices surrounding childcare, as well as the spread of sexually transmitted diseases. As early as 1911, one women's *anjuman* petitioned the health department to oversee matters related to women's health, particularly childbirth. Additionally, it requested that midwives and wet nurses undergo training and examination in order to be permitted to practice.[231] Some *anjumans* established health clinics for women.

By the early 1930s, women's magazines openly discussed taboo issues such as sexually transmitted diseases and the conditions of prostitutes, including child prostitutes. In both of these cases, the blame was placed upon men. Men were blamed for transferring diseases such as syphilis to their wives, and prostitutes "were viewed as victims of male trickery and intrigue."[232]

Education

Perhaps the most significant and vigorous pursuit of the early women's movement was that of education for females. Sanasarian maintains that Iranian feminists first had to direct themselves to female education because "in a society where ignorance, superstition, disease, and illiteracy were rampant, addressing political issues would have been absurd, hypocritical, and

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[230] Ibid.
[231] Ettehadieh, 90.
[232] Sanasarian, 46.

irrelevant to the great majority of women."[233] Therefore, a grassroots educational campaign for females began during the Constitutional Revolution, and intensified throughout the 1920s. Women who had been active participants in the revolution began to devote their efforts to the education of women and girls, primarily by opening schools for girls and offering literacy classes for women. The era also witnessed a rise in schools for girls opened by religious and ethnic minority groups. Articles and letters published in newspapers supported their cause by emphasizing importance of literacy among women, and encouraging literate women to teach other women how to read and write.

The argument supporting female literacy and education was, for the most part linked, linked to the betterment of Iran and its families. Its advocates argued that because women were the first educators of children, the education of females was necessary for national progress.[234] Likewise, an educated woman was important for a happy family life, and especially, for a happy husband.

Some letters published in newspapers of the time revealed another line of support for women and girls' education: the need for education so as to root out injustice in society, and to contribute to women's own happiness and honor. It was only through receiving an education that women could support themselves through paid work, and by doing this they would be able to stem the "instincts of tyranny and oppression" in even the most enlightened of men.[235] These were the aims of Iran's first educators and supporters of female education, whose stories are described below.

First Schools Opened by Women Activists

While the principal of compulsory public education was enshrined in the constitution,

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[233] Ibid, 48.
[234] Bayat-Philipp, 297.
[235] Amin, 65.

state schools for girls were not opened until after World War I. For that reason, the only formal educational opportunities open to girls were privately owned and operated schools. Most of these schools were founded and run by constitutionalist women, while others began as tutorial classes in homes. Many of these schools later obtained official recognition from the Ministry of Education.[236]

On January 20, 1907, a women's meeting was held in Tehran in which ten resolutions were adopted, one of which called for the establishment of girls' schools.[237] Three years later, by April 1910, fifty girls' schools had been opened in Tehran, and a woman's congress on education had taken place in Tehran.[238] The London *Times* reported:

> It is not surprising that faint ripples of the Feminist movement should have reached the shores of distant Persia, and that ardent young Persian visionaries who prattle about Socialism, old-age pensions, and capital and labour have so far contemplated adding to their difficulties by inviting women to share them; but signs are not wanting among the women themselves of a desire to give their daughters an education on European lines.[239]

In 1911, a number of Iranian women reportedly gathered to discuss challenges surrounding expanding females' education in Iran.[240] By 1913, there were 63 private girls' schools in Tehran enrolling a total of 2,500 students,[241] and by 1923, there existed ten free public schools for girls in Tehran.[242]

Despite the fact that these schools' founders were Muslim—some of whom were wives of *mujtahids*—and included religious education in their curriculum, most of the religious establishment accused the schools of being centers of prostitution and corruption. Incited by religious leaders' vocalized opposition, many of the schools were attacked and looted by mobs.

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[236] Bamdad, 42.
[237] Afary, 182.
[238] "The Education of Women in Persia," *The Times* of London, August 13, 1910, 3.
[239] Ibid.
[240] C. Colliver Rice, *Persian Women and their Ways* (Philadelphia, PA: J.B. Lippincott Company, 1923), 54
[241] Afary, 182.
[242] Rice, 154.

Likewise, "the sight of girls and women teachers walking to school aroused a hostile public male reaction, which daily expressed itself with gross insults, obscene gestures, and spitting."[243] The government was unwilling to finance or provide physical protection for these independent schools. As such, parents who wished that their girls receive an education oftentimes preferred to hire tutors or teach their daughters themselves, rather than risk being subjected to such treatment.

The following section will highlight some of the first privately owned and operated schools for girls that were opened by Iranian women, most of whom were active in the constitutional movement: Bibi Astarabadi, Safiyeh Yazdi, Máh-Soltán Amir-e Sehhi, and Máh-Rokh Gowharshenás. There are several threads that run through the experiences of these four women. First, most received support and encouragement from their husbands—two of whom were clerics—in their own education and in the education of girls. Another common thread was the belief and practice that education of girls was in line with the teachings of Islam, and in the commitment of providing moral and religious education in the schools. Lastly, all faced opposition, largely from the religious establishment, in one form or another.

Bibi Astarabadi, Dabistán-i Dushizagán

Bibi Astarabadi, famous for her satiric treatise "The Vices of Men,"[244] may have been the first Iranian woman to open a school for girls in Tehran. Called Dabistán-i Dushizagán ("Maiden's Elementary School"), the school attracted students by giving poorer families a discount, and ensured that all teachers were women. Cooking instructions were added as an incentive for parents, as well as the establishment of center for teaching of handicrafts in the

[243] Bayat-Phillipp, 300.
[244] See Chapter 3.

school.[245] Dabistán-i Dushizagán was the target of a *fatwa* issued by an influential *shaykh,*[246] which declared that the establishment of girls' schools was contrary to Islamic Shari'a. Another cleric, Siyyid Ali Shushtari, received strong public support when he staged a sit-in at a shrine and distributed a declaration of heresy against the school.[247] The school's students and teachers were likewise verbally and physically abused on the streets.[248] Despite her pleas to the Minister of Education to provide protection against the vandalism and threats the school faced, he ordered her to shut down the school. She eventually reopened it, but only admitted students under the age of eleven at the government's directive.[249]

Tubá Ázmudeh, Námus School

Another early school for girls was the Námus ("Honor") School, founded by Tubá Ázmudeh in 1907. Ázmudeh herself received her education in an interesting way. At the age of fourteen, her father arranged her marriage to a fellow army officer. The age difference between the two was large, and the couple had no children. Her husband therefore encouraged her to study Persian, Arabic, and French with a private tutor in order to keep her occupied. This learning instilled in Ázmudeh an understanding of the importance of education, causing her to dedicate her life to girls' education. She believed that women's education was rooted in the principles of Islam, and Qur'ánic scripture and other religious texts were included in the school's curriculum.[250] Despite this, Ázmudeh faced threats to her life and was calumniated by reactionaries in Iran, some of whom composed and spread defamatory songs accusing her students of unchastity.

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[245] Afary, 188
[246] Islamic scholar.
[247] Derayeh, 120; and Paidar, 70.
[248] Afary, 188.
[249] Derayeh, 120; and Afary, 188.
[250] Bamdad, 42-43.

Safiyeh Yazdi, Effatiyeh School

The Effatiyeh ("House of Chastity") School in Tehran was founded by Safiyeh Yazdi, who was encouraged to do so by her husband, a high-ranking *mujtahid*. Likewise at her husband's request, Yazdi gave lectures to her pupils on the status of women, prompting the Ministry of Education to warn her that subjects outside the official syllabi for schools should not be taught. Her husband was among the clerics chosen to sit in the Majlis in order to ensure that its legislation were in line with Islamic precepts, and his unpretentious and open-minded nature, as well as his concern for the poor, endeared him among the masses. His popularity therefore protected the Effatiyeh School from the threat of further attacks instigated by antagonism directed at the school.[251]

Máh-Soltán Amir-e Sehhi, Tarbiat School

Máh-Soltán Amír-e Sehhi was another constitutionalist who was an early and active member of the National Ladies Society. She was married to a liberal-minded *mujtahid* who, like Tuba Ázmudeh's husband, was personally committed to furthering his wife's education. Sehhi was motivated to start the Tarbiat ("Education") School after seeing how the spread of literacy among women helped to strengthen the constitutionalist movement. Its curriculum emphasized the teaching of Islamic precepts, the intention of which was to prove to the masses of opponents to girls' education that the acquisition of knowledge was not incompatible with a belief in God.[252] Opponents of the school "used to get loiterers—very often psychopaths who then prowled the streets as there were no lunatic asylums—to walk into the school's premises and grin at the terrified girls, while they [the opposition] themselves would gather outside the

[251] Badr ol-Moluk Bamdad writes, "As this example shows, clear-sighted members of the Moslem clergy not only showed great devotion in the cause of constitutional government and national freedom for the whole people of Iran, but also gave pioneering help in the uplift of the nation's women. They too saw the need to strip the blinkers of ignorance off the women's eyes and to bring up a new generation of conscientious, educated mothers" (Bamdad, 45).
[252] Bamdad, 47-8.

gateway to enjoy the spectacle and jeer."[253]

Máh-Rokh Gowharshenás, Taraqqi School .

Máh-Rokh Gowharshenás was a "strictly religious"[254] constitutionalist and one of the early members of the National Ladies Society. She founded the Taraqqi ("Progress") School in Tehran in 1911, which later became a secondary school. Given the fact that her husband, a merchant, disapproved of girls' education, she kept her activities a secret from him for two years. It was a progressive school, so much so that it admitted boys to the "junior classes," where they studied alongside female students. Its repute was such that a high-ranking *mujtahid* sent his daughter to study there. Given the dearth of female teachers, she invited male supporters of women's advancement to teach at the school. Many of the Taraqqi School's pupils later became eminent professionals in Iran.[255] Gowharshenás often faced insults from Iranian women from lower classes who disapproved of her work—in one instance, a group of women threw her in a pool of water, causing her to have leg trouble for the rest of her life.[256]

Support from Men

Liberal-minded men likewise supported the cause of girls' education. A number of religious leaders supported establishment of new schools for girls, and female members of their own families were active educators.[257]

One of Iran's first girls' school—the Ecole Franco-Persane—was established by Mirá Yusuf Khán Richard, the son of an Iranian woman and a Frenchman who taught at the Dáru'l-

[253] Ibid, 48.
[254] Ibid, 45.
[255] Ibid, 46-7.
[256] Ibid, 46
[257] Afsaneh Najmabadi, "Women's Education in the Qajar Period," *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, 9 December 2011 <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/education-xxv-womens-education-in-the-qajar-period>. These religious leaders included Hájj Mírzá Hádí Dowlatabádí, father of Sedíqeh Dowlatabádí; Shaykh Hádí , father of Áqa-Beygom and Bíbí Najmábádí; and Shaykh Muhammad-Husayn Yazdí, husband of Safiyyeh Yazdí.

Funún.[258] Richard, the father of two girls, consulted with prominent men of the time who expressed a mutual desired that their daughters receive an education. He organized classes in a private home in 1906, which eventually turned into a school as the number of pupils grew. The school included a chemistry and physics laboratory, and adopted the French style of education.[259] Like its contemporaries, the Ecole Franco-Persane was the subject of harassment, which reached its height when an influential mullá declared from the pulpit that the school's founder led "their minds astray and [turned] them into unbelievers and wantons." The mullá vowed to supply his supporters with pickaxes and spades in order to attack the school.[260]

Religious and Ethnic Minority Schools for Girls

As discussed in Chapter 2, religious and ethnic minority groups were among the first to open schools for girls in the late nineteenth century. In the wake of the Constitutional Revolution, their efforts multiplied, and in the years following 1911, the Supreme Council on Education issued 49 licenses for Armenian, seven for Zoroastrian, and 30 for Jewish schools.[261]

Iran's Baha'i community pioneered efforts in providing education to girls in villages and remote towns, as well as urban centers. Given the particular emphasis placed on the equality of the sexes and the education of girls in Baha'i teachings, Baha'is were encouraged to open girls' schools alongside those for boys. The first modern Baha'i school for girls was the Tarbiyat School in Tehran opened in 1911, and by 1913, it was the third-largest school for girls in the city. It became one of the most well-respected girls' schools in Iran, so much so that Reza Shah Pahlavi himself eventually sent his daughters to that school. As its curriculum was largely secular, it attracted many students who were not Baha'is. Given the general opposition to the

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[258] Iran's first institution of higher education. See Chapter 1.
[259] Bamdad, 52-53.
[260] Ibid, 53.
[261] Jasamin Rostam-Kolayi, "Origins of Iran's Modern Girls' Schools: From Private/National to Public/State," *Journal of Middle East Women's Studies* 4, no. 3 (Fall 2008), 62.

Baha'i religion in Iran, it was not uncommon for clerics to incite mobs to attack and destroy some Baha'i schools for boys and girls, despite the fact that the schools' curriculum did not include instruction on the Baha'i faith.[262]

Male Support for Women's Rights

Most male support for women's advancement was motivated by a belief that the emancipation of women was good for the national interest: in other words, that Iran's national strength, which they believed was dependent on modernization of institutions and culture, likewise required a "modernized" approach to the status of women. Yet there were a number of progressive intellectuals, literary figures, and politicians whose position for women's advancement was more enlightened. These men called for women's recognition as equal to men and capable individuals in their own right.

Iranian Mothers as the Educators of a New Generation

A number of Iranian thinkers concerned with Iran's competitive advantage in a rapidly-modernizing world took on the cause of women for their role in raising a new generation Iranian patriots. These included the famed Iranian reformers Mirza Malcom Khan and Siyyid Hossein Taqizadeh, both of whom championed women's right to education and opposed polygamy.[263] As mentioned earlier, such thinkers argued that because women were the first educators of and transmitters of culture to her children, the education of females was necessary for national

[262] Moojan Momen, "The Baha'i Schools of Iran," in *The Baha'is of Iran*, ed. Dominic Parviz Brookshaw and Seena B. Fazel (London: Routeledge, 2008), 101-117.

[263] Malcolm Khan, for example, invited men to support women in "promoting humanity," as "women are the educators of children and hence the creators of our nation." Taqizadeh likewise wrote, "Women are the carriers of national traditions and customs. Women function as the main pillars and the firm foundations of ethnicity, religion, language, culture and the national heritage. Women can exert enormous influence in the education of the new generation" (Paidar, 72).

progress.[264] Hence, women's issues remained on some pro-constitutionalists' and reformists' agenda for this reason.[265]

Freedom from Western Domination

Another way in which reformists used the woman question to bolster the case for Iran's transformation and modernization was to link it with Russian and British economic and military domination, which had plagued Iran for over a century. This camp used, for example, women's unveiling a symbol of national liberation from chaos and European colonialism.[266] While there existed among some Iranians a fear of the West's corrupting influence on women, reformists likewise wondered whether the relative freedom European and American women experienced contributed to those regions' strength.

An example of this may be found in articles written by the satirical columnist Dekhoda in the periodical *Sur Esrafil*. In one particular article, Dekhoda encouraged women to educate themselves and to reject traditional practices. He held up Western women as models of progress; women "who have founded organizations, and attracted the attention of Western newspapers to their speeches and essays, and have written multiple books to establish the righteousness of their cause of enfranchisement."[267] Dekhoda called for women to become educated, organize, open schools, establish organizations, and "break their ever-dirty pots and pans behind them and drive backward-looking *mollas* [clergy members] out of their lives."[268]

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[264] Bayat-Philipp, 297.
[265] Paidar, 73.
[266] Amin, 63.
[267] Paidar, 63.
[268] Ibid.

The Case for Human Rights

Some progressive male intellectuals—namely, journalists, poets, and politicians—emerged as strong supporters of women's rights in this period. At times, these individuals challenged the more conservative arguments for women's advancement outlined above. They instead argued that women's demands—chiefly, access to education and political participation—were basic human rights from which women, as human beings and as men's equals, should not be excluded.

Among these were the parliamentary deputies Vakil al-Ru'aya and Siyyid Hossein Taqizadeh who, while unsuccessful in securing institutional support for women, were outstanding in the support they provided in debates on the parliament floor. Among these debates were those on women's suffrage, as discussed earlier, and the existence of women's *anjumans*. While they were unable to move the parliament to change its stance on women's suffrage, Ru'aya and Taqizadeh were instrumental in the Majlis's official stance to permit the existence of women's *anjumans*.

Articulation of Support for Women's Advancement Through Poetry

Given the importance placed on poetry in Iranian culture, it is telling that some Iranian poets took up the cause of women's advancement in their works. Prior poetry (even by the famed Persian poet Rumi) represented women in a derogatory manner—when not merely as beautiful playthings or as temptresses, then as "dragons," "snakes," and "devils."[269] This shifted in the first decade of the 20th century, when there emerged poetry that challenged the deprecating attitude toward women that was rooted in traditional Islamic belief that God made woman inferior to man. While such poetry initially stressed the importance of women's education as a

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[269] Bayat-Philipp, 304

means of bringing up a new generation of patriots, it evolved to assert that the woman was a human being worthy of consideration. These poems questioned prevailing attitudes and norms surrounding women and boldly questioned interpretations of the Qur'án that asserted women's inferiority. Some remarkable examples of this are by the poet Iraj Mirza; passages from his poetry are quoted below:

> Are women not human amongst us, or is there in women no power of distinction between good and evil?
>
> O girl of the Golden Age! Hasten toward the school. In the need of learning, accomplishment, and wisdom, there is no distinction between thee and men!

Similarly, the poet Lahuti wrote:

> I don't appreciate the beauty of one who is ignorant; fascinate me no more by thy beauty, rather show thy worth.

On the issue of veiling, Lahuti and the poet 'Ishqi wrote, respectively:

> Wherever thy
> veil is mentioned the rival laughs,
> but sobs choke my throat.
> I long to see thee free in the community.
> Upon thy soul I have no other desire except this.
>
> … so long as the women hide their heads in this shroud,
> half of the Persian nation remains dead.[270]

[270] Ibid, 305.

THE RISE OF REZA SHAH PAHLAVI AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR THE WOMEN'S MOVEMENT

The reign of Reza Shah Pahlavi (1925-1941) marked both the end of the Qajar Dynasty's 140 year reign of rule in Iran, and the decline of the grassroots Iranian women's movement. The fall of the Qajar Dynasty began in 1921, when a commander of the Persian Cossack Brigade named Reza Khan led a coup d'etat against the young Ahmad Shah. Reza Khan crowned himself "Reza Shah Pahlavi," thereby ushering in the Pahlavi Dynasty and becoming the country's effective leader.

Reza Shah's reign (1925-1941) marked a period of notable advances in women's rights and, paradoxically, the weakening of the Iranian women's movement. At the top of the new monarch's agenda was Iran's modernization, placing an emphasis on urbanization, Persian nationalism, and Western technological advancement. Reza Shah's modernization agenda was in part inspired by Turkey's advancement under Kemal Ataturk. It was after his visit to Turkey in 1934, where witnessed women who were unveiled and educated, that the Shah placed women's emancipation on his agenda to modernize Iran.[271]

Most significantly, Reza Shah banned the veil in 1936, making it illegal for women to wear the veil in public. Prior to this ban, some women in Iran had begun appearing in public unveiled, though they had been publicly harassed for doing so. While this state-mandated unveiling was a significant step, it had its consequences. Many women felt uncomfortable appearing in public unveiled, and so began for many females a period of self-imposed seclusion.[272] This prevented many from attending school despite the wider educational opportunities to them. After the Shah's abdication in 1941, veiling again became a matter of choice.

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[271] Nashat, Introduction to *Women and Revolution in Iran*, 26.
[272] Ibid, 27 and Derayeh, 129.

The "emancipation" that women experienced under Reza Shah was limited. Women were still not granted suffrage, and the Shah's legal reforms did not address the status quo regarding polygamy, child marriage, divorce and inheritance. While he sought to emulate Turkey's advancement under Ataturk, Reza Shah's policies diverged from Ataturk in a significant way with regards to Islam. Ataturk refused to adopt Shari'a-oriented law, believed in full equality of opportunity for women in all areas—legal, employment, educational, politics. Reza Shah, by contrast, banned certain traditional or "Islamic" practices such as veiling, but supported Shari'a law with regards to polygamy, divorce, and inheritance law—thereby maintaining the status quo that deprived women of certain rights that men had.[273]

While gains were made in the area of girls' education, this too was limited. Under the new Shah, Iranian girls enjoyed the possibility of attaining secondary education, but the newly-designed curriculum for female students was gender biased.[274] Furthermore, there were far fewer girls' primary and secondary schools than boys' schools—particularly in rural areas—and secondary schools were often forced to close due lack of teachers or drops in enrollment due to marriage.[275] Women were first permitted to attend university in 1934, though only a select number of courses of study were open to female students.[276]

Most crucially, Reza Shah's move to disband groups that posed a threat to his power—including some of the strongest women's *anjumans* and their associated publications—had a devastating effect on the women's movement that had steadily taken root throughout the first two decades of the twentieth century.[277] Reza Shah's policies, while intended to be in Iran's best

[273] Derayeh 135.
[274] Minoo Derayeh, "High Hopes and Broken Promises: Common and diverse concerns of Iranian women for gender quality in education and employment" (PhD diss, McGill University, 2002), 157.
[275] Ibid, 154.
[276] Ibid, 159.
[277] Nashat, Introduction to *Women and Revolution in Iran*, 28.

interests, changed the face of women's rights from an autonomous movement that sought full equality and rights for women to one that was state-mandated and selective in its approach. Given Reza Shah's aim to modernize Iran in the Western style, his actions arguably cemented the notion that women's emancipation was closely aligned with Westernization.

CONCLUSION

The Constitutional Revolution of 1905-11 opened an opportunity for women in Iran to call for their own rights. Though most of the participants of the burgeoning women's movement in its first decade were of the upper and upper-middle classes, their demands were classless in nature. With the rise of Reza Shah Pahlavi in 1925, the "woman question" shifted from being the domain of a grassroots movement to being a part of the Shah's agenda to modernize Iran.

CONCLUSION

The nineteenth and early twentieth centuries witnessed attempts by some Iranians to create a new culture in Iran. While for some this meant adopting the customs and norms of the West, for others, this culture meant retaining those things that were uniquely Iranian, but shedding those things that were the products of superstition and prejudice. Attempts at building this new culture were met with resistance—particularly by those who benefitted from the status quo, who likewise equated the institutional and social change that reformers advocated for with Westernization. But by the turn of the twentieth century, the forces of history and the will of a determined minority gave rise to the beginnings of change in Iran by way of the Constitutional Revolution, which led to the establishment of a constitutional monarchy and a parliament.

Among the elements of the old culture that was most resistant to change was that of the status of women. For centuries, and bolstered by interpretations of Islamic scripture, women largely remained confined to the home and enjoyed far less rights and privileges than men. But the exigencies of the Constitutional Revolution required women's active support. While some prominent women began to voice their opposition to females' disadvantaged position in the late nineteenth century, their participation in the Constitutional Revolution—which gave them an opportunity to both express their concerns with Iran's weaknesses and to organize and participate in the public sphere—gave rise to the beginnings of a women's movement in the decade following the revolution.

The movement was most successful in expanding opportunities for girls' education, and made advances in securing government supervision of women's health. These advancements were largely seen in urban areas, however, and most Iranian women remained illiterate and without access to health care services. Women were not able to, and worked less in, securing

political and legal rights for their sex.

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With the change in dynasty in 1925, the first phase of the women's movement came to a close. What began as a spontaneous movement inspired by grassroots socio-political change in Iran gradually turned in one element of a top-down policy of government centralization. The most notable of these were the expansion of opportunities for education for females, and the controversial abolition of the veil—a policy that, in the short-term, had mixed outcomes. Reza Shah's deposition in 1941 gave rise to a clerical backlash against his modernizing policies, resulting in a reversal of the gains made by the women's movement in decade following the Constitutional Revolution.

The inauguration of the Islamic Republic in 1979 led to a further reversal in gains made in the mid-twentieth century. Iranian women today hold fewer rights than men in matters related to marriage and divorce, inheritance, and child custody.[278] While female university students now outnumber males, in 2012, over thirty universities in Iran banned women from enrolling in courses in a number of disciplines, ranging from computer science to English.[279] Women make up less than 20 percent of the workforce, despite the fact that they comprise over 60 percent of the college population.[280]

That said, the gains of the first decades women's movement were to place the "woman question" on the agenda. The efforts of early women's rights activists required the government to take seriously matters of female education and health, and gradually, other issues related to women's rights and status. While defenders of women's rights in today's Islamic Republic of

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[278] Human Rights Watch, "Iran." In *World Report 2013* (New York, NY: 2013) <http://www.hrw.org/world-report/2013/country-chapters/iran?page=2>.
[279] Fariba Sahraei, "Iranian University bans on women causes consternation," *BBC News*, September 21, 2012 <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-19665615>.
[280] Deborah Amos, "Iranian Women Make a Push for Greater Opportunities," *NPR*, March 5, 2014.

Iran face pressure from the government, and despite the reversals made in women's rights since the 1979 revolution, women's rights ranks among the top four issues in Iran's national elections today.[281] In 2014, the Facebook group "My Stealthy Freedom"—to which women in Iran contribute photos of themselves *sans hijab* in a statement against compulsory veiling—garnered hundreds of thousands of followers worldwide.

At the dawn of the twentieth century, few would have imagined that Iranian women would arise so publicly, and so vehemently, to work toward the betterment of their country and, consequently, the emancipation of their sex. Though the present regime in Iran continues to deny females equal rights to men, the achievements of the present generation of Iranian women—among whom are activists, artists, politicians, educators, writers, and even a Nobel laureate—is a testament to their foremothers' modest but bold efforts over a century ago. It is true, as William Morgan Shuster wrote in 1912, that the actions of women during the Constitutional Revolution "upset the idea of centuries." Their actions, too, would have a hand in shaping the ideas, lives, and fortunes of women in the century to come.

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[281] Haleh Esfandiari, "The Women's Movement in Iran," *The Iran Primer* (Washington, D.C.: Woodrow Wilson Center, August 24, 2012), <http://www.wilsoncenter.org/article/the-womens-movement-iran>.

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