

SIX THEORIES ABOUT THE ISLAMIC REVOLUTION'S VICTORY

**Seyed Sadegh Haghightat
(Editor)**

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In the Name of Allah, the Mercy-giving, the Merciful

Preface

In the 100th anniversary of Imam Khomeini's birthday and at the threshold of the 22nd anniversary of the Iranian Islamic revolution's victory, we should admit that various aspects of this mass movement and its consequences have remained hidden.

Introducing different and even contrary theories and viewpoints, the present book attempts to scientifically examine this important phenomenon of the 20th century. In the introduction, the editor explains how he has chosen the articles and their logical arrangement in the book. The existence of sympathetic and opposed positions on the Islamic Republic government and the employing of a descriptive language in investigating the realities of Iran make the book more attractive.

We should thank all the scholars who contributed to this book, specially Dr. S. Sadegh Haghghat, the editor of the Persian text, and Mr. G. A'arabi, the translator. We are also grateful to Mr. Hassan 'Abd al - Rahman who edited the English text. We hope that political and social scholars will pave the way for further researches and publications by presenting their suggestions and critical comments.

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Introduction

The Islamic Revolution of Iran is in its 21st year. This phenomenon and its contradicting the expectations and theories of social scientists, had a deep effect on ideas extant in the field of social sciences, and engaged the attention of many thinkers. The "hows" and "whys" of the Islamic Revolution became the topic of an entire field of essays, books and articles in and out of Iran. How did the Shah of Iran, with the support of foreign powers and his 700,000 man army, collapse and lose power? This was a question that also occupied the mind of the Shah. Since he could not find a precise answer, he gave credence to the super powers' conspiracy against him.

After two decades since the victory of the Islamic Revolution, and with respect to the sea of writings in this regard, the real reasons for the Revolution's victory still remain a mystery to many, proof of this is the existence of conflicting opinions on the components of the victory of Iran's Islamic Revolution. The greatest challenge for foreign theorists in this regard is a lack of cultural context and the concomitant misunderstanding of the details of this phenomenon and the revolutionary movement of the Iranian people.

Perhaps, the most important challenge for most local theoreticians is the lack of depth in their analyses and the resulting superficiality in their views of the event. There are also issues that relate to the essence of the Islamic Revolution. One is the rapid and unexpected victory of the revolution, as well as the disparateness of the forces involved in the victory. In fact, many reasons and factors, such as the leadership of Imam Khomeini, (R.A.), the role of Islam and Shi'i ideology, massive popular participation and the opportunity to mobilize them, the

politically open environment (due to Carter's human rights slogan), dumbfoundedness of the super powers, Shah's illness, and the lack of coordination between economic development and cultural-political development (modernization factor) came together at a specific time and made the Revolution rapidly victorious.

In this book, a number of important views on the root causes of the Islamic Revolution of Iran have been collected and edited.

The ideas for the reasons of the victory of Iran's Islamic Revolution can be divided into six categories:

- 1- Conspiracy Theory,
- 2- Modernization Theory,
- 3- Theory of Economy,
- 4- Theory of Religion,
- 5- Theory of Dictatorship, and
- 6- Theory of Religious Leadership.

From the above division, we introduce the seven articles presented in this collection. The conspiracy views are so far from reality that we have sufficed to give explanations on the topic in the sixth and seventh articles. In fact, time has proven the emptiness of the conspiracy theory approach and if in the early days of the revolution's victory there were doubts in the minds of a few people that the super powers may have had a hand in it, now in the 21st year of the event, very few give this credence.

1. The first article is titled "A Glance at Various Approaches in Studying the Iranian Islamic Revolution", by Homeira Moshirzadeh. It was first printed in *Rahbord Magazine*, Number 9 (Spring 1996). The inclusion of this article serves as an introduction to reviewing other opinions that will be discussed in detail. Besides pointing to non-scientific and journalistic analyses, Moshirzadeh discusses five important elements, emphasizing:

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- the importance of cultural factors,
- the importance of socio-economic factors,
- psychological factors,
- political approach to the revolution,
- multi-causal approach.

She generally concludes that the multi-causal approach can best help in understanding and explaining this important historical event provided that its disparate elements are packed in an exacting theoretical framework.

Given that it points to different causes and factors, the multi-causal approach is more comprehensive than other explanations. The argument is that, firstly, we should introduce precisely these causes and factors; and secondly, take care that stressing the multi-causal approach doesn't lead us into too much generality, resulting ambiguity. A revolution, like any other social event, develops through a coalition of tens of different economic, political, social, and cultural factors. The important point is "Which factors, and how, were involved in the emergence of this phenomenon?" As stated, Moshirzadeh's article merely serves to introduce different techniques for analyzing the Islamic Revolution. Her division of these approaches is innovative and gives the reader the possibility to categorize and study each view on its own merits. She has placed Amir Arjomand's theory in the cultural approach section, while in our opinion, it is best suited to the multi-causal approach. This issue will be reviewed in detail in the seventh article.

2. The second article is called "Modernization and the Islamic Revolution" and is a selection from the book *Roots of Revolution: An Interpretive History of Iran*, by Nikkie Keddie. This book has also been translated into Persian by Abdolrahim Gavahi.

Keddie also emphasizes on causes other than modernization, such

as, revolutionary ideology and economic and political factors. However, her focus is on the larger issue of modernization. For this reason, we have titled this article "Modernization and the Islamic Revolution". Adherents to this theory seek the beginning of the revolution and its roots in the early 1960s. In that time, the Shah, under pressure from the United States, undertook his land reform and development programs. Since the progress of economic development faced many obstacles in Iran and was not coordinated with political progress, a crisis ensued in the years 1978-1979. The coalescence of other factors resulted in Iran's revolution.

If this theory is thought to encompass the most important reason for the victory of the Islamic Revolution, it falls short of its grand aim. Mere incongruity between economic development and socio-economic progress can not explain the victory of the Iranian Islamic Revolution. If we posit factors such as the revolutionary Shi'i ideology and the unique leadership of Imam Khomeini as secondary factors, we move far from the truth. What seems logical is that the modernization theory can only justify the grounds for the appearance of the Islamic Revolution (and fading of the monarchy's legitimacy). This idea has been employed to make this same point in the seventh article, replete with witnesses to this end.

3. The third piece is "Iran's Islamic Revolution in Comparative Perspective", written by S. Amir Arjomand.

This article was translated into Persian by Abbas Zarea and published in 1998, in a collection of articles titled *Theoretical Approaches to the Islamic Revolution*. The importance of this work is in the dissociation that the author has allowed between the causes and the conditions of the Islamic Revolution, and the teleology of the Islamic Revolution. In his construct of disconnection, Amir Arjomand places cultural, social and economic issues on one side;

and the moral motives of the revolutionary ideology of Shi'ism as the ultimate cause of the revolution in a second category. The partition presented is to some extent similar to the division presented in the seventh article.

4. The fourth article, "The Role of Ideology, Leadership and People in the Islamic Revolution", is a selection from the book titled/*In Analysis of the Islamic Revolution*.[^]

Mohammadi, in interpreting the causes of the revolution's victory, first introduces the people and then explains leadership and religion as the most important factors; however, he places greater emphasis on religion. For this reason, we have reversed the order of these three causes in the title of our article. As a matter of fact, this piece aims at proving the principal role of religion in the victory of the revolution.

5. The fifth essay, "Religion, The Most Important Element in the Islamic Revolution's Victory", is a selection from the book *The Islamic Revolution and its Roots*.^W

The above volume has for many years been the most important reference for outlining the general course of "the roots of the Islamic Revolution" in Iranian universities. The author takes religion as the basic factor in the revolution's victory and introduces the other elements as secondary or accelerating factors. In our view, there is no distinction between "religion" and "religious leadership" in the fourth and fifth articles. We shall see in the seventh article that this distinction is very necessary.

- 6- The sixth item, "A Comparative Study of Various Theories on Causes of the Occurrence of the Islamic Revolution", is a combination of an

1- Manoochehr Mohammadi. (Tehran: Amir Kabir, 1989).

2- Abbas-Ali Amid Zanjani. (Tehran: Nashre Ketabe Siasi, 1989).

article of the same title from the book *The Islamic Revolution and its Roots*, and parts of the book *An Introduction to the Islamic Revolution* by Sadegh Zibakalam (1980).

The above collection is a composite of the articles and essays presented at the First Congress of the Islamic Revolution and its Roots in 1995.

here, the author has attempted to refute the four theories of conspiracy, modernization, economy, and religion; and introduces the dictatorship theory as the most important cause of the revolution's victory. Since a more detailed explanation to this theory was published in *An Introduction to the Islamic Revolution*¹ by the same author, we have added parts of that book to the above article.

The theory of religion positions the beginning of the revolution in the 1960s; while in Zibakalam's view the start of the revolution goes back to 1970s. In his opinion, neither of the four theories suffices in explaining the causes. His criticism of the four assumptions is much more detailed than his explanations of the proof of the dictatorship prescription. In our opinion, as in his criticism of the four theories, this also holds true for the dictatorship supposition as well.

It must be noted that Zibakalam's classification of the causes of the Islamic Revolution has been generally accepted here. That does not necessarily mean, however, that it is the definitive conclusion ascribed to by the compiler of this book.

7. The seventh article begins with our explanatory criticism of the five theories and then presents the theory titled "The Role of Religious Leadership in the Victory of the Islamic Revolution".

On the basis of this view, the most important element in under-

1- A collection of articles, volume 1 is published.

2- Rozaneh Publishers, Spring of 1993.

pinning the revolution (and fading of the monarchy's legitimacy) was modernization; however, the most important factor in the victory of the Islamic Revolution was the religious leadership of Imam Khomeini (R.A.). In this article, the religious leadership factor has been distinguished from the element of religion (and the revolutionary ideology of Shi'i).

The author holds that proving this theory must be set aside for another opportunity, and in this manuscript, we will only set forth some of the evidence for this theory's proof.

These seven articles logically overlap each other. We hope that this collection will provide a modicum of assistance for the researchers and proponents of the Islamic Revolution in understanding this great historic phenomenon.

S. S. Haghghat

A Glance at Various
Approaches
in Studying
the Iranian Islamic Revolution

By: Homeira Moshirzadeh

Introduction

Non-scientific and Journalistic Analyses

Attempts to Describe the Islamic Revolution

- Emphasis on Cultural Importance
- Emphasis on the Significance of Economic and Sociological Factors
- Emphasis on Psychological Factors
- Political Approach to Revolution
- Multi-causal Approach

Introduction

The study of political and social revolutions is an essential area of research in social sciences. The very rare occurrence of revolutions provides unique possibilities for scientific research, theory testing, experimental examinations of existing assumptions and presenting new deductions. Until a few decades ago, theories of revolution focused on the French, Russian and Chinese experiences. In recent decades, with the occurrence of conflicts, upheavals and finally, revolutions in the Third World, the so called "exploration fronts" moved along with history¹⁾ and the studies of uprisings and revolutions in newly liberated countries and other countries of the so called "Third World" expanded.

With two successful revolutions in Iran and Nicaragua, this field of research found new depth from the late 1970s. The inexorable and overwhelming rise of the masses in the years 1978 and 79, which was the Islamic Revolution, and its triumph and establishment of the Islamic Republic, was the most important of these events, and thus became the center of attention for investigation into revolutions.

Before the start of the turmoil, which ended in the Islamic Revolution in Iran, and even far after that, despite the extent of scientific efforts for outlining a theory about the event which should have included prediction of this phenomenon, very few people anticipated the overthrow of the Shah, the fall of an ancient monarchy and the establishment of the Islamic Republic. The possibility of creating instability in the Middle East's "island of stability", was never raised. In

1- Geoff Goodwin and Theda Skocpol, "Explaining Revolutions in the Contemporary Third World" politics and society, vol . 17 (1989), p. 489.

fact, the occurrence of the Islamic Republic surprised almost all of the revolution's spectators, from journalists and politicians to Iran experts, researchers and theorists.

With the Islamic Revolution's victory, the presentation of different analysis about it begun and now after seventeen years, the volume of articles and books written about the revolution's cause and its nature is quite voluminous. However, there are still disagreements over issues such as the nature of the Pahlavi rulership, Iran's social structure, etc., among researchers. In addition, the ad hoc theories posited about Iran's Islamic Revolution do not delineate the Islamic Revolution from all aspects; however, the Islamic Revolution has had an important role in modifying the theorists' opinions and in the presentation of new theoretical paradigms.

Our goal from this outline is a quick reviewing of different perspectives that a variety of authors have taken from the Islamic Revolution; and we hope laying these views out could open the way for further study and investigation by Iranian researchers. The analysis of the Islamic Revolution falls in two main categories. There are writings with a journalistic aspect which are not scientific; and works that have studied the Islamic Revolution more profoundly and primarily from a theoretical perspective. Here, after referring to the non-scientific journalistic analysis, we proceed to different theoretical viewpoints towards the Islamic Revolution.

Non-scientific and Journalistic Analyses

The work of many of the politicians, military men, diplomats, journalists, etc., about the Islamic Revolution would fall into this category. Some of them have a biographic aspect which includes the writer's personal memories of the revolution both before and after. The other group, gives second-hand, and inaccurate, reports that present a series

of factors as the causes of the revolution, without any theoretical support. This species of writing presents the revolution's process in a narrative form and gives its own analysis about it. Of course, some of this work, because of its strong narrative aspect, could be useful to researchers. Part of this material was written by western politicians and foreign political officials, particularly Tehran-based ambassadors of western countries. Among these writings we can point to the memoirs of British Ambassador Anthony Parsons, and US Ambassador William Sullivan, and also General Robert Huyser.¹

Sullivan, who lived in Tehran during 1977-79, witnessed the outburst of the chain of events, and finally the revolution's victory. He describes the period in a narrative manner, in his book *Mission to Iran*, and highlights the role of leading personalities in politics and in the process of Iran's revolution. The envoy describes economic conditions, the situation of military, police and security force, the social structure and the role of Shi'ism in Iranian society, and gives some information to the reader in each field. However, he admits his unfamiliarity with Iran before his tenure as ambassador and makes no effort to explain the background of these events²)

Other works of this genre consist of memoirs and writings of key personalities of the Pahlavi regime. Among them, we refer here to Mohammad Reza Pahlavi himself, who after his fall, in the book *Answer to History* searches for the cause of the revolution's emergence and his subsequent downfall in the machinations of western governments conspiracy. His attempt is simple minded affair³).

1- See for example: William H. Sullivan, *Mission to Iran*, New York, W. W. Norton, 1981.

2- Ibid, Sullivan.

3- Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, *Answer to History*, translated by Hossain Abutorabian, Tehran, translator, 1371.

The Pahlavi memoir is rooted in "conspiracy theory", with every event related to a human source that is yet an absolute power able to do whatever it wishes. In the Shah's particular case, this absolute power was the West, and especially the United States and Britain. His perception of events was itself linked to a distinct phobia towards them which had long existed in his mind.

Other personalities related to the Pahlavi regime adopt the same analysis of the revolution. In general, no evidence is given verifying such analysis, and these writings could be viewed as the psychological projection characterizing the believers of this theory. Fereidoon Hoveyda, Hossain Fardoost, Abbas Ghareh Baghi, and Parviz Raji, were all political-military experts of the Pahlavi era, who have described the Islamic Revolution in their memoirs¹).

For instance, Fereidoon Hoveyda, the brother of former prime minister Amir Abbas Hoveyda, and one of the closest persons to the regime in Iran, in his book, *The Fall of the Shah*, after reviewing the course of crisis leading to the fall of the Shah, turns to the roots of the crisis' emergence. To describe the revolution, he delineates the structure of the dictatorship and the monarchy's missteps as the determining factors in the revolution's emergence. The author pinpoints financial corruption, censorship, moral corruption, excessive purchase of arms, economic decline, the one party system and underestimation of the power of religion, as the leading factors of the revolution.² In this review, too much attention has been given to the Shah's incremental

1- Ref. to Fereidoon Hoveyda, *The Fall of Shah*, translated by Mehran, Tehran, Ettelaat, 1365; and Hossain Fardoost, *The Emergence and Fall of Pahlavi's Ridership*, Tehran, Ettelaat, 1367; and Abbas Ghareh Baghi, *The General'?! Confessions*, Tehran, Nei Publication, 1366; and Parviz Raji, *Takht-E-Tavoos's Servant*, translated by Mehran. Tehran, Ettelaat Publication, 1364.

2- Hoveyda, *Ibid*, from page 89.

transition toward dictatorship without taking into consideration the economic, social and political structural factors involved.

A number of journalists have also analyzed the revolution, but these writings do not offer the same research value. Many of them are not considered good references because of their lack of dependence on reliable sources and the weight given to their personal perceptions. Others, however, are more trustworthy and though considered narrative history, they offer valuable information to readers by relying on both formal and informal documents and evidence and sometimes personal experiences.

Included in this type of work, that has analyzed the revolution's historic aspects specifically and its formative process, is the book *The Story of the Revolution*. The material presented relies on fairly reliable sources. This book is a concise history of the important events of Iran's recent decades. The writer first describes the civil movements in the Qajar era in which the clergy actively participated, and seeks for the roots of the Islamic Revolution in those incidents.

He identifies the start of the revolution in the policies of the Pahlavi era which in general, along with despotic rulership, enmity toward the clergy, and foreign interference, especially that of the Americans after the August 19, 1953 coup. According to the writer, in the last years of Mohammad Reza Shah's rule, the execution of ambitious economic policies and the foreign powers' emphasis on observing human rights, the regime felt itself under pressure.

The chain of events that formed the process of revolution, has been given a relatively detailed review in the book from the period January 1977 to February 1978. The context of many of the revolutionary era's bulletins and speeches are accurately placed. In its analytical section, this volume contains politicians and researchers' opinions about Iran's revolution. In the end, the author provides his analysis of the revolution

which includes a list of long and short term social, economic, political, cultural and individual factors. In so doing, he refutes superficial theorizing on conspiracies, whether based on America's working for creating a green belt around the Soviets to prevent the penetration of communism, or the alleged British plan to take revenge from America for taking its place in Iran¹⁾

Among non-Iranian authors, we can refer to Dilp Hiro²⁾. He reviews the Islamic tradition and the formation of Shi'ism and the relationship between Shi'is, Shia theologians and the government. In analyzing the events of the Pahlavi era, he also refers to two cultures (traditional culture among theologians and business class, and the westernized culture among the modernist and upper classes) that resulted from Reza Shah's fast-paced reforms. In Mohammad Reza Shah's time, he points out the course of changes which resulted in the Shah's absolute power, accompanied by the suppression of opposition and his working to weaken the religious leaders and isolate Imam Khomeini (R.A.).

Hiro tables the growth of dissatisfaction from inflation and lack of freedom, and explains that considering the existence of organizational weakness among the opposition and suppression of organizations and groups, only the religious leaders remained in a position to lead a protest movement. This came in the context wherein the Shah, in agreement with Washington, had opened society somewhat and the objections from traditional and newly constituted constituencies were

1- Mahmoud Toloee. *The Story of the Revolution*. Tehran, Elm Publication. 1370.

2- However, Hire's book is not exclusively limited to the Islamic Revolution's analysis and the major part of this book is attributed to the post revolution event. Bui in the first three chapters of the book, which makes a complete section, he reviews the Islamic Revolution's triggering factors and its forming process. Ret. to:

Dilp Hiro. *Iran Under the Ayatottahs*, (London and New York: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1987).

being aired in different ways.

As we see, since this type of work does not rely on a certain theoretical frame, therefore, when describing a phenomenon like the Islamic Revolution, they collect data from different spheres, place very distant historic factors next to recent events, present structural elements along with characteristic ones -- without establishing a logical connection between these different phenomena at different levels. This is in sharp contrast to an approach that relies on a theoretical structure that could lead us to causal explanation of the phenomena, provide the possibility for comparison, and clear the path for anticipating similar phenomena in similar conditions in other societies. The next section concerns the efforts made in this field.

Attempts to Describe the Islamic Revolution

In the past seventeen years, a great many absorbing scientific works have been published by depending on different theoretical approximations to explain the Islamic Revolution. Many writers have tried to explain the revolution on the bases of various assumptions extant in the scientific observations of the phenomenon of the revolution. Attempts have been made to use the Islamic Revolution as a case for theoretically assaying other theories. With this method, some modifications have been made in the theories' old traditions. Some have looked at the Islamic Revolution from a different perspective, while others made attempts to explain the event by relying on various suppositional models and a compound presentation of them.

Taking the inefficiency of classic social meta-theories, there has been little attempt to use them in describing the Islamic Revolution. However, since their traces are found in recent writings as the general views towards revolution phenomenon, their concepts, presumptions and statements have been employed in new modelings. Among the

works that Jack Goldstone refers to as the "first generation" of the revolution theories¹), it seems like Crane Brinton's narration from the paradigm of natural history^{1^2}) generally conforms to the different steps in the Islamic Revolution's life cycle.

Putting intellectuals aside, the government's unsolvable crisis created the revolutionary condition. The regime's improper response to this crisis, namely enforcing necessary reforms in an inappropriate manner and the lack of inserting effective force, led to the emergence of revolution. This model has been referred to in some of the works related to the Islamic Revolution¹?), but the natural history explanation will not tell us how and why the government's crisis occurred and how the developing policies of the Shah created a government that was vulnerable to the disturbing factors from the outside world. Neither is it sensitive to the amazing effect of world's historic processes on national government, and how later changes in the socio-economic structure (as in Iran's case) do not usually bring much change in the class arrangement.

Brinton's model does not show the opposition groups' keen combination or how they worked on pursuing their intellectual benefits. The school of natural history, merely describes a collection of visible features while ignoring the reasoning and ambitions of the groups who pursue their defined interests. It does not illustrate the formation of the revolution's causative factors. Though Iran's revolution went through the same stages as other revolutions, it seems that the Brintonesque frame is not

1- Jack Goldston, *Theories of Revolution: The Third Generation*, World Politics, vol. 32. (1980). pp. 425-453.

2- Ref. to: Crane Brinton, *The Autopsy of Four Revolution*[^], translated by Mohsen Salasy, Tehran. Nou Publications, 1363.

3- Ref. to some reasonings of Manoochehr Mohammadi in an analysis on Islamic Revolution. Tehran. Amir Kabir. 1365.

very helpful in describing the emergence of revolutionary conditions in Iran/¹)

Among different theories considered in studying revolutions under the heading of the third wave or the second and third generation, some are taken into more consideration, such as the economic and sociological theories, social, psychological and social, and social-political psychological theories. Besides, considering the significance of Islam and Shi'ism in the whole process of revolution, the cultural explanations of the revolution have also been discussed.

Regarding the complexity of the revolution, a group of writers have decided that some certain dimensions should not divert our attention from other dimensions. They have, therefore, chosen a multi-causal process for studying the revolution. Based on cultural, socio-economic, socio-psychological and political factors, and multi-causal processes, five explanations could be posited for the Islamic Revolution.

Emphasis on Cultural Importance

From this perspective, the cause of revolution should not be sought in economic problems, but in cultural factors. This approach is dominant in most works published in Iran after the revolution. The focus of these works is on cultural values and leadership factors of the revolution, more than any other factor. For example, in the book called *The Movement of Clergy of Iran*, the author, in analyzing the historic struggles of Shi'i clergy in Iran, tries to show that the Islamic Revolution is, in general, the continuation of the same movement. It follows that the fall of the monarchy should also be looked for in its separation from Islam and ignoring religious rites, in the contexts of the ability of the clergy to

1- M. Hadi Semati, *Power, Discontent, Resistance*, unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation (University of Tennessee, 1993).

mobilize people, based on Islamic sentiments/¹⁾

Hamid Algar in his *The Roots of the Iranian Revolution*, presents "Shi'ism and Imam Khomeini's leadership as reviving a tradition", and "presentation of Islam as an ideology" as the roots of the revolution, but won't put these factors in a specific theoretical frame/²⁾

Asaf Hussain, in the volume *Islamic Iran: Revolution and Counter*, emphasizes that "understanding and evaluation of the Islamic revolution through western secular standards is impossible"/³⁾ and therefore, the study of revolution should be done by taking into consideration the ideological element, the role of Islamic opposition, legitimacy, education and particularly the leadership/⁴⁾ Of course, his analysis is more of an effort to understand the revolution than to delineate its causes.

Besides the mentioned authors who have a positive view about the Islamic Revolution, some of the revolution's critical analysts also underline cultural importance. Said Amir Arjomand, in the book *The Turban For the Crown: The Islamic Revolution in Iran*, believes that to understand Iran's revolution, considering two basic factors is essential; one is the shi'i clerical authority's structure, and the other is the effect of modernized government on Iranian society. He takes a glance at socio-economic factors and pays more attention to the role of values in the revolution, and explains the determining characteristic of the revolution as its being value-oriented. The author emphasizes the ideological importance of the revolution as the essential characteristic in defining it. In this book, the revolution is more the result of a fading

1- See: AH Davani, *The movement of the Clergy of Iran*, vol. 1-10 (Imam Reza Cultural Foundation).

2- Hamid Algar, *The Roots of the Iranian Revolution* (London: Open Press, 1983).

3- Asaf Hussain. *Islamic Iran: Revolution and Counter* (London: Frances Printer. 1985).

4- Ibid, pp. 54-104.

Shah and his legitimacy than the consequence of army's disorganization.¹

In all, it seems the cultural view cannot alone explain the revolution because it does not explain many of the important issues; for example, why the movement of Khordad 15 (1953), which had the same cultural nature as the revolutionary movement of the years 1977-78, did not end in victory, but the Islamic Revolution did? This shows that political, social and economic factors must be considered in explaining the revolution. In Foran's opinion, the problem with this viewpoint is that, it does not focus on the role of other social forces, due to its emphasis on the role of cultural, Shi'i and clergy factors²)

Emphasis on the Significance of Economic and Sociological Factors

Works emphasizing the significance of socio-economic factors in the emergence of the Islamic Revolution are, in a way, just the opposite of the cultural approach. In these explications, the role of political economy or social structure is more emphasized and the cultural and sociological factors are considered as assumptions, and thus, do not fit in the descriptive model.

One of the works explaining Iran's revolution by considering economic factors is *the Economic Origins of the Iranian Revolution* by Robert Looney. By analyzing the strategy of development, Looney concludes that the execution of this scheme, with regard to the lack of fundamental reforms, could not succeed; and the government was not able to recognize the scope of the dissatisfaction resulting from injustice

1- Said Amir Arjomand, *The Turban For the Crown: The Islamic Revolution in Iran* (New York: (Morel University Press, 1988). pp. 189-91.

2- John Foran. *The Iranian Revolution of 1977-79: A Change for Social Theory*, in John Foran. ed. *A Century of Revolution* (Boulder: West view Press, 1993), p.163.

and short term social displacements inherent in the economic programs based on development models.

In the economic development programs, no attention was given to the relationship between development goals and programs and the problems resulting from the current policy makings which could only be created by combining the program and policies of development and stability. Inflation was considered a short term and solvable problem but when predicaments reached a high pitch, shock therapy was applied, which was naturally against stability. The government, instead of adopting a solid and systematic effort of broad development, took the short term management approach toward the crisis.

At this point, the relationship between the economic transformation and the decline of the supporting regime revealed themselves and the unequal distribution of income fueled the outburst of dissatisfaction. A mere economic dealing with the revolution's emergence could not achieve a definite end. Not considering the government's vulnerability, social structure, and the role of ideology and leadership is evident in this approach. Many governments in similar economic conditions, could stop the riots from turning to revolution, because of the structural nature in political and social systems and by relying on a legitimizing ideology; but the economic approach pays no attention to such matters/¹)

Homayoon Katouzian in the book, *The Political Economy of Iran*, presents a description of the Islamic Revolution, by analyzing Iran's conditions from the nineteenth century till the establishment of the Islamic Republic. He recognizes the years 1961 to 1978 as the years of oil dictatorship. In this period, some of the elements of modernism which were being fed with the oil income, gave shape to what he calls pseudo-modernism: Non-critical negation of traditions, values, agencies,

1- Robrt E. Looney, *Economic Origins of the Iranian Revolution* (New York, pergamon press, 1982).

etc., and Iranians as a handicapped people.

He introduces a combination of oil dictatorship and pseudo-modernism as the profound origins of Iran's revolution, and believes that, for the same reason, the revolutionary movement had an anti-dictatorship nature and also was against pseudo-modernism.

Katouzian observes that the government and the social structure of Iran were totally different from that of the West. We could not say that there was an absolute government in Iran, but it could be said that there was an absolute state in Iran, and that the government in Iran was self-centered, autocratic, and unfettered by any law, custom, tradition, etc. In addition, given the lack of a feudalist background and the government's absolute rule over the economy which was intensified by the oil income, Iran was a society without, strictly speaking, any social class. The government was also independent of the society because it was dependent on oil income¹⁾

Despite Katouzian's potent analysis, his lack of attention to social forces and the sources under their control, prevents him from describing the cause of the revolution's emergence in a certain period. Many other countries had the same conditions as in Iran — dependence on oil income and the dictatorial configuration of the government -- also existed, for example, in countries like Saudi Arabia and Nigeria; but that didn't lead to a revolution. Besides, as Farhi states, Katouzian, by emphasizing absolute government rule, cannot answer the question why the government could not widely suppress its opposition. This means a limitation in power. In other words, Katouzian's use of the "concept" of dictatorship, blocks the analysis of internal and external pressures and bottlenecks²⁾

1- Ibid, different pages.

2- See Farideh Farhi. *State Disintegration and Urban - Based Revolutionmy Crisis*, Unpublished Ph.D dissertation (University of Colorado, 1986), pp. 253-56.

Theda Skocpol, The revolution's famous theorist, in an article titled "Rentier State and Shi'i Islam in the Iranian Revolution", in reviewing the causes of the emergence of the revolution in Iran, introduces the vulnerabilities of a rentier or collector state, (with continuous oil income), and the existence of civic gatherings and local organizations, independent from the government and related to other social classes (Bazaar). This merged with the presence of a rooted ideology in the society (Shi'ism), with certain symbols and legends used to justify martyrdom and sacrifice, and finally, the easy encounter with death against the regime's suppression¹⁾

This article illustrates the existing problems in generalizing Skocpol's structural model onto the Islamic Revolution. As the author herself writes, "If only in one case the revolution would have occurred by a massive social movement to intentionally destroy the ancient system, that case would have been Iran's Revolution against the Shah"²⁾ Yet, she demonstrates that she has kept faithful to her main analytical framework. She writes, "The revolution of Iran must also be comprehended from a large perspective view and a structure based on history; a perspective that would proceed to mutual relations among government, society, and organized diplomacy in Iran, and would place Iran in the internationally evolving political and economic path"³⁾ Despite this, she can not ignore the importance of beliefs and cultural systems in creating revolutionary action, and for this reason, she concentrates on the mentioned factors — the rentier state, Shi'i and local organizations -- as the unique features of Iran's revolution. This apparently is an indicator of considerable divergence from her primary view.

1- Theda Skocpol. *Rentier State and Shi'a Islam in the Iranian Revolution, Theory and Society*, vol. 11 (May 1982), pp. 256-83.

2- Ibid, p.267.

3- Ibid, p.286.

Emphasis on Psychological Factors

Considering the individualistic character of the government and the determining effect of the Shah's personal decisions, his characteristic psychology has also been considered for rooting Iran's revolution. Marvin Zonis, in the book, *Majestic Failure*, holds that the victory of Iran's revolution was not an inevitable task and if before the start of the revolution, the Shah had undertaken some democratic reforms, and during or even after the revolution, he was capable of suppressing it, he could have kept his throne. But his personal traits, carried over from childhood and youth, made him consistently hesitant and doubtful. Thus he acted tardily and inefficiently and this opened the way for his fall/¹)

Although, the pivotal role of the Shah's character necessitates attention to his personal features, it is also important to notice the social, political, and cultural factors allowing the growth of such a government, the long term structural factors which came together at a certain historic point and also the opposition's ability to mobilize sources at a certain historic point, in order to explain the emergence and also victory of the Islamic movement. There have been many characters similar to the Shah in the history of many societies, but they have not been overthrown by a revolutionary movement, therefore, attention should be given to other factors as well.

The explanations forwarded in Davis and Garr's socio-psychological model, have also been applied in the study of the Islamic Revolution. The main point of these explanations concerns the axis of the J-curve model. The tremendous socio-economic changes of the 1960s and early 1970s created a steadily growing improvement in the living standards in Iran. But after this period of relative welfare, the sudden decline in the

1- Marvin Zonis, *Majestic Failure*, Translated by Abbas Mokhber (Tehran: Tarhe Nou, 1991).

middle of the 1970s took place, when the government faced an intense decrease in economic growth. The resulting gap between the existing high expectations, and the level of needs fulfillment, created an awareness of structural weakness and provided the incentive for revolutionary anger.

Although Hussein Bashiriye attempts a combined theoretical approach, he agrees with Davis's general argument. He writes that by taking a look at Iran's situation in light of the above mentioned theories, it seems that the period of 1973-78, namely the years prior to the revolution, are in harmony with Davis's theory. Therefore, we will show how the increase in economic resources, in a short period, raised the expectations of the low income class, and how these expectations kept increasing in the crisis period that came afterward, while the regime's ability to respond to them continued declining¹⁾

The most important problem with this approach is the impossibility of proving a connection between individual expectations and universalizing it to all the people, the collective expectations and the actual protest. Periodic trends of expectation upswings, and then, government's failure in providing them have not ended in uprisings in many societies. The essential point is to determine how these collective sources of disturbances and the potential of the groups in manifesting them are affected. The ways these structural changes affect into class confrontations and the exact nature of allocation and application of the resources are different, considering the specific socio-economic and cultural history of the society being studied.

Farrokh Moshiri, following the same socio-psychological line of logic, relies on Ted Robert Garr's theory of relative deprivation. By using the

1- Hussein Bashiriye, *State and Revolution in Iran: 1962-1982* (London: Groom Heim, 1984), p.85.

clergy as the authoritative group, he argues that the outstanding effect of westernization was the decrease in the collective power of the clergy. Yet, their collective value expectations remained relatively the same¹⁾ The gap created was due to the decrease in social influence and financial sources, against and the increase in the government's efficiency and emergence of secular classes. The rift between the power of the clergy's collective value of collective expectations, led to dissatisfaction.

Moshiri writes that given the financial strains the government placed on the clergy and consequences of the government's efforts to create social changes in the Pahlavi era, the clergy's collective value position declined. Since there are no grounds on which to say the collective value expectations of the clergy had also declined, therefore, a case of declining relative deprivation could not be diagnosed²⁾

This approach has many methodological and theoretical problems. The argument depends completely on the assumption that all people experience an individual deprivation in the same manner. It is the illusion of deprivation that causes revolutionary anger. A theorist who assumes this relationship exists in the real world, will relate this cause to the players. But, it could never be affirmed that it is the ultimate cause.

The leap from an individual deprivation to a collective one, has not been sufficiently observed. Are there any intermediate agents in the process through which the individual's deprivation would restore itself at the group level? Relative deprivation of other groups could not be deduced from the clergy's deprivation. Besides that, the relative deprivation frame, as Moshiri puts it, will not be of any help in understanding interactions that change its subsequent deprivation and dissatisfaction into revolutionary action. The last point is that the

1- Farrokn Moshiri, *The State and Social Revolution in Iran* (New York: Peter Lang, 1985), p. 102.

2- Ibid, p. 105.

experimental evidence proving the decline in the collective power of the clergy is not so strong and could easily be argued against.

Political Approach to Revolution

Some theorists have tried, explicitly or implicitly, to use Parsonsian functionalism as their general theoretical framework for explaining Iran's Revolution. These researchers, who are mostly dependent on Huntington's narration of functionalism, stress the speed of modernization in Iran. According to this analysis, the rapidity of change acted as a balancing force which put immense pressure on the social system. When the Shah was carrying out his vast socio-economic development programs, during the time when new groups were being formed that needed to be absorbed in political institutions and were able to organize a new socio-economic system, he did not build the enduring entities able to absorb the new emerging forces that had been created in the modernization process.

Abrahamian, the main proponent of this line of thinking, writes that the revolution took place because the Shah undertook modernization at the socio-economic level, thereby, expanding the middle class and the industrial labor class. But he could not achieve development at the political level. This failure widened the gap between the government and social structure, closed the linking channels between the political system and the whole population, increased the rift between the ruling party and new social forces. More importantly, this process shattered the few bridges that had been built in the past between political organizations and the traditional social forces, particularly the Bazaar and the religious authorities.¹

1- Ervand Abrahamian, "Structural Causes of the Iranian Revolution" *Middle East Research and Information Project Research Reports*, No. 81 (May 1980), p. 21.

Functional analysis, in general, leads to this tautology and thus, cannot make a distinction between the systems characteristics and causal mechanisms. Consequently, this line of argument attributes the sole potentiality of the revolution's emergence to events that occurred after the fact. In addition, the major mobilization of the lower class masses in Iran's revolution, requires observation of ideology and organization as independent variables. The functional theory gives little weight to these variables, and therefore, cannot explain why and how the masses follow a particular leader or a certain group in the revolution, and not others.

Abrahamian often relates statements which have roots in Marxist thinking and sometimes are not in harmony with his functionalistic analysis. Huntington's frame of reference does not call attention to the power relationship between classes and between classes and government. In addition to the problems resulting from the lack of logical integration, the experimental evidence does not indicate a relationship between rapid modernization and revolutionary consequences either. In the mid-1970s, when the Shah's modernization program was at its peak, no observer from academia or the world of diplomacy would have anticipated the occurrence of a revolutionary rebellion in Iran. The imbalance between socio-economic and political advancements, as the cause of revolution according to definition, is a correct statement which does not tell us why the revolution took place in the time that it did. Therefore, using different types of functional explanation entails serious experimental, methodological and theoretical problems/¹)

In explaining Iran's revolution, in addition to the political theories based on the functional approach, the ideas founded on contradictory concepts of the society have also been used. The most important of these theories belongs to Charles Tilly who portrays the process of the

1- see: Semati, op cit.

revolution and the opposition's ability to mobilize resources to confront the state.

Misagh Parsa, in the book *Social Origins of the Iranian Revolution*, by relying on this theory, explains the appearance of a revolutionary coalition based on group and class interests, communication networks, organizations, economic sources, suppression elements, ideology and leadership. He presents his own analysis of the activities of the main groups participating in the revolution, such as the clergy, business class and laborers. Parsa observes that the Bazaar was the first group mobilized and led its resistance through mosques. The mosques were a nationwide network for mobilization and a safe place for gatherings and communications.

The Open Policy Doctrine of the government provided the opportunity for other dissatisfied groups, especially in the economic dimension but many of their demands took a political form, and a vast coalition of social classes took shape which all accepted the leadership of Ayatollah [Imam] Khomeini. Finally a combination of social disruption, weakness in the military establishment and attacks on the armed forces, paralyzed the government. And dual sovereignty emerged which finally ended in the victory of the revolutionaries and the fall of the monarchy/¹)

Jerrold Green, also proceeds to analyze Iran's revolution by accepting Huntington's general approach and its connection with the theory of source mobilization. He divides the political participation process into two phases: Mobilization and counter-mobilization. In his opinion, modernization politicizes people, and a lack of space created for participation could lead to political turmoil, and finally, revolution. He believes that the Shah's government was not able to control this

1- Misagh Parsa. *Social Origins of the Iranian Revolution* (New Brunswick and London: Rutgers University Press, 1984).

mobilization through creating proper mechanisms. The failure of (the Shah's) Rastakhiz party in mobilizing the middle and lower classes to support the regime, finally led to the organization of a counter-mobilization, created by the split of society into two parts of the supporters and opponents of the regime, (simplification of politics). And victory at any level of the revolution increased its unity and integrity¹).

Although Green proceeds to explain the social characteristics of Iranian society and refers to it as an effective factor in selecting the revolution's leadership and points to the power of religious institutions and classes in the process of counter mobilization, however, he does not exactly clarify how the counter-mobilization took shape.

His reference is to factors such as, the decline in the regimes authoritative forces, simplification of politics, politicization of groups which had not hitherto been political, crisis creating events and the regime's brutal response to people's movement without considering the role of the leaders, their conduct and their maneuvering in mobilizing the masses.⁽²⁾

Multi-causal Approach

Many of the Islamic Revolution analysts believe it was ultimately the result of different coinciding elements along the economic, political and cultural-ideological axes. However, in the works referred to earlier, there is less tendency to put emphasis on a specific cause, as the essential factor of the revolution and the authors practically point at different causes. But some put more stress on the necessity of paying attention to a collection of factors, the conjunction of which has formed the

1- Jerrold Green, "Counter-mobilization as a Revolutionary Form". *Comparative Politic**, vol. 16 (Jan. 1984).

2- Mehran Kamrava, *Revolution in Iran* (London and NewYork: Routledge, 1990), p 8.

revolution's occurrence.

In the case of Michael Fischer in the book, *From Religious Dispute to Revolution*, he has allocated the major part of his analysis to reviewing Iran's religious culture. This work is among those emphasizing the importance of the cultural elements of the Islamic Revolution's occurrence. He, however, thinks that the causes of revolution and the timing of its occurrence was economic and political. In point of fact, the form of revolution and the place of its occurrence was mostly due to the tradition of religious protest¹⁾

Nikkie R. Keddie in the book, *Roots of Revolution: An Interpretive History of Iran*, tables the changes of various levels in order to explain the Islamic Revolution: execution of reforms along with economic growth and at the same time, its negative effect on different social groups and classes, from one side, and the suppression of political groups and lack of freedom, from the other side, cleared the path for the revolution.

Meanwhile, a change in the way of thinking and the Shi'i assuming revolutionary and radical traits which transformed it into the ideology of the revolution, is of importance. She traces the socio-political and ideological-psychological aspects and takes into account the existence of a classic pre-revolution situation, i. e, occurrence of economic difficulties after a period of flourishing and consequently, the creation of a gap between expectations and realities²⁾ Yet, her analysis is a totally historical one and lacks a specific theoretical foundation.

Fred Halliday in his article titled "The Iranian Revolution: Uneven Development and Religious Populism" searches for the main causes of the emergence of Iran's revolution in the simultaneity of the appearance

1- Michael Fischer, *From Religious Dispute to Revolution* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1980).

2- See: Nikkie Keddie, *Roots of Revolution: An Interpretive History of Iran* (New York, 1982).

of contradiction and conflict in developing capitalism and "the existence of reactionary institutions and persevering popular resistance against the transition process". He recognizes five main elements for Iran's revolution, which are: uneven and rapid development of capitalistic economy in Iran, political weakness of the monarchial regime, vast coalition of the opposition forces, the role of Islam in mobilizing forces and the changing and uncertain ground for international environment/¹)

These factors are of undeniable importance. However, it is necessary to theoretically and historically determine what the sources of these factors are and how they could be put together in a general frame.

Farideh Farhi in the article "State Disintegration and Urban-Based Revolutionary Crisis: A Comparative Analysis of Iran and Nicaragua" has borrowed Skocpol's concept of state independence from social classes — whether in the sense of the entirety and its particular logic or in the sense of the possibility of pursuing its own certain interests away from the interests of the dominant class --, and she brings up the governments vulnerability against the social classes and the foreign players. But she tries to go beyond the Skocpol's theoretical frame by adding two other factors:

1. The changing balance of class forces due to the uneven development of capitalism at the global level for understanding governments' domestic situations and external pressures imposed on it, and
2. A wider understanding of ideology.

Iran's ambitious and authoritative government faced excessive exploitation in the international economic structure as a peripheral country and since it was empowered by foreign interaction and influence it could not be responsive to national feelings. Add to that its

1- Fred Halliday, "The Iranian Revolution: Uneven Development and Religious Populism", *Journal of International Affairs*, vol. 26 (Fall - Winter 1982 - 83).

independence from local social classes. Iran's specific social structure as a peripheral society, caused the growth of the middle class (traditional and modern) as the "prominent classes" which adapted a value system completely separated from the dominant value system (meaning the Islamic worldview). The religious scholars proceeded to mobilize different urban groups by relying on religious gatherings and they were able to take over the revolution's leadership.^{(^}

Although Farhi tries to go beyond Skocpol's theory by placing greater emphasize on the role of ideology and the global systems structure, in general, she does not abandon her underlying structural approach.

Moreover, according to Foran, in focusing too much emphasizing on the state, Farhi does not pay enough heed to social structures and fails to present a comprehensive structural analysis. Instead, she portrays the social structure based primarily on the state, rather than the dependency situation in the world structure^{^2}).

John Foran also tries to explain the Islamic Revolution by presenting a synthesis of different approaches and theories. Of course, his theoretical approach is very similar to that of Farhi's. At the structural level, he places greater emphasis on social structure, and conceptualizes the power center in the world system based on the interaction between the producing methods of pre-capitalism and foreign political, military and economic forces. The result of this interaction in Iran was a complicated social structure consisting of modern and pre-capitalistic classes. The process of particular accumulation "dependent development" needed a suppressive "individualistic, authoritative and closed" government to

1- Farideh Farhi, "State Disintegration and Urban - Based Revolutionary Crisis: A Comparative Analysis of Iran and Nicaragua", *Comparative Political Studies*, vol. 21 (1988) pp. 231-256.

2- Foran, op. cit, p. 165.

maintain the societal control.

For the conjunctive and agent factors, Foran sees it necessary to focus attention on the cultural factor which he terms "the resistance and opposing political cultures". This appeared in different shapes (religion, nationalism, socialism, and populism) at the ideological level. At the level of common feelings it defined by anger and dissatisfaction. Furthermore, he believes that the internal economic decline and what he calls "world systemic opening" led to the revolution's occurrence. Thus, we see the existence of four factors -- dependent development, closed and suppressive government, world systemic opening and economic decline -- caused the appearance of the crisis while the presence of political cultures led the opposition of different players to an anti-government coalition and ended in victory/¹)

As we see, the Islamic Revolution of Iran has challenged, in different ways and at various levels, all the different existing theories about revolution in social science. Deciphering different works will create doubt about the efficacy of higher explanatory examples and theories of revolution. Most of the concrete generalizations in theoretical structures have not been able to understand the unique basis on which the revolution of Iran occurred. It could be said that none of the explanations based on their own merits, can explain the massive revolutionary action in Iran. But at the same time, it seems that the multi-causal process could be of more usefulness in understanding and explicating this important historic event. This provided that its different elements be put in a precise theoretical frame.

1- Ibid, pp. 165 ff.

Modernization and the Islamic Revolution

By: Nikkie R. Keddie

Reform, Boom, and Bust: 1963-1977

- Intellectual and Literay Trends to 1960

- Contemporary Shi'i Thought

The Revolution

Conclusion

Reform, Boom, and Bust: 1963-1977

The socioeconomic policies of the consolidated autocratic regime in the later 1960s and early to mid-1970s appeared to many, especially outside Iran, as a great success story, and in support of this contention they could point to large increases in Iran's GNP, impressive industrial, agricultural, and infrastructural projects, and a number of social welfare activities. On the other hand, many opponents of the regime proclaimed that all the reforms were fraudulent, that growth benefited mainly the rich, and that there were no structural changes. In fact, the social and economic changes and projects undertaken by the Shah's regime in this period may be seen as contributing to a capitalist type of agriculture and of industrial growth, with a natural emphasis on state capitalism, given the autocratic nature of the regime and its monopoly control of the ever-growing oil income¹⁾

For purposes of brief analytic treatment the years 1962-77 may be seen as a unit in this building up of a predominant state capitalism, undermining of semi feudal forms of landownership seen as a bar both to development and to central government control of the countryside, and encouragement and subsidizing for private capitalists. (Some authors, reacting against simplistic equations of Iran and other countries, reject terms like "capitalist"; in fact *every* area is unique but one needs general terms to indicate comparable structures.) Instead of proceeding year by year or five-year plan by plan in discussing the basic features of the economy, it seems more enlightening, within the short compass of this

1- On Capitalism in Iran see especially Fred, *Iran, Dictatorship and Development* (New York, 1979), chap. 5ff. On the Shah's use of reforms to strengthen his political power see .1. A. Bill, *The Politics of Iran: Groups, Classes and Modernization* (Columbus, Ohio, 1972), chap. 6.

chapter, to deal with developments in key economic sectors over the whole period after 1962 and to stress analytic conclusions rather than details that may be found elsewhere/¹)

Land reform, which was legislated early in 1962, was the earliest phase of new economic policies and of an agricultural program which by 1977, was clearly going in directions very different from those envisaged by the original architect of land reform, Agriculture Minister Hasan Arsanjani. The first phase of land reform, passed in 1962 and implemented over several years, sold to peasants, on the basis of (usually low) tax evaluations by their landlords, villages held by landlords with over one village. The landlord was allowed to keep one village or, and this was often the option chosen, the "equivalent" of one village by holding, say, the best of the traditional one-sixth divisions of the village in each of six villages. The latter option not only gave the landlord more and better land, but gave him some say in the running of six villages instead of one.

Within Iranian villages some sharecroppers had cultivating rights which assured them of a certain share of the crop, and one family might own more than one such right, or might, if they owned oxen or parts of an underground water channel, hold a right without actually being cultivators. On the other hand, about 40 percent of the cultivating villagers were laborers paid in cash, kind, or both according to hours of work done and without cultivating rights.

Those who drafted the reform may have been unaware of the number of laborers without cultivating rights who would be left out of reform, but, on the other hand, the Shah had spoken out in favor of small landlords, whom he did not wish to buy out and who he said were more productive than large ones. A division that included the laborers

1- See especially R. Looney, *The Economic Development of Iran* (New York, 1973).

would have been possible only with a far more radical taking over of land and equalization of landholding, with cooperative farming where appropriate, than the Shah's regime wished to carry out/¹) Hence the reform, like most capitalist land reforms, was unequal even in its relatively progressive first phase supervised by Arsanjani, and even on the level of villagers in the same village; some got more, some got less, and some got nothing.

A widely praised feature of the Iranian land reform was Arsanjani's pragmatic solution to the lack of cadastral surveys for almost all villages, which would have slowed any reform based, as in most countries, on acreage limits for landlords. By making the top limit the traditional village unit, the expensive and time consuming problem of surveying was avoided. As in many countries, some landlords found ways to evade the top limit. Since land reform had been mooted for some years before 1962, and particularly since the government's abortive attempt in 1960, landlords had a chance to make partly fictitious sales or gifts to relatives or friends in order to lessen their legal holdings in return for real control or compensation. Moreover, the bill, with some economic reason, excluded orchards, pastures, plantations, and mechanized farms. It was easy to convert much of one's land to one of these.

Although in some areas land reform officials, who in the first period tended to be young and enthusiastic, tried to disallow any such changes made after passage of the law, this was often not done. In the end, despite many previous reliable estimates that well over half of Iran's land belonged to large landlords with over one village, the best estimate is that something like 9 percent of Iran's peasants got land in this first phase/²)

1- This policy was proposed by, among others, Hossein Mahdavy in an unpublished paper delivered at Harvard in 1965.

2- See the calculations in Keddie, "The Iranian Village."

This is not an insignificant figure, especially as peasants affected by the first phase, unlike those in later phases, usually got whole farming units, i. e., an amount of land equivalent to that which had previously supported their families, and their payments to the government were generally lower than their former rent in kind. By law all peasants receiving land had to join a credit cooperative, and many such cooperatives were formed. These cooperatives were supposed to provide for the credit needs of peasants who formerly resorted to landlords and users (who might be peddlers or traders who theoretically charged no interest but instead overcharged for their goods). Studies have shown that the cooperatives were grossly under capitalized and could not provide enough low-interest loans to those who needed them, so that usury continued at almost the same rate as before, and richer peasants who could borrow more from the cooperatives often re-lent money at high rates to poorer villagers. Also, there were no adequate controls to ensure that loans were used for productive purposes, as they were supposed to be, while the provision that only landowning peasants could be members and receive loans discriminated, amongst others, against credit-worthy village craftspeople, particularly female carpet weavers.

Despite these problems the early record of those who got full shares in the first stage of reform was rather good. Many peasants began to invest in new equipment, including deep wells with motor pumps. There has never been any adequate agricultural education or extension service in Iran, however, and the assumption has been that problems can be solved by a combination of tinkering with property rights and agricultural units and using modern and often expensive equipment from the West without testing its appropriateness to Iran. The traditional means of irrigating much of Iran has been the underground water channel, or “qanat”, which gets its water from the mountains. It involves a great amount of skilled labor but allows for a democratic division of water and

does no ecological harm. The deep wells and pumps, however, after working well for a few years, were found often to lower the water table significantly and some areas that were once cultivable no longer are. Modified qanat construction might be a better approach.

Related problems have arisen, or will arise, in some areas from the use of tractors for plowing (their import has been favored and subsidized by the government). Large amounts of thin topsoil are plowed up in this fashion and in some cases deposited into streams and rivers, which then flood more often and may even change their course. The whole relationship between pasture and farmland has similarly been upset for the worse by new technology. Although American and other Western companies and governments are to blame for overselling such technology, the Iranian regime and many Iranian specialists who should know better were caught up in the idea that what is modern and Western is good. They should rather have studied the difficult problems of an arid country with few remaining forests and thin topsoil, and tried to meet Iran's specific conditions, which may involve modifications of traditional methods rather than straight borrowing from the West. Little has been done even with such a proven reliable method as reforestation; the old regime preferred buying tractors to planting trees. Western agricultural machinery was given preferential treatment over Iranian equipment, and little research went into improving existing methods.

In short, even for the favored peasants of the first phase of reform not enough was done to make available to them appropriate means to increase production for most of them to become significantly more prosperous. As government price controls increasingly favored city dwellers, considered politically volatile, and in effect subsidized foreign grain growers by paying them, but not Iranians, world market prices, peasants became a disfavored class, although there were exceptions. As for the laborers who got no land in villages affected by the first reform

phase, they were less likely to be hired by cultivating peasants than by the old landlords, and most of them joined in the swelling migration to the cities, which reportedly reached over 8 percent of the population per year in 1972-73, although this was well above the average 1956-76 rate/¹)

In the spring of 1963 Arsanjani was forced to resign as minister of agriculture, largely because the Shah never allowed another man to become too popular and pose a potential threat to his autocracy, and Arsanjani was clearly popular among Iran's peasants. Arsanjani wanted to transfer as much landlord land as possible to the peasants and promoted slogans and expectations of this kind. After his departure, subsequent phases of land reform were far more conservative than the first, and little was done to supplement the first phase, as Arsanjani and many peasants wished, with adequately capitalized multi-purpose cooperatives or extension programs with new seeds and other aids to improving peasant output.

The second phase of reform, after its revision under conservative pressure, amounted more to a regularization of the existing system than

1- See the calculations from Plan Organization and Central Bank data in .1. and A. Carey, "Iranian Agriculture and Its Development: 1952-1973," *LIMES*, vol. 7 no. 3 (1976): 359-82. On land reform and its results see in addition to the works cited in notes 4, 5, and 11-14 above, and 16-18 below M. G. Weinaum, "Agricultural Policy and Development Politics in Iran," *Middle East Journal*, vol. 31, no. 4 (1977); Paul Vieille, *La Feodalite Vetat en Iran* (Paris, 1975); T. Brun and R. Dumont, "Iran: Imperial Pretensions and Agricultural Dependence," *MERIP Reports*, 71 (1978); D. R. Denman, "Land Reforms of Shah and People," in G. Lenczowski, ed., *Iran Under the Pahlavif* (Stanford, 1978); A. K. S. Lambton, "Land Reform and the Rural Cooperative Societies," in E. Yar-Shater, ed., *Iran Faces the Seventies* (New York, 1971); and N. R. Keddie, "Oil, Economic Policy and Social Conflict in Iran," *Race and Clatifi*, vol. 21, no. 1 (1979): 13-29. E. .1. Hooglund has done extensive field study of the Iranian land reform over a period of years, the results of which have been given in several articles and in *Reform, and Revolution in Rural Iran* (Austin, 1982).

redistribution of wealth. This stage was to cover, in theory, all remaining villages not in the excluded categories, except for “*vaqf*” villages, which were put on 99 year leases. The landlord owning one village or less was given a series of five choices, among them cash rentals, division of the land based on the former crop division, and sale to the peasant (which very few landlords chose). In a later phase, applied in 1969, all peasants were to get land through installment purchase, but since this generally meant only a percentage of the land they cultivated equal to the percentage of the crop they received under the old system, the majority of Iran's peasants did not get enough land for subsistence and had to find additional farming or other work. In the majority of Iran's villages covered by the second and third phases there were thus far fewer peasants who could make a living than in phase-one villages, and migration to cities by both laborers and poor peasants grew. These villages were also hit by the problems of inadequate loan funds, no extension services, and manipulation of prices by the government, which favored the towns and foreigners and disfavored the countryside.

Most government economic and technical aid and encouragement from the late 1960s on went into a small number of larger agricultural units, while the small and middle peasant, to say nothing of the impoverished agricultural laborer, were increasingly starved of government help and discouraged from managing their own affairs on a comprehensive cooperative basis. The government bias toward big units was shown within a few years of agrarian reform especially in two policies, embodied in two major programs.

One was the law for the creation of farm corporations. In these units one or (usually) more villages were combined into a corporation, with peasants “persuaded” to turn over their recently received lands to the corporation, in return for which they got one or more shares, according to how much land they gave in. Wages were based on a combination of

land and labor, but since farm corporations use modern machinery not all shareholders could be employed, and former farm laborers could hardly ever be employed. These groups contributed to the massive migration to overcrowded cities.

Farm corporations were run by government specialists sent from Tehran, and required large expenditure for machinery, and for salaries, housing, and other buildings for the non-farmers. Farm corporation directors often claimed that their enterprises were profitable, but their basis of calculation did not include the government's initial and overhead expenses, and the claim of profitability was not credible. It is clear that, in the early phases at least, peasants generally disliked the farm corporations, although there are no known studies of their attitudes years after joining. It would be surprising, however, if a peasant would put in as much productive effort into a farm corporation as he would on his own farm. About 100 farm corporations were created by 1978. After the revolution they were often dismantled, suggesting their unpopularity.

The other form of large production that was favored, at least until 1977, was huge agribusiness, partly owned and operated by multinational corporations. These farms of 5,000 to 25,000 hectares were generally built below new dams, especially in Khuzistan. Despite their supposed concentration on "new" land, they too cleared off many small peasants, and those who did not become agricultural laborers joined the rural exodus. Agribusinesses generally farmed only a small part of the land they held, and their relative contribution to the Iranian economy was seen as dangerously small by Iranian experts. Before 1978 some of the largest agribusinesses, especially in Khuzistan, were taken over by the government in part because of poor performance.

Both agribusinesses and farm corporations have been proven to be

far less productive than middle peasants.¹ This is largely because they have involved huge expenses in preparing the ground for irrigation and heavy machinery in a land of low cost labor suited to cheaper home manufactured implements. They appear to have been favored both by foreign farm equipment manufacturers and by Iranian special interests who skimmed off large sums, which they invested in more profitable ventures. They often concentrated on unproven export crops and hence lowered Iran's food production and contributed to a growing dependence on food imports.

Government policy also favored private mechanized farming. Toward the reformed villages, however, the government did little in terms of economic or technical aid, or aid in form in multipurpose cooperative societies. In some spheres there was progress in a minority of villages, as in the military service literacy corps, supplemented to a small degree by health and development corps. In the more direct problems of production, however, the government did little. Few of the technical benefits of the "green revolution" were diffused; there were scarcely any efforts to pool resources for machinery; and extension services and technical education remained extremely inadequate. Most cooperatives remained purely credit societies, instead of giving the aid in marketing and production that a multipurpose society could give. Restrictive cooperative loan policies described above favored a growing disparity of income within the village, also favored by the digging of deep wells, which often monopolize water that once was more democratically divided from underground channels. The well owner can sell a precious resource.

1- M. A. Katouzian, "Oil Versus Agriculture: A Case of Dual Resource Depletion in Iran," *Journal of Peasant Studies*, vol. 5, no. 3 (1978): 347-69 and the cited unpublished Oxford University dissertation by Fatemah Etemad Moghadam, "The Effects of Farm Size and Management System on Agricultural Production in Iran, Somerville College, 1978.

In favoring mechanized extensive farming and disfavoring the small and medium peasant, despite the latter's proven higher productivity per person within Iran itself, the Iranian government adopted a policy that might have been economically rational in a country with large cultivable territory and a shortage of labor. In Iran, however, the present cultivable surface is too small for a heavily underemployed rural labor force, and to push ahead with large mechanized farms rather than more intensive techniques operated by peasants with a personal stake in their own lands was counterproductive.

The production record of agribusiness was miserable; farm corporations contributed less than would the same amount of government capital and effort spread over reformed villages, and increases in agricultural production were low. Although official statistics on the annual rise in agricultural production state that it was about 4 percent a year, this figure is almost universally considered unreliable and based on the need to mask the shocking reality that agricultural production rose more slowly than population. A more reasonable estimate is that agricultural production rose about 2-2.5 percent a year, population 3 percent, and consumption of agricultural products about 12 percent.

With rising mechanization, the unemployment or very low income of agricultural laborers, and the rise in rural population, there was a rapid stream of rural migrants into the cities, especially Tehran -- cities without the housing, amenities, or even jobs to cope with them. The agrarian situation plus a growth in food consumption meant a rapid rise in agricultural imports, which would create a major problem when oil income began to run out. The government also reduced sheep production, forcing ever more imports of meat and wool. Despite the huge migration to towns rural population grew slightly, owing to natural

Increase,¹ but migration was concentrated among men of working age, leaving agriculture further weakened.

If the government favored the big over the small in both city and countryside/it also favored the cities -- already wealthier and more powerful — over the countryside. This was shown particularly in price controls on basic food products, which for a time kept down the vocal discontent of the volatile urban masses. These controls were often based on fixed low prices paid to producers for certain agricultural products — prices that further depressed agricultural incomes relative to urban ones.

Similar problems were felt by tribal-pastoral peoples. Although it was probably tribal khans who instigated a revolt related to land reform among the Qashqa'i and Boir Ahmad of Pars province in f 963, ordinary tribes people also suffered from the government's agricultural policies. First, townspeople and wealthy farmers were more likely to take advantage of loopholes in the land reform law to lay claim to disputed tribal land than were tribes people who had less influence with the authorities. Second, the nationalization of pasture, one of the points added to the White Revolution, took away tribal control of pastureland and made tribes increasingly subject to governmental whims, policies, and gendarmes.

Agricultural and other projects spread at the expense of pasture, and

1- Calculations from official figures in J. and A. Carey, "Iranian Agriculture," p. 359, and Halliday, *Iran*, p. 130. The Careys' statement that over 8 percent of Iran's total population went from rural to urban areas in 1972-73 can be reconciled with the fact of rising rural population only if 1972-73 was an exceptional year. Both statements are based on official statistics, but these are often in error, as noted in T. Walton. "Economic Development and Revolutionary Upheavals in Iran," *Cambridge Journal of Economics* vol. 4, no. 3 (1980), where the increase in rural-urban migration in the 1966-76 census period is analyzed. The migration figures in Halliday. *Iran*, for 1956-76 are compatible with the slight increase in those employed in agriculture that he cites; clearly the migration rate was higher in the 1970s than before.

tribes people were less and less able to support themselves by a primarily pastoral existence. In the 1970s especially the government became increasingly convinced, partly persuaded by American businessmen, that instead of relying on the nomads' sheep for much of Iran's meat the government should underwrite the creation of large meat, poultry, and dairy farms, with expensive imported equipment, cattle and feed. Like other large agricultural projects these were both costly and unproductive, besides the fact that Iranians prefer fresh sheep and lamb to the beef and imported frozen meat that the government's policies toward pastoralists increasingly forced on them.

Mohammad Reza Shah, like his father, in fact pursued a policy of settling the nomads -- not by force of arms but by depriving them of their livelihood so that they had increasingly to become agriculturalists or enter the sub proletariat of the urban slums.¹ As in the case of peasant farming, the regime felt that nomadism was not modern whereas big American style animal farms were; and wealthy Iranians and Americans profited from the latter. In both cases a way of life in which ordinary people had learned to make maximum use of marginal resources, and which could survive with tested modification, was increasingly sacrificed to a wholesale use of inappropriate modern Western imports. (Since 1979 some nomads have moved back into lands taken from them, and the last chapter in this old struggle has yet to be written.)

Although, in both agriculture and industry, large mechanized enterprises made up a minority of total units, the important point is that investment and efforts were heavily concentrated on such units while small producers were disfavored. Land reform may never have had

1- See Lois Beck, "Economic Transformations among the Qashqa'i Nomads. 1962-1977," in M. Bonine and N. Keddie, eds., *Modern Iran: The Dialectic* of Continuity and Change* (Albany, 1981); and Dan Morgan, *Merchants of Grain* (New York, 1979).

primarily economic goals; a major aim was to cut landlord power and bring peasants and nomads under direct government control, and this was accomplished.

The industrial sphere has been somewhat more connected to Iran's Five Year Plans than have major agricultural changes (land reform, in particular, was not suggested in the plan that covered the period in which it was launched). The defects of the first Five Year Plan have been noted above. Later plans have become increasingly sophisticated in technique and personnel and increasingly comprehensive in coverage, although a running battle between the "independent" Plan and Budget Organization and the ministries that were supposed to carry out its projects but preferred to control their own, was a continual cause of delays and immobilization.

In the late 1950s an Economic Bureau was set up for the Plan Organization assisted by a group of Western advisers under the auspices of Harvard University. The only general evaluation published by a member of this bureau is almost totally negative about planning in Iran, and notes that the main economic advances experienced by Iran in the past half century have occurred not through planning but because of nationalism -- such as the increasing control over oil, tariffs, and relations with foreigners.¹ It is thus best to be wary on the subject of planning in Iran.

The regime indeed followed a general economic strategy, which was much influenced by increasingly large oil revenues. It is likely, however, that much of this strategy might have been followed without the mechanism of a Plan Organization, although the latter had some effect and played the ideological role of indicating that the government was thinking ahead for the benefit of the whole country, and using the most

1- G. B. Baldwin, *Planning and Development in Iran* (Baltimore, 1967).

modern mechanisms to ensure rapid economic and social progress. Often the dictates of the Shah in fact determined economic policies.

Governmental strategy toward the economy since the 1960s included rapid development of import substitution industries, especially large enterprises that used much modern and labor saving technology. Despite a few showy "crackdowns," mainly on retailers or vulnerable targets, extremely large profits were encouraged for both domestic and foreign companies, while less was done for those on the bottom rungs of the economic scale. The above policy was justified by some according to the theory that in early stages of development, income distribution must worsen, and that those at the top of the scale should be favored since they save and invest more than those at the bottom. The rival theory that, at least in the stage Iran had reached, much greater equality of incomes is needed for self-sustaining development if a mass consumer market where people could buy back what they produced were to be achieved, was rarely stated.

The regime's race for greater size, military strength, and modernity, with its concomitants of unemployment, waste, corruption, and poverty, affected both agriculture and industry. In both spheres heavy inputs of foreign capital, personnel, and imports were favored by official policies. The Shah in the 1970s voiced the expectation that Iran would become one of the world's five top powers in this century: such a fantasy encouraged heavy collaboration with multinational corporations and short shrift for the everyday needs of most Iranians. The essential mechanisms of the above economic strategy are fairly simple, although not well known to non-specialists. Oil income was one factor in a generally regressive tax structure, encouraging the government not to enforce its mild income tax and not to institute other progressive taxes. The government could essentially do without tax income and did not try seriously to use taxation either as one means for more just income

distribution or to prepare Iranian tax collectors and citizens for the day not long hence when oil will start to run out.

More seriously, the impetus given by oil to the dramatic economic boom experienced by Iran from 1963 until the late 1970s, with per capita GNP rising from about \$200 to \$1,000 in real terms, and with one of the highest growth rates in recent history for a sizable country, did not lessen the income disparity between the rich and the poor, but the contrary. Gains were concentrated at the upper levels, owing largely to government policies.

In industry, government policies, at least since the 1960s, favored both the private production of relatively expensive consumer durables with a large foreign component and a concentrated market in Tehran, and also the concentration of economic enterprises in or near Tehran. This helped both Iranian and foreign investors, who by law were free to repatriate their profits. (Foreign direct investment outside oil was, however, not very large; foreign sales and personnel were far more important.) Because of its oil income, the government could renounce industrial taxes to favor certain large industries; and the government was able on the basis of oil income to pay higher salaries to the higher administrative echelons, thus enabling them to purchase consumer durables.

The relevant government policies included preferential high tariffs, prohibition of certain imports, very low rates for bank loans to large industries, tax holidays, licensing of only a few industries in each field, and preferential treatment for foreign capital. High tariffs and prohibitions may have been needed in some cases at an initial stage in order to launch an industry, but tariffs were seldom lowered, so that there was little incentive to operate efficiently or to direct capital toward those branches of production using local inputs. An unneeded

variety of automobiles were assembled and partially produced, while many goods that could be made for popular use in small plants were either imported or handmade in insufficient quantities. Lowered tariffs could rationalize production by reducing the production of complex goods requiring many imported elements and encouraging production of simpler, more popular goods, which should need less tariff production as their manufacture is relatively less expensive. Capital goods production could also have been encouraged by new tariff policies.

Credit policies were designed to favor large enterprises and the rich Iranians and foreigners who owned and ran them. In general, subsidized rates considerably below the market price of money were available only to large enterprises, whereas small shop owners and craftspeople were starved even for unsubsidized bank credit, since their plants did not provide sufficient collateral for loans. They were generally not eligible for normal bank rates of about 12 percent, but had to borrow in the bazaar at 25 to 100 percent. More employment and less income inequality could have come from an opposite loan policy, with higher commercial rates charged to the big industrialists and subsidized rates to the small owners. (Difficulties in getting bank loans were probably one factor in mass attacks on banks in 1978, although other factors were more often mentioned.)

Tax holidays of various kinds were given to encourage foreign investors, or investors in certain regions. Although this policy was publicized as a way to decentralize industry out of the Tehran region, by offering tax inducements to factories built at least 120 km. from Tehran, it was found that the concentration of industry in the Central province where Tehran is located increased after the policy was enunciated, with a ring of industries built about 120 km. from Tehran.

Although legally a company did not need a license in order to operate, any sizable company did need one to import, export, or deal

with the government. Government licenses were given out only to a few companies in each field, their main theoretical rationale being to keep a field from getting so overcrowded that plants overproduced and could not operate to capacity. The need to get and keep a license, like many other government rules, required that top persons in a company spend much time in Tehran cultivating one or more leading people in order to insure the receipt of a license or other needed favors.

Regarding licenses and other matters, credible stories circulate of the highest ranking Iranians (including Princess Ashraf and her son Shahram) who took 10 percent or more of a new company's stock gratis in return for insuring the delivery of a license. Such practices, along with other industrial practices listed above, and other forms of corruption, significantly increased the sale price of Iranian goods, thus limiting their domestic and ultimately needed foreign market. They also further skewed income distribution.

Corruption, which mushroomed with the growth of oil income, is in part one more mechanism that pushes wealth up and out. It also made the culpable more subject to royal control. Besides the Shah's growing fortune, in the 1970s corruption in the court, royal family, and the elite was so massive as to add significantly to the opposition. Many foreign firms were also involved in payoffs to individuals.

As to foreign capital, although foreigners could legally own only a minority share in Iranian industries, they were subject to few other restrictions and could repatriate profits freely. Brochures for foreign investors proclaimed that profits on capital of 30 percent were normal in Iran. Economists who know the country often spoke of 50 percent, and profits in trade and industry of 100 to 200 percent were not unknown. Hence the "traditional" Middle Eastern reluctance to invest in "unprofitable" industry gave way to an industrial boom concentrating on the assembly of consumer goods and aimed largely at a restricted, relatively

wealthy market. Such a boom carried within it major problems.

Foreign investment in Iran was much smaller than was the import of foreign goods, and foreign corporations encouraged the Shah's mania for the ultramodern and sophisticated. In armaments the Shah bought billions of dollars worth of the latest weapons, often while they were still on the drawing board, Imported high technology computers and other instruments were fed primitive statistics and controlled semiautomatic factories. Iran became a huge market for American grain, some of which was used to feed the imported American cattle and poultry that were supplementing and replacing the nomads' sheep.

Sophisticated foreign equipment demanded foreign technicians and workers, who in the 1970s streamed in by the tens of thousands. Americans and Europeans were concentrated in the high technical posts, Far Easterners often held skilled labor positions, and Afghans came in for unskilled jobs, often depressing wage rates. The skilled foreigners, to the contrary, got higher salaries than Iranians — sometimes several times higher - and this, plus their behavior and their pushing up the price of scarce housing, helped make them objects of resentment.

It is within the context of industrial policies favoring large profits by a few capital intensive industries that the occasional campaigns against "profiteers," or in favor of shareholding by factory workers, which were given more publicity than the above policies, should be evaluated. Such measures were either scapegoating or palliatives in face of rising profits, income inequalities, high inflation, corruption, and a failure to meet government promises of greater economic and social equity. Along with certain other policies they were designed to allay the discontent of the class that evinced, through fairly frequent, illegal, and unreported strikes, its continued discontent -- the factory workers. Partly through government favoring of workers in large factories by shareholding and other measures, which were, however, less dramatic than their

announcements would make it seem, and partly through rising wages for qualified workers, workers in large factories and certain trades became a relatively favored group in the mid- 1970s. One cannot, however, take reports regarding groups of workers whose wages, say, tripled in a few years, as typical of the popular classes en masse. As for the jailed or exiled "profiteers," they were more often disfavored bazaar merchants or members of minorities than rich modern Muslim businessmen.

All this does not mean that the government's industrial policies produced only negative results. The rate of industrial growth was one of the highest in the world, and rose further with the impact of huge oil revenues since 1974. What was questionable was the continuation of preferential policies toward western style industries; the disfavoring of small crafts and industries, which contribute to production, to employment, and to greater income equality; the favoring of foreign investments and the kind of production requiring a huge foreign presence; and the underwriting of heavy consumer durables. These contributed to the over centralization of the national market in Tehran, and to the development of a kind of demand which meant that "import substitution" led to a rise in imports of food, capital goods, and many consumer goods. Thus, many of the problems often noted by Iran's own planners — such as over centralization in Tehran and a few large cities, too many automobiles and luxury imports, too much dependence on foreigners, and above all the growing income distribution disparity -- were fed by the government's own policies.¹

1- Much of the above analysis is based on private conversations or unpublished reports by Iranian and international organizations. Among the most useful published works are R. Looney, *Economic Development; International Labour Organization, Employment and Income Policies for Iran* (Geneva, 1973); D. Housego, "Quiet Thee Now and Rest," *The Economist*, August 28, 1976; R. Graham. *Iran: The Illusion of Power*, Revised ed, (London, 1979); and Halliday, *Iran*.

With what has been said, it is not surprising that income gaps widened in the 1960s and 1970s. Although no good income survey exists, there are family expenditure surveys, and on the basis of these Iranian and foreign economists have made studies with similar conclusions. Briefly, since the 1960s, income inequalities in Iran, which were already great on a world scale, increased, and this increase was particularly dramatic after 1974, when oil income shot up after the great price rise. The size and increase in Iran's distribution gap is notable whether the top decile or two are compared with the bottom decile or two, or whether one takes the Gini-coefficient, which measures deviation from the norm all along a normal distribution scale. In addition, an important Iranian study shows increases in income inequality in all major dimensions: between the top and the bottom, between the cities and the countryside, within the cities, and within the countryside/¹) All this occurred despite a repeatedly expressed government determination to reduce income inequality. However, as noted, overall it was primarily the rich who were subsidized by oil and other governmental money, and the poor much less.

This does not mean that most of the poor literally got poorer. Given the huge increase in GNP per capita, the rich could get much richer and many of the poor get somewhat richer. The poorer classes started from such a low income level, however, that even doubling or tripling their effective income would not bring them to anything like European

1- M. H. Pesaran and F. Gahvary, "Growth and Income Distribution in Iran," in R. Stone and W. Peterson, eds., *Econometric Contributions to Public Policy* (London, 1978). Pesaran has done excellent studies on income distribution, as has F. Mehran; most of the latter were distributed in mimeo by the ILO. On income distribution see also Looney, *Economic Development*, and his *Income Distribution Policies and Economic Growth in Semi industrialized Countries* (New York, 1975), and -ILO *Employment*.

working class standards. Also, they saw the conspicuous consumption of the elite all around them, and this gave rise to increasingly vocal discontent.

The consumption patterns encouraged by this distribution along with dizzy oil based growth after 1973 created a host of national problems: constantly increasing spending on imports; orientation of the economy toward dependence on foreigners; the huge population flow into overcrowded cities; and a lack of urban low cost housing and skyrocketing housing prices, exacerbated by the growing presence of foreigners whose high wages added to rising prices and scarcities, particularly in housing.

More equitable income distribution could both be aided by and contribute to a policy of economic decentralization and dispersion of the population, and could create a market for goods with greater Iranian inputs. A policy favoring peasants and small producers could boost production, add to employment, and encourage population dispersion, especially if crafts and small industries were developed in or near villages. Only diversified investment including towns and villages can humanely meet the needs of Iran's rapidly growing population. Big industries are needed, but so are small ones.

The oil component of Iran's economy became increasingly important over time. Even before the OPEC quadrupling of oil prices led by the Shah in late 1973, oil provided a steadily rising income as production went up, and also an increasing percentage of plan funds, rising finally to 88 percent of these. In the late 1960s and early 1970s Iran was able to renegotiate the terms of its agreement with the consortium so that Iran took some control of production levels and pricing, leaving a guaranteed supply to the consortium companies for marketing. Although this involved a partial return to nationalization, it did not hurt the consortium companies; to the contrary, they have profited immensely

from every OPEC price rise.

The 1973 Arab-Israeli War led to an Arab oil boycott on Western suppliers of Israel and an effective doubling of oil prices. At the OPEC meetings late in 1973 the Shah pushed successfully for a redoubling of prices, arguing with some justice that oil prices had been kept low while prices on all other commodities had risen. Later there were grandiose statements by the Shah that Iran would soon become one of the world's five great powers with average incomes equal to the best. The Shah seemed not to realize that huge sums could not simply be thrown into the Iranian economy without serious results in terms of inflation, shortages, and overheating the economy. In early 1974 he presided over an official conference where, in the face of feeble opposition from some planners, he vastly expanded the expenditures programmed for the current Five Year Plan¹⁾

Ironically, the Shah was in part undone by his OPEC triumph and its consequences within Iran. The processes described above — stress on big industry and agriculture with the resultant over rapid migration and shortages in housing and other goods and services — increased to crisis proportions. In cities shortages of food items, power blackouts, traffic jams, overcrowding, and pollution made life difficult, and loud arguments and physical fights in the streets were one sign of the strain.

The Shah's virtual mania for buying large amounts of up to date and sophisticated military equipment from abroad had free rein from 1972, when the Nixon administration underwrote the Shah as the policeman of the Gulf, and agreed to sell him whatever non nuclear arms he wished. Western governments and corporations, with the United States in the lead, were happy to sell, with little consideration on either side of possible negative consequences. Western eagerness to sell billions of

1- Graham. *Illusion of Power*, chap. 5.

dollars of military equipment to Iran each year was reinforced by the economic drain on the West caused by the OPEC price rise; arms purchases seemed a fine way to recycle petrodollars.

After the British pullout from the Gulf, the British and American governments were happy to see Iran become the gendarme of the area, fighting leftist -- led rebels in Oman's Dhofar province and threatening other potential disturbers of the status quo. The British provided Iran with more Chieftain tanks than they had in their own armed forces, and the United States let the Shah be the first to buy a series of sophisticated fighter planes, often before they were in production or their reliability had been proved.

Iran also began to construct a sophisticated American designed electronic intelligence network called IBEX for American surveillance of the Soviet Union. Along with all this equipment, as well as numerous less sophisticated items like Bell helicopters, went a large number of expensive foreign technical advisers and instructors and their families, who contributed to inflation and whose behavior often caused justified indignation among Iranians.

American military suppliers like Grumman, Lockheed, and Westinghouse took over key positions in the economy. Many potentially productive Iranians, including a high percentage of the technically trained, were increasingly concentrated in the armed forces and in building projects for arms and naval bases and for facilities to transport and house military equipment. New housing starts, and particularly the use of cement, were at times outlawed or rendered impossible because of the heavy demands on cement and other building materials for sheltering military equipment. Thus the growing housing shortage and rise in home prices was tied to military spending, and foreigners' and foreign contractors' willingness to pay high rents added to the problem. The

stress on big and complex projects increased, and as there had never been any adequate program of technical education there were not enough Iranians for skilled and technical jobs, much less scientific or managerial ones. Hence the importation of foreigners grew, further contributing to overcrowding, shortages, inflation, and anti-American feeling.

Inflation and other economic problems contributed to the appointment of Jamshid Amoozegar as prime minister in mid-1977. He immediately launched a deflationary program, which brought a sudden growth in unemployment, especially among the unskilled and semiskilled, and this, coming after rising expectations, helped create a classic pre-revolutionary situation. The combination of inflation, shortages, and large and evident income distribution inequities probably contributed more to growing discontent than did the standard factor cited in the West of "too rapid modernization." It was mainly *how* modernization was carried out, and the results of these policies, that were important¹⁾ Cultural uprooting was also important in the late 1970s, when Westernization was challenged by radical new interpretations of Shi'ism, associated particularly with Ali Shariati (see: ch. 8).

While some of the American press and even some government officials began to criticize the Shah after he pioneered the OPEC price rise, major United States business interests became more closely tied to, and even dependent on, the Shah's regime than ever. This was especially true of three key sectors of American business: armaments, oil, and banking. Producers of high technology, grain and agricultural equipment, and consumer goods also had large sales in Iran. Iran's huge advance orders were more than once responsible for bailing out an American arms manufacturer, some of whom spent vast sums, often

1- See Keddie. "Oil, Economic Policy and Social Conflict."

illegally, lobbying Iran for business¹⁾)

The several American oil companies who together marketed 40 percent of the large consortium sales of Iran, the world's second largest oil exporter, profited increasingly from Iran and from high oil prices. Finally, several American banks received and helped invest huge amounts of Iranian money, both from the Iranian government and from funds sent abroad by the Shah, the royal family, other rich Iranian, as well as the Pahlavi Foundation, which was an effective charitable front for many profitable royal investments. American banks also owned percentages of Iran's banks and held shares in Iranian businesses.

Given these and other Western business interests in Iran and the Anglo-American desire to use Iran strategically in the Gulf, against Russia, and against possible trouble with bordering radical movements in Muslim countries, it is no surprise that United States representatives in Iran predominantly went along with the Shah's reported desire that they not contact the opposition, and with his rosy assessment that the opposition consisted of small and unimportant groups of Marxists and religious fanatics. Although the United States under Carter may have influenced the Shah some concerning human rights violations, neither the United States government nor major American business interests wanted to see a fundamental change in Iran's orientation in the direction of nonalignment, reduction of arms and other deals profitable to Americans, or the building up of a more independent, self-sufficient economy. American government and business interests thus preferred the Shah to any truly popular alternative, which would have had to reduce American economic and political influence, and might alter Iran's

1- See A. Sampson, *The Arms Bazaar: From Lebanon to Lockheed* (New York, 1977), chap. 14, "The Arming of the Shah." On the 1960s see J. C. Hurewitz, *Middle East Politics: The Military Dimension* (New York, 1969), chap. 15, "An American Client: Iran."

pro-American foreign policy. They only reforms favored by the United States were ones that would not change Iran's pro-American oil, strategic, and economic policies.

To add a brief word about major political developments since 1963 which, until 1977, had none of the drama or importance of the early 1950s or the early 1960s: as the Melliyun Party of Eghbal was discredited by the electoral fiascoes of the early 1960s, a new party called Iran Novin (New Iran), was encouraged by the Shah. Some of its leaders reputedly had Freemasonic ties, which Iranians often associate with the British. The first prime minister from this party, Hasan Ali Mansur, like Amini and Alam from an old, rich landholding family, ruled only from March 1964 to January 1965, when he was fatally shot by a religious terrorist. There was also an attempt on the Shah's life in 1965.

Another Iran Novin leader, Amir Abbas Hoveyda, was appointed prime minister in 1965 and held the post for an extraordinary 12 1/2 years, owing to the lack of economic and political crises in this period, the apparent success of the government's economic and social policies, and Hoveyda's ability to carry out the Shah's wishes without appearing as a threat to the Shah's power. In March 1975, the Shah announced that the legal parties would be merged into a new single Rastakhiz (resurgence) party headed by Hoveyda. Membership was required of most government and university employees, as well as many others. (At the same time the Shah's first autobiography, called in English, *Mission for My Country*, was withdrawn from circulation and a new edition minus the passage saying that only Communist and fascist countries used one party regimes was later issued.) The Rastakhiz party was allowed to have two wings, but each was headed by a loyal pretender to succeed Hoveyda. Instead of mobilizing most Iranians for the regime, the Rastakhiz added significantly to discontent.

The economic and social development of the 1960s and 1970s, of which a critical assessment is given above, was not without positive features, and an early minister of the economy of this period as well as various figures in the PO's high quality staff and in some other departments are generally credited with a number of useful projects and policies. Some industrial, infrastructure], educational, and social welfare achievements were net gains for Iran. Although his low opinion of women as expressed to the Journalist Oriana Fallaci is well known, the Shah was apparently convinced that it was economically beneficial and would contribute to his modern image to have more women educated and in the labor force. Just as organizations like trade unions and chambers of commerce could exist only under official control, but nonetheless managed to express some of the needs of their members, so independent women's organizations were merged into a single Iranian Women's Organization under the patronage of Princess Ashraf.

Owing partly to pressure from this organization a Family Protection Law was passed in 1967 (repealed and passed in stronger form in 1975). The law introduced a number of important reforms into marriage, divorce, and family law, which until then had been rather strictly based on the sharia and the Quran. To try to make the new legislation Islamically legitimate, a feature of Shi'i (and some Sunni) law was utilized whereby special provisions can be inserted into the required marriage contracts, such as one saying that a husband cannot take a second wife without the first wife's consent. Reform provisions were henceforth to be inserted into all Muslim marriage contracts. According to the new law men could no longer unilaterally divorce their wives, but all divorce cases had to go to court and grounds for divorce by husband or wife were similar. Guardianship of children, which in Islamic law goes to the husband after an age that varies by school of law but in Shi'ism is

young, was now to be awarded according to the merits of the case by the courts.

No man could take an additional wife or wives without the permission of the previous one(s), and if he did so this was grounds for divorce. While opponents of the Shah are right to say that this law was neither totally egalitarian nor universally applied, especially among the popular classes, this is true of such reform legislation every where, and is not a good argument against such legislation as one important step toward changing the unequal treatment of the sexes. Even the real problem of lengthy and complex court procedures could have been met by further reform. Unluckily for women's rights, this cause and the Family Protection Law became associated with an increasingly unpopular regime and with Western style mores disliked by religious traditionalists.¹

Such displays as the Shah's coronation and especially the huge celebration in 1971 of a mythical 2,500th anniversary of the Persian monarchy (which had not existed between A.D. 640 and A.D. 1501) showed up the discrepancy between the seemingly unlimited wealth the Shah could throw around and the poverty, however slightly mitigated, of most of his subjects. It was hard for many to give the Shah credit for any achievements when so much more could have been done with his oil billions (ca. \$20 billion a year after the price rise), and when there was little freedom of speech or press and opposition was so ruthlessly suppressed, particularly after the rise of guerrilla groups in the 1960s and 1970s. The effective suppression of the Tudeh after 1953-54 and of the National Front after 1963 as well as the exile or jailing of [Imam] Khomeini and other oppositional figures helped change the character of

1- On Iranian women 1960-77 see the introduction and articles by L. Beck, M. Fischer, M. Good, J. and M. Gulick, B. Pakizegi, N. Tapper, and P. Vieille, in L. Beck and N. Keddie, eds., *Women in the Muslim World* (Cambridge, Mass.,

the opposition. In part it became more than ever concentrated abroad, particularly among the tens of thousands of Iranians studying in the West, many of whom belonged to various leftist groups, while an increasing number combined leftism or Third Worldism with their interpretation of Islam. The increasing circulation by cassette and leaflet of the talks and writings of Ayatollah Khomeini in exile in Iraq encouraged the religious oppositional trend both outside and within Iran.

With the improvement of relations between Iran and the Eastern European countries in the 1960s and later with China, both the pro-Soviet reformism of one wing of the exiled Tudeh party and the pro-Chinese position of the other wing seemed increasingly unattractive to anti Shah radicals inside and outside Iran. Beginning in the late 1960s there was a rise in small urban guerrilla groups who carried out a number of assassinations, hitting a few American military personnel and advisers. These groups came to coalesce primarily into two important ones: the Marxist Fedayean-e Khalq and the Islamic leftist Mojahedin-e Khalq, both of which became, toward the end of the 1978-79 revolution, large and open revolutionary groups.

Guerrilla activities contributed something to the increase in political repression, jailing, tortures, and executions from the late 1960s on; many of those executed were tied to these groups. On the other hand, they also suggested to many oppositionists that it was still possible to act against the regime despite its formidable repressive machinery¹⁾ At the same time religious and bazaar opposition to the regime continued to be expressed indirectly in sermons, meetings, and ceremonies. The bazaar

1- On the secular opposition see Halliday, *Iran*, chap. 8. *MERIP Reports*, 86 (Mar.-Apr. 1980) is entitled "The Left Forces in Iran," and in addition to articles and interviews by Fred Halliday contains a major article by E. Abrahamian. "The Guerrilla Movement in Iran, 1963-1977," pp. 3-15.

economy was hurt by the regime's favoring of big, ultramodern enterprises and of foreigners and disfavoring of bazaaris, who bore the brunt of attacks on "profiteers." Given the economic dependence of the ulama on bazaaris and the political influence of each of the two groups on the other, governmental attacks on both helped create a strong oppositional coalition.

By 1977 an economic recession, inflation, urban overcrowding, government policies that hurt the bazaar classes, glaring income gaps, and conspicuous Western style consumption by the elite and the lack of political freedom or participation were all widely felt and belied the numerous official predictions that the "Great Civilization" was just around the corner. The effective suppression of secular oppositionists, whether from the National Front or Tudeh, left room for the religious opposition, whose sermons, processions, and plays with themes like the martyrdom of Imam Hosain by tyrants were understood to refer to contemporary tyranny, but could not be suppressed.¹ In addition the association of the Shah's regime with Western culture, commodities, and vices brought on a traditionalist reaction even among many former Westernizers, which often took an Islamic form.

Intellectual and Literary Trends to 1960

The "two cultures" phenomenon in Iran (that is, different cultures for the elite and the masses) is largely a phenomenon of the Pahlavi period. This can be seen in such elementary spheres as dress, homes, styles of furnishing, means of locomotion, and mosque attendance. It also appears in literary forms; "folk culture," which in the 19th century and

1- See M. Fischer. *Iran: From Religious Dispute to Revolution* (Cambridge. Mass.. 1980). chap. 6. and S. Akhavi. *Religion and Politics in Contemporary Iran* (Albany, 1980), chaps. 5-6.

before cut across classes, has increasingly been relegated to the popular classes. Such folk culture includes the folktale, a widespread genre now most important to the popular classes, especially in the countryside.

To understand the rapid changes in culture after 1961 we must remember the concurrent intensification of a Westernizing despotism, closely tied to dependence on the West, and especially the United States. We must also remember the over rapid rural-urban migrations, increased income disparities, socioeconomic problems, and *anomie* that lead people to go back to familiar traditional moorings and to associate Westernization with suffering and dictatorship. For the mass of people traditional and religious cultural forms were supplemented by Western films and TV, not by Sadegh Hedayat. It was Shariati, more than all the poets and writers who made such brave attempts to employ the simple language of the masses in order to change their consciousness, who most touched their sensitive nerve. Once dependence on the West was associated with Western culture, and Western culture with moral decay, it was natural to seek Iran's salvation not in the Westernization pushed by the Shah's regime but in a return to an idealized indigenous Islam.

Contemporary Shi'i Thought

Muslim ideologists associate Islam with struggles against colonialism and great power domination. But it should not be forgotten that various secular trends also continued to exist in Iran.

The increasing cultural Westernization of the Pahlavis was resented by the popular classes. Al-e Ahmad was, in the 1960s, the intellectual leader of a new generation of Iranian thinkers. His viewpoint on Shi'ism was both critical and positive.

The most important among the politicized ulama, Ayatollah Ruhollah

Musavi Khomanini, became a political figure of the first rank after the events of 1963, which put him in prison and then in exile, and especially in the revolution of 1978-79. Only his tenacious character and his critical thought could have led one to believe before the 1960s that this theologian would become anything but a high ranking ayatollah.

In 1962 [Imam] Khomanini began direct combat against the Pahlavi regime. His exile from 1964 through 1978 after his 1963-64 battles with the regime did not stop [Imam] Khomeini from continuing his struggles against the Shah, imperialism, and Zionism via declarations and tape cassettes diffused, after he went to Najaf in 1965, by Iranian pilgrims to the holy cities in Iraq. In 1971, at the time of the royalist celebrations in Persepolis, he called upon the ulama to denounce political terror and the waste of Iran's resources. His refusal of all compromise with the regime constituted a revolution by contrast with many in the religious opposition who called only for constitutional reforms.

Among the best known ayatollahs playing different roles in the revolution and its ideology were Ayatollah Shariatmadari in Qom, who was very influential in his home province of Azerbaijan and in Khorasan, and Ayatollah Taleqani of Tehran, especially influential in liberal and progressive circles.

As a conclusion, here only a few general remarks will be offered.¹ First, the above survey of Iranian political thought since the late 19th

1- Critical studies of recent Islamic thought in Iran are found in articles by W. Floor, H. Katouzian, and others in *Mardomnameb* (Berlin, 1981), which will later be published in English. Other critical studies include N. Keddie, "L'Ayatollah, est-il intégriste?" *Le Monde*, August 22, 1980, and "Islamic Revival as Third Worldism" (forthcoming in a festschrift for M. Rodinson, ed. .I. P. Digard). Translations from (the writings of Bani Sadr and selections from his French writings are in Abol-Ffassan Banisadr, *Quelle revolution pour l' Iran?* (Paris. 1980). A survey of traditional and modern Shi'i thought is Y. Richard, *Le Shi'inme en Iran* (Paris. 1980).

century suggests the frequent reappearance of certain similar themes, often found in both religious and secular thinkers. One of the most important is anti-imperialism, accompanied by a determination to free Iran from Western economic and cultural dominance. This took a reformed Islamic form with Seyyed Jamaladdin, a more secular form with Mosaddegh and his main followers, and again a religious form in recent years. The Islamic nature of recent reactions even by many non-clerical leaders may in part be explained by the association of Western dominance with Western "cultural colonization," and of Pahlavi rule with secularism. Islam appeared, to those who rejected both liberalism and Marxism, as the natural ideological base from which to fight the West and the Pahlavis, especially as Islam was believed by, and familiar to, the great mass of Iranians. As with modernist and political adaptations of religion elsewhere, this utilization of Islam has involved new interpretations of old texts and practices, interpretations sometimes attacked by the more traditional and orthodox. It has also involved indiscriminate attacks on the West as a monolithic evil.

A more serious difficulty is that most modern Shi'i political thinkers have assumed that solutions to Iran's problems are essentially simple. They have tended to think that freeing Iran from foreign control and influence and setting up new and fairly simple political and economic institutions, for which they find an Islamic base, will solve Iran's problems, but this has not turned out to be the case. In essence, the new Islamic thought became a potent weapon in making a revolution, but had far less success in building up new institutions. The various books and pamphlets on Islamic politics and economics written in the past 20 years do not, even had they been followed in detail, provide an adequate basis for setting up a polity that could meet the widely recognized needs for social justice, mass participation in political and economic life, rights

for minorities and women, a truly functioning economy, and so forth.

Intolerance by some leaders of ideas labeled "un-Islamic" or "counterrevolutionary" has narrowed the range of permissible discourse, even though this, as of 1980, remains broader than it was under the Pahlavis. Voices of the secularist left, including the Tudeh and the Fedayean-e Khalq as well as smaller leftist groups, of the left-Islamic Mojahedin-e Khalq, and of liberal secularists may still be heard, and to a degree published, in Iran today, and there are signs of widespread hostility toward the mollahs and their policies. It may be that the dominance of thought couched in Islamic terms is not as durable a phenomenon as it now appears, and that Iran's long traditions of religious dissidence and skepticism, rationalist philosophy, and even secularism and anticlericalism will once again come to the fore. Whichever tradition is dominant in the foreseeable future, it is to be hoped that Iranians have learned that the "two cultures" split, which separates the religious from the secular and the masses from the elite, does not benefit Iran, and that each of the two culture groups may strive to understand, learn from, and see the needs and contributions of the other.

The Revolution

The continuing growth of malaise and discontent among most sections of the Iranian population as despotism and repression increased in the 1970s, promised political and economic decentralization failed to materialize, and economic difficulties grew in 1976 and 1977, despite huge oil income, led to an outbreak of opposition beginning in 1977. The appearance of open opposition to the Shah would likely have occurred soon in any case, but its form and timing were to some degree a consequence of the human rights policy enunciated by President

Carter, inaugurated in January 1977, which implied that countries guilty of basic human rights violations might be deprived of American arms or aid. The influence of the human rights policy was not due to any significant American pressures, however, but to the belief by both the Shah and the opposition that the United States might act for human rights. This belief helped give some Iranians the courage to circulate open letters and petitions in the hope that they might be heeded and would surely not be as severely repressed as before.

There may have been additional reasons, rarely mentioned, for the Shah to tolerate criticisms in 1977 that he would not have allowed earlier. Among them was that he knew he was ill with cancer, and that the throne might pass to his minor son, with regency going to Queen Farah, according to a provision he had initiated.

More important than their small numbers and few pre-1978 successes would indicate were the guerilla groups in Iran, recently studied by E. Abrahamian/¹) According to him, guerilla tactics were an outgrowth of the regime's bloody suppression of the 1963 riots, which made many think that open protests were sure to be violently suppressed.

The other guerilla group, whose name is shortened to Mojahedin-e Khalq, also originated in the 1960s, but while the Fedayean came mostly from the Tudeh Party and from Marxists in the National Front, the Mojahedin came mostly from the religious wing of that Front, particularly the Freedom Movement led since 1961 by Mehdi Bazargan and Ayatollah Mahmud Taleqani.

Although several guerilla actions aroused horror among many particularly assassinations of Iranian and American military and intelligence figures -- there were peaceable Iranian oppositoinists who

1- E. Abraamian, "The Guerrilla Movement in Iran, 1963-1977," *MERIP Reports*, 86 (Mar-Apr. 1980): 3-21

argued that, given the atmosphere of repression, only such acts could indicate the vulnerability of the regime and keep alive hope for its eventual overthrow. It seems likely that the increase in jailing, torture, repression, and censorship in the 1970s was tied to the guerillas' activities, although repression was already strong previously.

As suggested above, parts of various opposition groups -- the predominantly middle class and elderly remnants of the National Front, students inside and outside Iran, the workers, and the guerillas -- had ties to the growing number of oppositionists who voiced their views in Islamic terms, here called the "religious opposition." The religious opposition can best be understood in terms of its own two major groups, even though they overlap the above groups; first, those with a traditional religious education and functions, and second, those with Western or Western style educations who united modern and traditional ideas under an Islamic rubric.

The newspaper attack on [Imam] Khomeini and the Qom incident may be seen as a key point — January 1978 -- in which much of the initiative in the protest movement swung from the secular forces, with their letters, petitions, organizations, and political poetry readings, to the religiously led opposition.

Among the followers both of [Imam] Khomeini and of Shariati (whose ideas were rarely distinguished by the masses in 1978-79) were the bazaaris, meaning not only those who had shops in the bazaar but also those who carried on retail and export trade and manufacture of a traditional rather than a modern type.

Throughout the 1977-78 period [Imam] Khomeini's popularity grew. In this more than in previous revolutionary protest movements the urban poor and sub-proletariat were represented, and because of their large numbers they at first came out in greater strength than did factory

workers and the middle classes, despite the latter's importance. For the urban poor [Imam] Khomeini and his words were supreme guides, and as revolutionary anger, enthusiasm, and activity grew, [Imam] Khomeini's refusal to make any compromise with the monarchy and his implication that problems could be solved by a return to Islamic ways had increasing appeal for the Muslim masses.

Numerous eyewitnesses have commented on the almost universal enthusiasm, discipline, mutual cooperation, and organization which not only added to the esprit and extent of the last months of the revolution and distributed supplies and heating oil during the revolutionary strikes, but helped make it impossible to break off one group from the others. Spontaneous or directed councils and committees to organize revolutionary guards, urban quarters, factories, and other institutions began in this period, and many continued after February when, however, pre-revolutionary unity increasingly broke down.

Conclusion

A major thread trying together many aspects of 19th and 20th century Iranian history has been Iran's relations with Western countries -- both as they existed in reality and as they were and are perceived by Iranians and Westerners. Already in the early 19th century many Iranians were concerned with the presence of French and British advisers and especially with the two wars against the Russian "infidels." These wars not only lost important territories, initiated the series of unequal treaties including extraterritoriality with Westerners, and helped incite Iran's first major anti-foreign incident, against Griboyedov, but they also put new financial burdens on the government and on the Iranians they taxed.

The cheap entry of foreign manufactures, supported by treaty

limitations on tariffs, brought complaints from Iranian artisans and merchants from at least the 1830s onward. In the course of the 19th century, Iran's trade relations with the West grew, and Iran's exports changed from primarily wool, silk, and textiles, to the newer cash crops of opium, cotton, tobacco, dried fruits and nuts, and others, which were often grown on land bought by merchants. As detailed above, many poor peasants and artisans suffered from these changes, while even some merchants who profited resented the privileged treaty position of Western merchants. These were among the causes leading to growing economic discontent in the 19th century.

The Qajar government, plagued by the decentralizing forces of geography, nomadism, and independent ulama and bazaar classes, accomplished little of the centralizing "reform from above" seen in Mediterranean countries like Turkey, Egypt, and Tunisia. In addition to the difficulties of reforming Iran, the Qajars lacked many promising reformers; Prince Abbas Mirza, who modernized Azerbaijan's army and encouraged modern education in Azerbaijan early in the century, died before his accession. The later reforming prime ministers, Amir Kabir, Moshir-ud-Dauleh, and Amin-ud-Dauleh, were all dismissed before they could carry through their reform programs — largely because of the hostility of decentralizing or vested interests that would have been hurt by centralizing reform. No Qajar Shah was a consistent reformer, and none was even effective in trying to build up a strong, centralized army.

In Iran, as in many Third World countries, the official reformers from above were followed by critics of the government, some of whom held official posts at times, but many of whom did not. Among the former group the best known is Malkom Khan, who worked for governmental reorganization, the rule of law, and sometimes constitutionalism, and who published a newspaper against the government after his dismissal as

an official in 1889.

Among the unofficial critics the best known is Jamal ad-Din "al-Afghani"; although he spent few of his adult years in Iran, in the 1886-91 period, he had considerable influence in awakening Iranians to the use of propaganda, leaflets, and speeches against the government's sale of Iran to foreigners. It was the spate of Qajar concessions to Westerners, which rose dramatically after 1888, that aroused the bazaar classes, the ulama, and intellectuals against the government and foreigners, and culminated in a successful movement against a British tobacco concession, 1890-92. The growth of secular and religiously led opposition to the government led to the Constitutional Revolution of 1905-11, which gave Iran a Western style constitution. In this period the ulama were upset about direct Western encroachments in the land of Islam, but they were not then concerned over Western intellectual borrowings, which had not taken on the overwhelming importance that they did under the Pahlavis. Between 1911 and 1960 most critical writers were secularists, but then came the revived Islamic opposition.

In the years before the 1905-11 revolution Russia was seen as the biggest threat to Iranian independence, and liberals and even some ulama placed hope in Great Britain, long Russia's biggest rival, to help protect Iran and its fledgling revolution against Russian hostility. When Great Britain and Russia signed their 1907 entente dividing Iran into spheres of influence, however, Iranians felt bitterly betrayed, and believed the British had sold out them and their revolution. Feelings against Great Britain after this were stronger than feelings against Russia, as nothing had been expected of Russia, whereas Great Britain had been seen as more of a supporter of Iran's independence and integrity. When Great Britain backed the Russo-British ultimatum that ended the Iranian Revolution in 1911 these feelings intensified, as they

did again with Britain's proposed 1911 treaty that would have made Iran a virtual protectorate. Further anti-British feeling was enflamed by the oil issue, where Iranians could see that after the British concession and the discovery of oil in 1908 by far the lion's share of profit from a wasting resource was going to Great Britain. These feelings were already expressed in the dispute of 1932, and came out much more strongly in the postwar disagreements that culminated in the nationalization of oil and the Mosaddegh period.

If the British, once regarded by many as relatively friendly, were transformed for many into an enemy after the Constitutional Revolution, a similar fate befell the Americans after the Mosaddegh period, and for similar reasons. Americans had generally been well regarded early in the 20th century, when individual Americans helped in the Constitutional Revolution and in founding schools, and Morgan Shuster had made valiant efforts to help build up an independent Iranian economy and enforce tax collection. Even more mixed figures like Millspaugh were not objects of widespread dislike, and it was only beginning in World War II when Americans, backed by their government, became heavily involved with military and gendarmerie training that doubts arose.

The real change in widespread Iranian nationalist feeling about American policy, however, came when the Americans, after indicating support for Iranian grievances against the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company, gradually changed their position, and went along with the worldwide blockade on Iranian oil initiated and partially enforced by the AIOC. Feelings against the United States government became far stronger when it rapidly became known that the United States was heavily involved in the 1953 overthrow of Mosaddegh. American support over 25 years for the Shah's dictatorship and nearly all its ways added to this

anti-American feeling.

Hence, in both the British and American cases, however exaggerated and paranoid some charges by some Iranians may be, suspiciousness and hostility have their roots in real and important occurrences; chiefly, participation in the overthrow of popular revolutionary movements and support of unpopular governments. This antirevolutionary participation was all the more traumatic for Iranians in that it involved a power hitherto considered largely friendly, or at least a clear lesser of evils, so that distrust of anything said by the representatives of either America or Britain (or by others in their behalf) increased. (For every strange seeming Iranian character trait, as with "mistrust" or "paranoia, "one can nearly always find partially explanatory causes in Iranian history.)

Iranians see foreign powers, which recently meant mainly the Americans, as using them for their own purposes: always for Iran's strategic role, with the hope of scoring gains and stopping gains by others, chiefly the Russians; in the 20th century for oil, and by the Americans also as a gendarme of the region against Soviet or Communist advance. Foreign governments have also promoted exports, investments, construction of infrastructure, and banking by their nationals or governments in Iran. As noted, huge American sales of arms, agricultural equipment, high technology, and consumer goods inadvertently helped destabilize Iran's economy and contributed to the Iranian revolution. However wrong and self-defeating have been many of the methods and policies used in Iran since that Revolution, one may understand the Iranians' widespread desire to demonstrate their release from foreign control and foreign ways and to build up an economy, society, and culture that are independent or freely interdependent, rather than subordinate to Western powers.

Iran's Islamic Revolution in Comparative Perspective

By: Said Amir Arjomand¹

- This paper was completed at the Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton, and has benefited from the comments of the fellow members of the Social Sciences Seminar for 1984-85. Of the colleagues and friends who have commented on earlier drafts of this paper, I especially wish to thank Lewis Coser, Jack Goldstone, Juan Linz, and James Rule.

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Introduction

The object of this paper is to bring out the theoretical significance of the Islamic Revolution in Iran by focusing on the political dynamics of the radical change in Iran's societal structure of domination and the moral dynamics of reintegration and collective action that accompany it. The political dynamics of revolution primarily explain the collapse of the structure of domination, while the moral dynamics of revolution underlie its teleology -- i. e., its direction and consequences. In the analysis of the moral dynamics and teleology of revolution, revolutionary ideology assumes primary importance.

Revolution can be defined as the collapse of the political order and its replacement by a new one. Modern revolutions occur in political orders dominated by the state. I will use the term "societal structure of domination" to refer to the prevalent system of authority. It comprises the state, which is paramount at the time of occurrence of modern revolutions, but it also includes other institutions and corporate entities that have some measure of autonomous authority in the religious, judiciary, or economic spheres. The most important of these other institutions is usually the hierocracy - i. e., the church or its equivalent.

Modern revolutions occur not in stagnant societies, but in those undergoing considerable social change. Social change involves social dislocation and normative disturbance. The dislocated groups and individuals need to be reintegrated into societal community and may also demand inclusion in political society. The integrative social and political movements that arise to meet these demands have often been a major contributing factor to the occurrence of revolutions.

The collapse of the societal structure of domination in revolutions is

caused by two sets of factors: the structure's internal weaknesses and vulnerabilities, and the concerted action of the social groups and individuals opposing it. Such groups and individuals may have political motives for opposing the regime, usually arising in the context of the power struggle set in motion by the centralization of the state. They may also have moral motives, which usually require the preconditions of social dislocation and normative disturbance. In addition, there may be other motives, such as class interest. The degree of cohesion and solidarity within each social group is a primary determinant of its capacity for collective action; the possibility of successful revolutionary action usually depends on the formation of coalitions among opposing social groups. All of the above factors provide important points of reference for comparisons regarding the *causes and preconditions* of the Islamic Revolution in Iran.

Revolutions can and should be compared in terms not only of their causes and preconditions, but also of their consequences. Those integrative social movements which successfully build on the preconditions of social dislocation and moral disorder to create revolutionary movements, do so by using ideology as an instrument. The ideologies that set the revolutionary struggle in motion and are shaped in its course bridge the gap between the causes and the consequences of revolutions. They cannot account for the collapse of the societal structure of domination to any significant degree. On the other hand, the value-ideas that form their normative foundation, and are often progressively defined and formulated during the revolutionary process, do shape the political order installed by the revolution to a significant extent.

A comparative analysis of the *teleology* of the Islamic Revolution thus requires a serious and systematic analysis of revolutionary *ideologies*.

The modern political myth of revolution and the various ideologies onto which it has been grafted in the past two centuries have constituted a causal factor motivating revolutionary opposition to the status quo, but it would be a serious mistake to stop the analysis there. Ideologies are of primary theoretical interest in that their constitutive value-ideas determine the teleology of the respective revolutions.¹ The nature and specific content of the value-ideas that distinguish different revolutionary ideologies therefore supply the basic points of reference for comparison with the teleology of the Islamic Revolution. These latter comparisons enable us to assess the distinct significance of Iran's Islamic Revolution in world history.

I. The Causes and Preconditions of the Islamic Revolution

A. The Collapse of the Monarchy

The emphasis of recent scholarship on the role of the state, its repressive capacity, and its ability to weather serious crises has brought out the fact that revolutions often owe their success more to the internal breakdown and paralysis of the state than to the power of revolutionary groups.² It has been argued that the decisive factor in the occurrence of a revolution is the fragility of the existing political system.³ Centralization of monarchical states reduces the degree of

1- The logic of the analysis requires that I exclude the unintended consequences of revolutions and confine the points of comparison to those consequences that are prefigured in the goals of the historical actors who eventually appropriate the revolution.

2- Charles Tilly, *From Mobilization to Revolution* (Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley, 1978); Theda Skocpol, *States and Social Revolution* (London and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1979); Ekkart Zimmermann, *Political Violence. Crises and Revolution* (Cambridge, MA: Shenkman, 1983), 309-14.

3- Jean Baechler, *Revolution* (New York: Harper & Row, 1975).

pluralism in society and increases its political fragility. Among the political regimes of the modern world monarchies are especially fragile and vulnerable to revolution because popular discontent can be focused on a single person. De Tocqueville, who considered that hatred of the Old Regime dominated all other passions throughout the French Revolution, also showed how that hatred became fatally focused on a single person, the king: "To see in him the common enemy was the passionate agreement that grew."¹ The same can be said about the Shah, whose ouster was the one common demand that brought together almost all of the disparate sections of Iranian society. Furthermore, the same property of the monarchical system in Iran goes a long way toward explaining the meteoric rise of [Imam] Khomeini as anti-monarch and the Shah's counter-image.

The type of political regime we might call "neo-patrimonial" is also characterized by its fragility. In contrast to the ideal-type of the absolutist state in which the king is the first servant of the state, government is extremely personal in patrimonial states. The chief executive encourages divisions within the army and the political elite in order to rule. Such neo-patrimonial states are particularly subject to collapse and ensuing revolution once the ruler breaks down.⁽²⁾

The Mexican Revolution that was set in motion by the death of Porfirio Diaz in 1911, as well as the Cuban and the Nicaraguan revolutions, can be cited in support of this proposition. In his regime, the Shah combined the weaknesses of the neo-patrimonial system with the old

1- Alexis de Tocqueville, *The European Revolution and Correspondence with Gobineau*, ed. and trans. by John Lukacs (New York: Doubleday Anchor, 1959), 82, | 109.

2- S. N. Eisenstadt, *Revolution and the Transformation of Societies* (New York: Free Press, 1978); Jack A. Goldstone, "The Comparative and Historical Study of Revolutions," *Annual Review of Sociology* 8 (1982), 196-97.

vulnerabilities of monarchy.¹ He had painstakingly constructed the machinery of the state around his person; there can be no doubt that the collapse of the man preceded the collapse of the machine. This collapse was evident in the Shah's pervasive wavering and indecision (for example, he could not make up his mind to appoint a prime minister for the liberal, nationalist opposition until it was far too late), in his inconsistent combination of rewards and threats, and in his highly inhibited use of force.²

The neo-patrimonial character of his state notwithstanding, the Shah did have a disciplined and well equipped army and police force. He simply refused to use them effectively to repress the revolutionary movement. The Shah pretended to be using the army. He declared martial law in some cities in late summer of 1978 and installed a military government in November. But after the Black Friday massacre of September 8, 1978, he had muffled the army, to the outrage of his generals. This is reflected in low casualties, about 250 in the September 8 massacre, about 750 in Tehran in the following five months, and probably three times this figure for the whole of Iran. On December 21, 1978, the Prime Minister, General Azhari -- after a mild heart attack and from his bed -- complained to the American ambassador of the demoralization of the army which he attributed to the Shah's orders forbidding the troops to fire except in the air, no matter how badly abused or pressed. "You must know this and you must tell it to your government. This country is lost because the king cannot make up his

1- The Shah was aware of these vulnerabilities, and, in 1978, knowing he had cancer, began trying to make the regime more "democratic" for the succession of his son. Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, *Answer to History* (New York: Stein & Day 1980).

2- *Ibid.*, 168-71; William H. Sullivan, *Mission to Iran* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1981), 190; Jerrold J. Green, *Revolution in Iran: The Politics of Counter-mobilization* (New York: Praeger, 1982), 92-124.

Unlike the Czar's troops in 1917, the Shah's army remained largely intact and loyal until he departed on January 16, 1979. [Imam] Khomeini's leaflets were distributed among the soldiers. There were instances of fraternization with the demonstrators and of desertion; 12 officers were killed by three rebellious soldiers of the Imperial Guard; a mutiny occurred in Tabriz in December; and there were a number of, other minor incidents. There was also persistent trouble with paramilitary technicians of the air force, known as the Homafaran. But overall, the strain of confrontation with the people did not seriously affect the morale and discipline of the armed forces. It was only after the Shah's departure that the process of disintegration of the army under political pressure set in seriously.

I do not wish to assert that the use of the army for massive repression would have prevented the revolution. We will never know what would have happened if the Shah had ordered his forces to be brutally repressive in October and November 1978, when they were not yet affected by the revolutionary turmoil. The army might or might not have disintegrated or split; the fact remains that it had not disintegrated by January 16, 1979. And the opposition knew it.²

The army's officers had a strong sense of professional identity, but no attachment to any particular social group or any organized interests. Furthermore, the Shah had carefully chosen his top army generals to assure they could not act in concert against him, and he had succeeded in that. The generals could have acted under him, but he

1- Sullivan (FD. 7), 212. The figures for Tehran are taken from a Master's thesis for Tehran University supervised by Dr. Ahmad Ashraf. I am grateful to Dr. Ashraf for this information.

2- Gary Sick. *All Fall Down: America's Tragic Encounter with Iran* (New York: Random House, 1985), 142-43.

not let them. They could not act against him, but neither could they act for themselves or any other group. In desperation, some of them finally made a deal with the clerical opposition.

Tilly has correctly emphasized the importance of coalitions linking revolutionary challengers to the military.¹ Although the term coalition would be too strong, the agreement worked out by Bazargan and Beheshti through the mediation of the American ambassador with a number of the generals was of crucial importance in bringing about a split in the army and its consequent neutralization in February 1979.²

If the Shah's regime collapsed despite the fact that his army was intact, despite the fact that there was no defeat in war, and despite the fact that the state faced no financial crisis and no peasant insurrection, where does all this leave the usual generalizations about revolutions? Mostly in the pits. War has been called the midwife of revolution, and peasant insurrections are considered indispensable in many currently fashionable theories of revolution.³

The inferences we can draw from the case of Iran are as follows: financial and fiscal crises — or, for that matter, the extractive capacity of the state and heavy taxation — are not necessary for the occurrence of revolution. It is possible for the societal structure of domination to collapse without the participation of the peasantry; and a major war of defeat of the army are not necessary preconditions of revolution. I will show how a political order may collapse without any of these conditions.

For now, let us merely note that the Cuban Revolution was an instance of a revolution without a rebellion of the peasantry and without

1- Tilly (fn. 2), 20.

2- Sullivan (fn. 7), 199-247.

3- Skocpol (In. 2), chap. 3 and p. 286; Walter K. Goldfrank, "Theories of Revolution and Revolution Without Theory: The Case of Mexico." *Theory and Society* 7 (No.3, 1979), 153; Zimmermann (fn. 2), 315, 322, 336-42, 352-57.

a major defeat in war. Skocpol, whose theory of revolution puts a great deal of emphasis on both these allegedly necessary conditions, cavalierly dismisses Cuba in half a footnote. Furthermore, she does not face the theoretical consequences of the absence of these factors in her subsequent article about the Iranian Revolution.

She is rightly determined to bring the state into the picture, but does so in an unsatisfactory way, largely by deploying a new pet phrase, "the rentier state." The basic idea is misleading in that the "rentier state" was actually created by Reza Shah from the early 1920s to 1941, when the revenue received by the state from the Anglo-Persian Oil Company was in fact small — some 10 to 15 percent of government revenue, and minuscule compared to the oil revenue in the 1970s. She musters a modicum of other plausible but ad hoc subsidiary themes to account for the Iranian Revolution. However, Skocpol never faces up to the problem of reconciling the Iranian Revolution with her theoretical schema of 1979.¹

One generalization is borne out by the revolution in Iran:² the Shah was seriously compromised by his close and subservient association with the United States, and the American military and economic presence and the presence of a large European work force acted as a major stimulus to mass mobilization. The anti-foreign motive in challenging the legitimacy of the societal structure of domination finds parallels in the English, the French, the Russian, the Chinese, and the Cuban revolutions, and in East European fascism.

1- Skocpol (fn. 2), 318, n. 2: Theda Skocpol, "Rentier State and Shia Islam in the Iranian Revolution," *Theory and Society* 11 (No.3, 1982), 265-304. On the Cuban Revolution, see John Dunn, *Modern Revolutions: An Introduction to the Analysis of a Political Phenomenon* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972), chap. 8.

2- Samuel P. Huntington, *Political Order in Changing Societies* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1968, 304-96).

B. The State, the Hierocracy, and Civil Society in Shi'ite Iran

It would be a mistake to equate the societal structure of domination with the state alone. For Max Weber, its major components were the state *and* the church. He defined the two institutions of legitimate authority analogously, and took care to analyze the relationship between the church and civil society when appropriate.¹ This point is significant because the unique feature of Iran's Islamic Revolution is that it is a crucial stage in the conflict between hierocracy and state, while at the same time being a modern political revolution. It is a composite of two phenomena whose counterparts in Western history are separated by centuries. The absolutist states of Europe had already won the protracted contest with the Roman Church before the coming of the early modern European revolutions.²

In the history of Iran, the analogous contest between the state and the hierocracy occurred much later. Shi'ism was declared the state religion of Iran in 1501, but the hierocracy remained heteronymous and subordinate to the state for a long time, consolidating its power and autonomy only at the end of the 18th and the beginning of the 19th century. The curtailment of the power of the hierocracy and the appropriation of many of its prerogatives and functions by the state took place in the 20th century. The Shi'ite religious authorities were and remained doctrinally and institutionally independent of the state, however: they retained their autonomous religious authority as well as their control over appreciable resources independent of the state

1- Max Weber, *Economy and Society* (2 vols.), ed. by Guenther Roth and Claus Wittich (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978), I, pp.54-56 and II, chap.15.

2- Otto Hintze. "The State in Historical Perspective," in Reinhard Bendix and others, eds., *State and Society: A Reader in Comparative Political Sociology* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1968); Bertrand Badie and Pierre Birnbaum, *The Sociology of the State* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983), 93. 110-11.

Bureaucracy.¹

The Western revolutions were directed against state *and* church. The church had been anglicized in England, gallicized in France, and disestablished by Peter the Great in Russia; in all instances, it was an integral part of the monarchical regime. In the Islamic Revolution in Iran, the entire beleaguered Shi'ite hierocracy rose against the state. (This was partly due to the Shah's fateful ineptitude in not splitting the Shi'ite hierocracy in time; there is now evidence that some of the grand Ayatollahs were ready for a compromise by the summer of 1978, and a split did in fact occur after the revolution.)

For analytical reasons, too, it is important to conceive of the societal structure of domination in more inclusive terms. Revolutionary situations occur because of the disintegration of central authority. With the disintegration of the authority of the state, other elements of the societal structure of domination assume greater importance. Corporations and individuals with authority in other spheres of life can extend their authority to the political sphere and assume positions of leadership. In such situations; they emerge as "natural leaders" of the people. The hierocracy and men of religion can use their traditional authority in this fashion, and have often done so -- for instance, in Spanish history.² In Iran, many of the high-ranking members of the

1- Said A. Arjomand. *The Shadow of Cod and the Hidden Imam: Religion, Political Order, and Societal Change in Shi'ite Iran from the Beginning to 1890* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984).

2- We encounter this kind of situation in rebellions in Castile in 1520, where Franciscan and Dominican monks figured prominently among the leaders of the Commoners. Similarly, as the president of the Catalan Diputacio, the priest Pau Claris assumed the leading position in the rebellion of the summer of 1640. When the Spanish people rose against Napoleon in 1808 without any king or government, they were led by the church - priests and monks. See Gerald Brenan, *The Spanish Labyrinth: An Account of the Social and Political Background of the Spanish Civil War* (Cambridge:

Shi'ite hierocracy led the popular opposition to the monarch during the Constitutional Revolution of 1905-1906. In 1978, many groups and individuals who wanted the Shah out but had no interest whatsoever in a theocracy accepted Ayatollah Khomeini's leadership.

The centralization of the state necessitates the concentration of economic, coercive, and symbolic resources. It entails encroachments upon local and provincial privileges as well as fiscal and constitutional immunities; and it entails the dispossession of certain privileged social groups. It thus sets in motion an intense and continuous political struggle. The reaction of privileged groups and of autonomous centers of power against the expansion and centralization of the state is a major source of most if not all of the early modern European revolutions:¹ the revolt of the Commoners of the cities of Castile against Charles V in 1520; the revolt of the Netherlands in reaction to the centralizing policies of Philip II in the 1560s; the French Civil War of the 16th century; the revolt of the Catalans once Olivares had consigned their "constitutions" to the devil, and of Portugal in 1640; the early phase of the English Revolution;² and the Fronde and the aristocratic pre-revolution of 1787-1788 in France.³ In all these cases, estates and corporations reacted when their autonomy and inherited privileges were threatened by the state; and they usually found men of religion as their

Cambridge University Press, 1943), 42; Perez Zagorin, *Rebels and Rulers, 1500-1660* (New York and Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), I. pp.266-67.

1- Eisenstadf (fn. 5): Baechler (fn. 3), 139; Goldstone (fn. 5), 194-95.

2- By 1640, the English Crown had alienated a large segment of the elite which included, notably, the proponents of aristocratic constitutionalism and the rising local landed gentry who resisted its increasingly statist policies. See Lawrence Stone.

The

Causes of the English Revolution (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul. 1972), 30, 57. 92, 124.

3- De Tocqueville (fn. 4); Alfred Cobban, *Aspects of the French Revolution* (New York: Norton, 1968); Zagorin (fn. 18).

allies. The dispossessed or debt-ridden nobility of the Netherlands, for instance, found allies in Calvinist preachers and iconoclasts.¹ In the Iran of the 1970s, the preachers and the chief dispossessed the group capable of reaction were the same group.

Three major privileged social groups were victims of the centralization of the state under the Pahlavis. The first consisted of the tribal chiefs. The pacification campaigns of Reza Khan (later to become Reza Shah) in 1921-1925 broke the power of the tribal chiefs and eliminated many of them physically, even though resistance in the most peripheral areas such as Luristan continued until the early 1930s. The land and property registry law of 1922 converted the surviving tribal chiefs into big landlords.⁽²⁾ As such, they became members of the city-dwelling, landowning upper class, and, as individuals, many of them entered the Pahlavi political elite.

The Shi'ite hierarchy was next to come under fierce attack by the centralizing Pahlavi state. Under Reza Shah, the state deprived it of all its judiciary functions, eliminated its fiscal and social privileges, and greatly reduced its control over education and over religious endowments. In the face of Reza Shah's determination and severity, it did not react in any significant fashion.

Reza Shah had reached an accommodation with the class of big landlords, "the thousand families," who predominated in the Iranian parliament (Majlis) until 1960. It was during the first -- and the only genuine -- stage of Mohammad Reza Shah's land reform in 1962 and 1963 that the landowning "thousand families," including the tribal chiefs, were liquidated as a class. Once the Majlis was dissolved, the "feudal" landowning class had no autonomous institutional basis and could not

1- *Ibid.*, II, p.94.

2- Ann K. S. Lambton, *Landlord and Peasant in Persia* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1953), chap. 15.

react against its complete political and partial economic dispossession by the state. Though many of its members retained large holdings of land and become mechanized commercial farmers, thus joining the petro-bourgeoisie, and though many of them remained in the Pahlavi political elite, the traditional peasant-landlord relationship, which was the power basis of the landowning class and accounted for its prominence in the Majlis, had undoubtedly been destroyed.¹

Relations between the hierocracy and the monarchy had improved after the resignation of Reza Shah -- especially in the late 1940s and 1950s, when the monarchy was weak and the hierocracy was alarmed by the threat of communism. The state resumed its aggressive posture in the 1960s, and 1970s, this time encroaching upon the religious sphere in the strict sense/²) In contrast to the landowning class, the partially dispossessed Shi'ite clerical estate did have an autonomous institutional basis. It could react to the expansion of the state, and eventually did.

In the political struggle set in motion by the centralization and modernization of the state, the dispossessed social groups that retain an institutional basis for reacting against the expanding state need to create *coalitions* with other social groups and classes if they are to succeed. In the early 1960s, elements from the hierocracy, the landlords, and the

1- Ahmad Ashraf "Dehqanan, Zamin va Enqelab" (The Peasantry, Land and Revolution, in *Kitab-e Agah* (1982, 136), I, 11-12; Eric Hooglund, *Land and Revolution in Iran, 1960-1980* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1982), 79, 31; Ann K.S. Lambton, "Land and Revolution in Iran" (Review Article), *Iranian Studies* 17 (No.1, 1984), 76-77. The destruction of the peasant-landlord relationship was completed in the 1960s, during the second and third phases of the reform, with the schemes for division of land between peasants and landlords. Though the redistributive effect of these phases was negligible, their socio-political effect in breaking the traditional links between peasants and landlords was profound.

2- Said A. Arjomand, "Shi'ite Islam and the Revolution in Iran," *Government and Opposition* 16 (Summer 1981), 293-316.

tribal chiefs made poorly coordinated attempts to forge a coalition, but the separate uprisings of [Imam] Khomeini's followers and the Qashqa'i and Boyr Ahmad tribes of Pars in 1963 were ruthlessly suppressed.¹ In 1978, when an effective coalition did come into being, it carried out a revolution.

Because of their common hatred of the Shah, the revolutionary coalition of 1978 included the bulk of Iran's urban population. The peasantry did not play a role in the Islamic Revolution, and neither did the industrial working class. All other segments of the population actively opposed the Shah and accepted [Imam] Khomeini's revolutionary leadership. The two most important coalition partners of the militant clerics consisted of the new middle class government employees, school teachers, the intelligentsia, and the white-collar workers in the service sector -- and the traditional bourgeoisie of the bazaar.

The coalition between the Shi'ite clerics and the new middle class was highly unstable. It rested on fraudulent silence on the part of the former and on wishful self-delusion on the part of the latter. It did not last long: having ejected the Shah, [Imam] Khomeini lost no time in liquidating the Westernized intelligentsia.

The coalition between the revolutionary clerics and the traditional bourgeoisie, on the other hand, rested on more tangible grievances on both sides and on a more solid historical basis. It has been more enduring. It is the latest instance of the alliance of the mosque and the bazaar, and resembles the alliance of the urban bourgeoisie and the church in the 11th and 12th centuries in Western Christendom. It was forged in the late 1970s, under the immediate impact of the Shah's destruction of the seminaries in Mashad and his massive anti-profiteering

1- Ann K. S. Lambton, *The Persian Land Reform* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969), 102-13; Tapper (fn. 23), 29.

campaign against the bazaar merchants and retailers.¹

Why did the new middle class lose out? History could have gone the other way — as it did in the case of Nasser's temporary coalition with the Muslim Brothers who had wide popular support and were in some ways much better organized than the mullahs. In 20th century Iran, the centralizing state had atomized society to a considerable degree. It had detached the tribal chiefs and dissolved the landowning class; and it had created an intelligentsia, a bureaucratic class, a body of army officers and, lately, an industrial / entrepreneurial group; all of these were unattached to any social community, be it a tribe, an estate, or a corporation. In partial contradistinction to pre-revolutionary France, however, three elements of the old civil society had escaped the atomization of Iranian society: the Shi'ite clerical estate; the bazaar and traditional bourgeoisie; and urban communities in certain older city quarters that were dominated by the previous group. To these, one should add the new urban communities created by chain migration from rural areas and small towns into the larger cities. It is not surprising, then, that the atomized new middle class proved to be the proverbial Marxian "sack of potatoes" while the other social groups in the coalition were capable of remarkably concerted political action, and soon took over.²

The Shah had kept the new middle class under constant supervision

1- According to Bakhash, 8,000 shopkeepers were jailed and as many as 250,000 fined during this campaign in 1975 and 1976. Shaul Bakhash. *The Reign of the Ayatollahs: Iran and the Islamic Revolution* (New York: Basis Books, 1984), 13. The last figure seems too high.

2- It is interesting to compare the heterogeneity and lack of cohesiveness of Iran's new middle class with the same features associated with its Western counterpart, which Gouldner erroneously portrays as a new class in the Marxian schema. Alvin Gouldner, *The Future of Intellectuals and the Rise of the New Class* (New York: Seabury. 1979).

by the secret police and had not allowed it to form associations or to gain any political experience. Moreover, its ability to act was seriously I impaired because the army officers were isolated from the rest of its elements. Thus, the political representatives of the new middle class could not easily form a coalition with the army, which was too closely identified with the Shah and his regime. They therefore decided to form a coalition with the Shi'ite hierocracy.

According to Tilly, contenders who are in danger of losing their place in a polity are especially disposed to "reactive" collective action. He I rightly observes that for centuries the principal form of collective action followed a "reactionary" pattern — i.e., it was "reactive" and "communal." Thanks to social evolution, however, that is no longer the case, and collective action has become predominantly "proactive" in modern times/¹) This conceptual distinction seems of dubious value: a whole set of revolutions analyzed in this paper are both "reactive" and "proactive." In reality, collective action that Tilly had typified as "reactive" does not lose its importance after the middle of the 19th century; and it usually continues to draw on communal traditional solidarities. Whenever these communal solidarities are class solidarities, they pertain not to rising but to *declining* or threatened social classes. The Islamic Revolution in Iran alerts us to the undeniable importance of reactive action in the revolutionary movements of the last two centuries, including those that Marx

1- Charles Tilly. "Revolutions and Collective Violence" in Fred I. Greenstein and Nelson W. Polsby, eds., *Handbook of Political Science, III: Macro-political Theory* (Reading, MA: Addison - Wesley, 1975), 507-10. It is highly revealing that the period identified by Tilly as marking the transition from traditional to modern forms of collective action, the mid-19th century, coincided with the *end* of the classic age of revolutions. Charles Tilly, "How Protest Modernized in France, 1845-1855," in William O. Aydelotte, Allan G. Bogue, and Robert Fogel, eds., *The Dimensions of Quantitative Research in History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press. 1972).

took to be revolutions of rising classes.

Fascinating evidence for the importance of reactive action and traditional communal solidarities in revolutionary movements has recently come to light; it concerns the very groups who inspired Marx with the theory of revolution that has distorted our understanding of the phenomenon for over a century. The myth of the middle class in the English and the French Revolutions has long been exploded, notably by Hexter and Cobban. Trevor-Roper's characterization of the English Revolution as the declining "mere gentry's" revolution of despair contains an element of truth, but also much exaggeration¹⁾

On the other hand, we now know that the revolutionaries of 1789 were *not* the capitalist bourgeoisie²⁾ and that the revolutionaries of the first decades of the 19th century in England and of 1848 were *not* the industrial working class. The English revolutionary working class of that time in fact consisted of the artisans and craftsmen who were threatened by capitalist industrialization and were holding on to the memory of the golden age of a community of small producers based on mutual ties and cooperation³⁾

A recent study of these "reactionary radicals," as one observer calls them, concludes that "commitment to traditional cultural values and immediate communal relations are crucial to many radical movements. "Communal relations are seen to be important resources for mobilization as they enable traditional communities to remain mobilized

1- For an assessment of Trevor-Roper's idea, see J. H. Hexter, *Reappraisals in History*, 2d ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979). 129-31.

2- Alfred Cobban, *Social Interpretations of the French Revolution* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1964); Jack A. Goldstone, "Reinterpreting the French Revolution," *Theory and Society* 13 (September 1984).

3- Krishan Kumar, "Class and Political Action in Nineteenth Century England: Theoretical and Comparative Perspectives", *European Journal of Sociology* 24 (No. 1. 1983).

for a long time and in the face of considerable privation.¹ Shopkeepers and artisans predominated in the French insurrections of the 1830s.¹¹ The same group of artisans reacting against industrial capitalism and proletarianization, who drew their standards and idiom of protest from the past, constituted the backbone of the 1848 revolutions in France and Germany. In France, the journeymen's brotherhoods which perpetuated the traditional corporate consciousness and solidarities of the *ancient regime* constituted the leading revolutionary element in 1848. In Germany, artisan groups were prominent in the revolutionary movement of 1848 while the proletariat was the most quiescent of all social entities³⁾

"Reactionary radicals," concludes Calhoun, "have seldom, if ever, been able to gain supremacy in revolutions. But at the same time revolutions worthy of the name have never been made without them."⁴⁾ With the Islamic Revolution, a group of reactionary radicals under the leadership of the custodians of the Shi'ite tradition have at last gained supremacy in what is theoretically the most interesting of modern revolutions.

Let us move on to consider some movements that Marx did not study. First, there are the peasant rebellions. Generally speaking, the Islamic Revolution has this in common with peasant rebellions: it draws on corporate solidarities and communal and kinship ties, and

1- Craig J. Calhoun, "The Radicalism of Tradition: Community Strength or Venerable Disguise and Borrowed Language?" *American Journal of Sociology* 88 (No.5, 1983). 886, 897, 908.

2- Tilly (fn. 30, 1972), cited in Zimmermann (fn. 2), 374-75.

3- William H. Sewell, Jr. *Work and Revolution in France: The language of Labor From the old Regime to 1848* (New York and Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980); Barrington Moore. *Injustice: The Social Bans of Obedience and Revolt* (White Plains, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 1978), 126, 127.

4- Calhoun (fn. 34), 911.

consequently has many conservative and defensive features.¹ In Mexico, there was the massive peasant rebellion of 1810 led by Father Hidalgo and Father Morelos, both parish priests/²) In Spain, the Carlists' aim in the 1830s has been described as the "restoration of 'monkish democracy'": the clergy led the prosperous Basque and Aragonese yeomanry in rising to defend their local autonomy and their *fueros* against the centralizing policy of the Bourbon government.⁽³⁾ In the present century, there was the revolt of Zapata in defense of the local autonomy of traditional agrarian communities against the expanding *haciendas* in Mexico. Thanks to the devout Zapatistas (laws of 1915 and 1917) and to Cardenas (1934-1940), the Mexican Revolution established the security of the *ejido* -- community-owned, inalienable individual or communal holdings in the villages. It should be added that the outcome of the Mexican Revolution would have been much less secularist and more conservative if the Cristero movement, organized by priests and lay Catholics in reaction to the anticlerical policies of central government, with the motto *Viva Cristo Rey* (long live Christ the King), had succeeded in 1927-1928.⁽⁴⁾

The pernicious idea that fascism was a movement of the petty

1- Georges Lefebure, "La Revolution Francaise et les paysans (The French Revolution and the Peasants), in *Etudes sur la Revolution p-ancaise* (Presses Universitaires de France, 1954 (1933), 250, 254; Tilly (In. 30, 1975), 498; Zimmermann (fn. 2).

2- Dunn (fn. 13), 52-53.

3- Brehan (fn. 18), 206-11, 213, note A. In the Second Carlist War (1870-1876), monks and priests again led the guerrilla bands.

4- Bonn (fn. 13), 49. 64-69: Francois Chevalier, "The *Ejido* and Political Stability in Mexico," in Claudio Veliz, ed., *The Politics of Conformity in Latin America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1967). 161-169; Cuenier Lewy, *Religion and Revolution* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1974), chap. 16: Alistair Hennessy, "Fascism and Populism in Latin America," in Walter Laqueur, ed., *Fascism: A Reader's Guide* (Berkeley: University of California Press. 1976), 280.

bourgeois class has finally been laid to rest.¹ The petty bourgeoisie was somewhat overrepresented in most fascist movements, and it is undoubtedly overrepresented in the Islamic movement in Iran. But it is overrepresented in all sorts of radical movements. We find the "little! people," the "*menus people*," in the religious riots in 16th century France I on both sides²) We find them among the stormier of the Bastille³) and, as we have just seen, we find them among the 19th century radicals who, for E. P. Thompson, *made* the English working class.

Recent studies clearly show that fascist parties were supported by elements from *all* social groups, but especially the dislocated, the dispossessed, and the declassed. What is more to the point (and not disputed) is that the *leadership* of the fascist movements came disproportionately from the *declassé* and the dispossessed, from demobilized army officers, from displaced or unemployed bureaucrats (especially those dislocated by the redrawing of national boundaries), and from the occasional dispossessed aristocrat. The Nazis also did not fail to tap the traditional communal solidarities of the Protestant Countryside.⁴

European fascism and the Islamic movement in Iran are similar in

- 1- Stein U. Larsen, Bernt Hagtvet, and Jan P. Myklebust, *Wlw Were the Fascists!* *Social Roots of European Fascism* (Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 1980); Richard F. Hamilton, *Who Voted for Hitler?* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982).
- 2- Natalie Z. Davis, "Religious Riots in Sixteenth Century France," *Past and Present* 59 (1973), 85-86.
- 3- George Rude, *The Crowd in the French Revolution* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1959), cited in Zimmermann (fn. 2), 387.
- 4- Francis L. Carsten, "Interpretations of Fascism," in Laqueur (fn. 41), 416-19; Juan J. Linz, "Some Notes Towards a Comparative Study of Fascism in Sociological Historical Perspective," *ibid.*, 38-39; Peter H. Merkl, "Comparing the Fascist Movements," in Larsen and others (fn. 42), 794, 789; Miklo, "The Social Roots of Hungarian Fascism: The Arrow Cross," *ibid.*, 395-96; Hamilton (fn. 42), esp. 444-55.

that they were led by dispossessed elements. But there are two important differences. First, the fascist leaders were a heterogeneous group, whereas [Imam] Khomeini's militant clerics form a homogeneous group. Second, the fascist leaders did not have exclusive control over any cultural assets, and had to get their ideas where they could find them. The Shi'ite hierocracy consisted of the custodians of a rich religious tradition. The consequences of these differences will become apparent presently.

C. Integrative Social Movements as Reactions to Social Dislocation

We can now turn to the preconditions of revolution — the social dislocation and moral disturbance that follow rapid social change. Let us begin with normative disturbance at the most superficial level. The conspicuous consumption on the part of Iranian high society and the abundance of *nouveaux riches* produced an acute sense of relative deprivation among the new middle class government employees, white collar workers in the private sector, and school teachers. At times, there was the added discomfort of absolute deprivation, which resulted from an acute housing shortage that was aggravated by the influx of a sizable foreign work force and American advisers.

In this context, it would be valid to speak of the widespread discontent of 1977 - 1978 as a confirmation of Davies's J-curve of continuous rising expectations and sudden frustration.¹) Iran's GNP grew by 30.3 percent in 1973 - 1974 and by a further 42 percent in 1974-1975. Then came the economic debacle -- despite, or rather because of, the massive unregulated inflow of oil revenue. Severe

1- James C. Davies, "Towards a Theory of Revolution," *American Sociological Review* 27 (No. 1, 1962).

bottlenecks in skilled manpower and infrastructure halted economic growth in 1976.⁽¹⁾ The problem was more deep rooted, however. What underlay the widespread desire for revolutionary change was a fundamental disorientation and *anomie* more than a superficial and short-run frustration of material expectation. As Durkheim has pointed out, "crises of prosperity" generate disorientation by disturbing the collective normative order/²⁾

There can be no doubt about the tremendous confusion and disorder created by the massive inflow of petrodollars, just as there can be little doubt about similar confusions in Nigeria and Mexico today. The consequent sense of moral disorder and desire for the reaffirmation of absolute standards should not be minimized. There was a widespread cultural malaise throughout Iranian society, ranging from general confusion and disorientation on the part of the *nouveaux riches* to sharply focused and intense rejection of foreign and antireligious cultural influences on the part of the mullahs and the merchants of the bazaar.

In Europe, the socialist and fascist mass movements were part of the extraordinary wave of mass political mobilization integration that swept the continent in the early decades of the 20th century/³⁾

It is easy to recognize that these movements acted as vehicles for the integration of the recently mobilized masses into societal community. But one should not forget that religious movements have often performed the same function in the past.

Political mobilization comes about as a result of basic social change

1- Robert Graham. *Iran: The Ittmion of Power* (London: Croom Helm, 1978).

2- Emile Durkheim, *Suicide: A Study in Sociology* (Glencoe. IL: Free Press. 1951 [1897]).

3- Merkl (fn. 45), 760-62.

which also entails considerable social dislocation. Social change displaces a large number of persons from the strata into which they were born. These persons yearn for and demand inclusion in new forms of societal community. Religious movements and sects are age-old channels for the reintegration of such dislocated individuals. Political movements and parties are the new channels for societal reintegration. The Islamic Revolution demonstrates that the old and the new can combine.

Urbanization and the expansion of higher education in the two decades preceding the revolution are the two dimensions of rapid social change most relevant to the problem. Between 1956 and 1976, the urban population of Iran increased from 31 percent to 47 percent (from 6 to 16 million). Rural - urban migration accounts for a substantial proportion of this shift — over one-third for the decade 1966-1976, the rate being even higher for Tehran.

This decade also witnessed an unprecedented expansion of higher education. The number of persons with higher education quadrupled (to about 300,000) and the enrollment in universities and professional schools in Iran trebled (to about 150,000). These factors contributed significantly to the rise of the Islamic movement. Thousands of religious associations spontaneously came into being in cities and in universities, and acted as the mechanism for the social integration of a significant proportion of the migrants into the cities and of the first generation university students.¹ By contrast, the Shah's parallel attempt to integrate these same groups into his one-party political system proved to be a fiasco.

There is nothing new about dislocated, uprooted men and women finding new moorings in religious associations, sects, and revivalist movements. In England, for instance, many "masterless" men become

1- Arioman (fn. 26).

sectaries in the 16th and 17th centuries.¹ As early as the 1570s, Presbyterian classes were attended by laymen, but it is in the 1620s and 1630s that Puritan lectureships took root in towns to an astonishing degree, to the dismay of the Anglican Church. Laymen became patrons and paymasters of the Puritan lecturers, and the congregations clustering around the latter became "models for ideological party organization."²)

The situation strongly resembles the growth of lay religious associations in Iran in the 1960s and especially the 1970s, where the mullahs preached -- at first in person but later, when demand outstripped supply, through cassette players -- to avid audiences of urbanites. We find an even closer parallel in the rise of Methodism. In the 18th and early 19th centuries, migrants into the new industrial towns of England flocked to the assemblies of the Methodist preachers. Here, the perspective of integration into societal community brings out the sociological cogency of Halevy's famous thesis: the Methodist Revival integrated the recently urbanized masses into societal community and thus prevented a political revolution in England/³)

Fascism, too, acted as the vehicle of integration of rural - urban migrants into societal community. In Germany, for instance, "many of the new urbanites failed to complete their cultural adjustment to city life and instead remained curiously vulnerable to the agrarian romanticism of *volkisch* ideologues."⁴) One-half of the top Nazi party leaders were

1- Christopher Hill, *The World Turned Upside Down* (Harmondsworth, England: Penguin, 1975), 45-48.

2- Stone (fn. 20), 103, 120-21.

3- Elie Halevy, *The Birth of Methodism in England*, trans, and introduction by Bernard Sepimel (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1971).

4- Merkl (fn. 45), 757.

born in large villages.¹

Literacy and Puritanism went hand-in-hand. The same is true of the growth of Islamic scripturalism. Islamic fundamentalism spread in Iranian universities just as Puritanism had spread at Oxford and Cambridge²) Many of the Islamic activists of the 1970s, who currently form the lay second stratum of the Islamic regime, discovered "the true Islam" in university associations, just as Cromwell was reborn at Cambridge. Fascism spread at European universities in a parallel fashion. In Eastern Europe in particular, university students and young activists constituted the core of the fascist parties and their leadership. Rumanian fascism is of particular interest in this respect. In the early 1920s, its leaders, Colreanu and Mota, were founders of university associations for Christian reform and national revival in the universities of Iasi and Cluj, respectively.³

The *combination* of higher education and social dislocation is of particular importance for explaining the politicization of integrative movements. The key to the social composition of Islamic and university activists of the 1970s is that they either moved from small towns to big cities to go to universities, or they were the first generation from traditional lower middle-class backgrounds to attend universities, or both.⁴

1- Linz (fn. 45), 50.

2- Stone (fn. 20), 96-97; Michael Walzer, *The Revolutions of the Saints: A Study in the Origins of Radical Politics* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1965), 140-43.

3- Hugh Seton - Watson, *The East European Revolution*, 3d ed. (New York: Praeger, 1956), 44; Carsten (fn. 45), 418; Linz (fn. 45), 48-50; Juan T. Linz, "Political Space and Fascism as a Late-Comer," in Larsen and others (fn. 42), 167; Zeev Barbu, "Psycho-Historical and Sociological Perspective on the Iron Guard, the Fascist Movement of Romania," *ibid.*, 385-87.

4- Ahmad Ashraf and Ali Banuazizi, "State and Social Classes and Modes of Mobilization in the Iranian Revolution." *State, Culture and Society I* (No. 3, 1985).

These young men contributed to revolutionary politicization of the Islamic revival of the 1960s and 1970s in the same way in which the educated country gentlemen in England had contributed to the revolutionary politicization of Puritanism. The parallel with Rumanian fascism is even more striking. As the last Iron Guard leader, Sima, put it, "in 1926-27, our universities were flooded by a big wave of young people of peasant origin... who brought with them a robust national consciousness and were thus destroying the last strongholds of foreign spirit on our universiteis.¹ According to Eugen Weber, "legionary leadership came from the provincial, only just urbanized intelligentsia: sons or grandsons of peasants, school teachers, and priests."²

Max Weber once remarked that with the advent of modern mass politics, the condition of clerical domination itself changes. "Hierocracy has no choice but to establish a party organization and to use demagogic means, just like all other parties." Rapid urbanization and the Shah's failure to integrate uprooted elements — especially the socially mobile, newly educated elements -- into his political system offered (Imam) Khomeini and the cornered Shi'ite hierocracy an unparalleled opportunity for creating a politicized revolutionary mass movement. Using the organizational network of the lay religious associations and Islamic university students, the mullahs periodically organized the massive anti-Shah demonstrations and closures of the bazaar which amounted to a general strike of unprecedented duration. Perhaps they could even have brought down a stronger regime; we will never know. What is certain is that the clerically led general strike did bring clown the fragile Pahlavi regime and its vacillating ruler.

1- Barbu (in. 57), 392.

2- Eugen Weber. "The Men of the Archangel," *Journal of Contemporary History* 1 (No. 1, 1966), 107.

3- Max Weber (fn. 15) , TL P. 1195.

D. The Political and Moral Motives of the Supporters of Revolution and the Minor Significance of Class Interest

Political motive may be defined as the motive to retain or recover political and institutional assets threatened or expropriated, and to gain political power by membership in, and maximally, control of, political society. On the negative side, the moral motive for supporting a revolution may stem from the condemnation of a regime because it is unjust, because it is servile to foreign powers, or because it is instrumental in spreading an alien culture and undermining authentic traditional, cultural and religious values.

The moral condemnation of the regime as unjust may, in turn, be due to its being perceived as tyrannical, or it may be due to a sense of relative deprivation. On the positive side, the moral motive for supporting the revolution may result from the acceptance of the modern myth of revolution as a redemptive collective act. Finally, class interest can act as a motive for supporting the revolution if the economic interests of a class (so defined by virtue of their position in the mode or system of production) are protected or furthered thereby. With this schema, let us examine the motives that can plausibly be attributed to the social groups who supported the revolution against the Shah.

Political and moral motives are closely intertwined in the attitude of Shi'ite hierocracy. The primary material interest of the clerical leaders was to regain the prerogatives and functions they had lost as a result of the centralization and modernization of the state. This was true of the leading clerical militants who came from traditional urban backgrounds, were in their forties or fifties at the time of the revolution, and had a keen awareness of the dispossessions of the Shi'ite hierocracy by the Pahlavi state. The younger militant clerics, who were primarily drawn from humbler rural and small town backgrounds, saw all avenues of upward social mobility for people in their profession blocked under the

Pahlavis.¹ They expected an Islamic government to guarantee them rapid social ascent and full incorporation into the political system.

Both the clerical leaders and the militant seminarians were morally indignant at the spread of immorality, libertinism, and an alien culture under the Pahlavi regime. In a significant statement, [Imam] Khomeini's son identified the conservative members of the Shi'ite hierarchy who supported the revolution against the Shah as persons whose motivation was exclusively moral.²

The political and moral motives are also entwined for the intensely politicized lay Islamic activists. These first generation provincial and lower middle-class university students and graduates, mostly in the applied sciences and engineering, saw themselves barred from the Westernized upper echelons of society and high government positions. They, too, were motivated by the desire to remove these barriers to their upward social mobility. It would be absurd to attribute any class interest to this young "petty bourgeois" group other than the desire to gain power and entry into the political system, to move up on the social ladder, and to put an end to a cultural climate they found alien and resented deeply.

The motives of the new middle class were both political and moral. Many of its members -- including the recently mobilized middle class women who figured prominently in the anti-Shah demonstrations -- wanted inclusion in the political society. They considered the Pahlavi regime tyrannical and unjust, and accepted the myth of revolution. It should be noted, however, that the potency of the political myth of revolution caused the new middle class, especially the women, to join

1- Michael M. .1. Fischer, *Iran: From Religion* Dispute to Revolution*. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1980).

2- Quoted in Ervand Abrahamian, "Structural Causes of the Iranian Revolution," *Middle East Research and Information Project* 87 (May 1980), 26.

the Islamic revolutionary movement against their class interests -- indeed suicidally/¹)

The traditional bourgeoisie — the merchants of the bazaar, the petty bourgeoisie of distributive trades, and the craftsmen of the bazaar guilds -- was the one social group for which class interest was the primary motive for overthrowing the Shah. These groups felt threatened by the developmental economic policies of the state which, among other things, excluded them from easy access to credit; they also feared the encroachment of the modern sector of the economy on their territory in the form of competing machine-made goods and new distributive networks of supermarkets and chain stores. To this motivating class interest was added a sense of relative deprivation caused by the tremendous gains made by court-connected industrialists, as well as considerable moral indignation caused by the disregard of Islam and traditional values under foreign cultural influence.

II. The Teleology of the Islamic Revolution

A. Moral Rigorism and the Search for Cultural Authenticity

The fact that integrative social movements are reactions to social dislocation and normative disorder explains the salience of their search

1- It was neither the first nor the last time that a social class participated in a revolution which did not further its interests. As Barrington Moore has pointed out, peasants have often been the principal victims of modernization brought about by communist governments they helped create by their participation in revolutionary movements. See Moore. *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy: Lord and Peasant in the Making of the Modern World* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1966). 428-29; also see Zimmermann (fn. 2), 339-41, 356. Similarly, the outcome of the French Revolution was not especially favorable to the *Petite bourgeoisie*, the *sans culottes*, who most vigorously participated in it. *Ibid.*, 387,407.

for cultural authenticity and their moral rigorism.

"Fascism was a revolution, but one which thought of itself in cultural, not economic terms"/¹⁾ The same is true of the Islamic Revolution, which emphatically saw itself in these terms - even when not explicitly so, as in the "Islamic cultural revolution" against Westernism and (Eastern) atheistic communism inaugurated with the closing of the universities in April 1980. Since the revolution, Iran's secular judiciary system has been systematically Islamized, the Shi'ite Sacred Law has been codified for the first time in history, and Islamic morals and coverage of woman are strictly enforced by an especially created official vigilante corps.

Disoriented and dislocated individuals and groups cannot be successfully integrated into a societal community without the creation or "revitalization" of a moral order/²⁾ Walzer emphasizes that Puritanism was primarily a "response to the *disorder* of the transition period. "Ranulf³⁾ has correctly underscored the moral rigorism of Nazism and compared it to Puritanism/⁴⁾ The intense and repressive moralism of the Islamic revolutionaries in reaction to the moral laxity and disorder of Pahlavi Iran finds a strict parallel in Puritan moralism in reaction to the moral laxity and sensuality of the Renaissance culture, and in Nazi moralism in reaction to the decadence of the Weimar period. Furthermore, the parochial rejection of cosmopolitanism is a common feature of the Islamic Revolution and Nazism, and especially of Eastern

1- George L. Mosse, "The Genesis of Fascism," *Journal of Contemporary History*: (No. 1, 1966), 22.

2- Anthony F. C. Wallace, "Revitalization Movements: Some Theoretical Considerations for their Comparative Study," *American Anthropologist* 58 (April 1956).

3- Walzer (tn. 56), 313,315.

4- Svend Ranulf, *Moral Indignation and Middle Class Psychology* (New York: Schocken, 1964 [1983]).

European fascism.¹ The vehement rejection of cultural Westernism in favor of revitalized Christianity in Rumania and Hungary finds a counterpart in [Imam] Khomeini's more systematic and successful determination to extirpate Western cultural pollution by establishing an Islamic moral order.

B. The Revolutionary Ideology and its Adoption by Latecomers

The revolutions of early modern Europe were made by men for whom restoration was the key word, and who "were obsessed by *renovation* -- by the desire to return to an old order of society." The confused teleology of these revolutions was marked by an *absence of ideology* and by a corporate or national constitutionalism "which was mainly the preserve of the dominant social and vocational groups."² In the English Revolution, "with the nature, source, and grounds of political legitimacy all up for grabs, there was almost inevitably a great effusion of claims to legitimacy on all sorts of grounds, old and new."⁽³⁾ Nevertheless, two elements predominate in the teleology of the English Revolution: parliamentarianism, and Puritanism and its offshoots.

If the French Revolution instituted one thing for all subsequent revolutions, it is the presence of ideology. It gave birth to Jacobinism as the classic form of modern revolutionary ideology. The ideas of constitutional representation and national sovereignty were coupled at the beginning. As the revolution progressed, however, the source of legitimacy drifted from the representation of estates to the symbolic

1- Eugen Weber, "Rumania." in Hans Rogger and Eugen Weber, eds., *The European Right: A Historical Profile* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1965); Istvan Deak, "Hungary," *ibid.*, 394; Barbu (fn. 57).

2- John Elliott. "Revolution and Continuity in Early Modern Europe." *Past and Present* 42 (1969), 42-44, 48.

3-Hexter (fn. 31), 178.

embodiment of the will of the people. The claim to embody the will of the nation as a single homogeneous entity could only be made through the manipulation of the maximalist language of consensus. Presumed embodiments of the will of the people became the sole and sufficient basis of legitimacy. During the period of Jacobin ascendancy, revolutionary legitimacy triumphed; and with its triumph, revolutionary ideology "filled the entire sphere of power" and "became coextensive with government itself."¹ The distillation of the Jacobin experiment was the modern political myth of revolution. Revolutionary legitimacy became an autonomous and self-sufficient category.

In the 19th century, revolutions became "milestones in humanity's inexorable march toward true freedom and true universality.² Leninism combined this conception of revolution with the Jacobin myth; it has become the justification for the seizure of power by revolutionaries who proclaim themselves in charge of realizing the next stage of socio-historical development/³) With the consolidation of i Marxism-Leninism in Russia, Leninist revolutionary ideology "obtained control over the interpretation of world history/⁴) It is this control that is challenged by the fascist and the Islamic revolutionaries even while they are upholding, like the Bolsheviks, the myth of revolution as an act of redemption and liberation of oppressed masses and nations.

Both fascism and the Islamic revolutionary movement are latecomers to the modern international political scene. As such, they share a

1- Francois Furet, *Interpreting the French Revolution*, trans, t' by Elborg Forster (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), esp. 29, 48-49, 70-74.

2- Eugene Kamenka, "The Concept of Political Revolution." in Carl .1. Friedrich, eel, *Revolution: Nomoti VT.II* (New York: Atherton. 1966), 126.

3- Dunn (in. 13), 8-11.

4- Jules Monnerit, *Sociology and Psychology in Communism* (Boston: Beacon Press. 1960 [1949]), 12.

number of essential features. The foremost of these is the appropriation of the legitimately political myth of revolution. The Italian fascists boasted of their "revolutionary intransigence," and the Nazis contrasted their revolution, the revolution of the German *Volk*, to the "subhuman revolution" of 1789.¹ Similarly, Iran's revolutionaries take great pride in the historic mission of the Islamic Revolution.

"Economics was indeed one of the least important fascist considerations."² The same is true of the Islamic Revolution. ([Imam] Khomeini, responding to complaints about the state of the economy, once remarked, "we did not make the Islamic Revolution so the Persian melon would be cheap.") Furthermore, like the European fascists, the Islamic militants aim at integrating all classes, including the working class, into a national community. The fascists substituted "nation" for "class" and developed the concept of "the proletarian nations." Class conflict was thus replaced by the conflict *between* nations, rich against poor. With the Islamic revolutionaries in Iran, we have an identical transposition of the theme of exploitation of one class by another into the exploitation of the "disinherited" (*mustaz'af*) nations by the imperialist ones.³

"The fact that fascism is a latecomer," writes Linz, "helps to explain, in part, the essential anti-character of its ideology and appeal."

1- Ernst Nolte, *Three Faces of Fascism* (New York: New American Library, 1969). 281; Baechler (fn. 3), 10, n. 15.

2- Mosse (fn. 65), 21.

3- Linz (fn. 45), 16. Once the attempt to export the Islamic Revolution, temporarily checked by the setback in the Iran-Iraq war, is resumed fully, one may expect further resonances of the Italian fascist ideas of "an imperialism of the poor" and "proletarian imperialism." Zeev Sternhell, "Fascist Ideology," in Laqueur (fn. 41). 334-35; Joseph Baglieri, "Italian Fascism and the Crisis of Liberal Hegemony: 1901-1922," In Larsen (fn. 42), 322-23.

Furthermore, "it is paradoxical that for each rejection there was also an incorporation of elements of what they rejected.¹ Like fascism, the Islamic revolutionary movement has offered a new synthesis of the political creeds it has violently attacked. And, like the fascists, the Islamic militants are against democracy because they consider liberal democracy a foreign model that provides avenues for free expression of alien influences and ideas. (Also like the fascists, however, the Islamic militants would not necessarily accept the label of "antidemocratic."²

Similarly, both groups are antibourgeois, resenting the international cosmopolitan orientation of the new middle class. Both movements are anti-Marxist -- i.e., anticommunist and antisocialist -- while appropriating the ideas and certainly the slogans of social justice and equality.

The Islamic revolutionary movement has the considerable advantage over fascism, however, of combining this "anti-character" with strong traditionalism. Here we can see the consequence of the fact that the dispossessed leaders of the Islamic Revolution were not a heterogeneous but a homogeneous group and, furthermore, one that guarded the Shi'ite religious tradition. In contrast to the Nazi "Revolution of Nihilism" (and to the striking lack of reference to Japan's own intellectual tradition in the writings of the leaders of the fascist New Order Movement of the late 1930s)³) the Islamic Revolution combines the rejection of other alien political ideologies with a vigorous affirmation of the Islamic religious and cultural tradition. I have therefore characterized it as "revolutionary traditionalism."⁴

1- Linz (fn. 45), 5.

2- Ibid., 20-21.

3- William M. Fletcher, *The Search for a New Order: Intellectuals and Fascism in Prewar Japan* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1982).

4- Said A. Arjomand, "Traditionalism in Twentieth Century Iran," in Arjomand, *From*

In addition to their common anti-character and other incidental features, fascism and the Islamic revolutionary movement both have a distinct constitutive core. Racism and anti-Semitism were the most obnoxious features of European fascism, but, as Mosse and others have convincingly shown, not its core component. The constitutive core of fascism that goes beyond European fascism and continues to live in a variety of forms as a vigorous ideological force in the Third World is the combination of nationalism and socialism. As George Valois put it in 1925, "nationalism + socialism = fascism." The marriage of nationalism and socialism was in the cards after World War I.¹ This fact by far transcends the particular conditions of any dispossessed stratum, any European country, or, for that matter, of interwar Europe. It was arrived at by different fascist leaders in different European countries, and it has been arrived at independently by many Third World ideologues since 1945.

An enduring feature of fascist ideology has been its insistence on the reality of the nation and the artificiality of class. To the emotionally unattractive idea of perpetual class struggle, the French fascist thinker Marcel Deat contrasts the appeal of belonging to a community untainted by divisive conflict and fragmentation: "The total man in the total society, with no clashes, no prostration, no anarchy."² The Arab nationalist thinkers sought to utilize the appeal of belonging to a community by similarly replacing class by nation. The advocates of Islamic ideology only needed to take one step further to replace the nation by the *umma*, the Muslim community of believers.

Nationalism to Revolutionary Islam (London: MacMillan, and Albany: SUNY Press, 1984).

1- Sternhell (fn. 78), 320-21, 326, 335-37.

2- Quoted, *ibid.*, 335, 347.

Thus, the emergence of an Islamic revolutionary ideology has been in the cards since the fascist era. It has been in the cards irrespective of the plight of the dispossessed Shi'ite clerical estate in Iran. The latter did have the advantage of institutional autonomy and of independence in the exercise of religious authority, something the Sunni Islamic ideologues like Rashid Rida could only dream of. But it was exceedingly slow in creating a consistent ideology in order to defend itself against the state. In fact, the Islamic *ideology* was developed elsewhere, by publicists and journalists like Mawdudi (d. 1979) in Indo-Pakistan and Qutb (d. 1966) in Egypt. Its essence consisted in presenting the secular state as an earthly idol claiming the majesty that is God's alone. When [Imam] Khomeini finally rose against the Shah, he imported the Islamic ideology from Pakistan and Egypt as a free good.

In 1926, in a work that anticipates most of the ideological developments of the past two decades, the youthful Mawdudi had declared: "Islam is a revolutionary ideology and a revolutionary practice, which aims at destroying the social order of the world totally and rebuilding it from scratch... and *jihad* (holy war) denotes the revolutionary struggle." Mawdudi conceived the modern world as the arena of the "conflict between Islam and un-Islam," the latter being equated with pre-Islamic Ignorance (*jahiliyya*) and polytheism. Modern creeds and political philosophies were equated with polytheism and Ignorance. Their predominance necessitated the revival of Islam.

A few decades later, the Egyptian Sayyid Qutb adopted the contrast between Islam and un-Islam — conceived as Ignorance — from Mawdudi and made it the cornerstone of his revolutionary Islamic ideology. For accepting secular states, contemporary Muslim societies are branded as societies of Ignorance. To extirpate Ignorance from these societies, an Islamic government has to be established and the Sacred Law applied.

To establish an Islamic government -- that is, to establish the rule of God -- Islamic revolution is necessary, t¹)

The distinctively clericalist Shi'ite idea of Islamic government, to be realized after the revolution of 1979, was *not* directly influenced by the trend in Sunni Islam. It is best understood in the context of the struggle between the Shi'ite hierocracy and the centralizing monarchy discussed earlier. Though a novelty in Shi'ite history, [Imam] Khomeini's idea of Islamic government, first put forward in 1979, was stated in the traditional Shi'ite frame of reference and does not betray any influence of the ideological innovations of Mawdudi and Qutb. It simply extended the general judiciary authority of the jurist (*faqih*), as well as some of his very specific rights, to include the right to rule.⁽²⁾

Nevertheless, Mawdudi and Qutb were read avidly, in Persian translation and / or in Arabic, by [Imam] Khomeini's militant followers, who adopted the fundamental revolutionary idea that obedience to the impious secular state -- in this case the Shah's -- was tantamount to idolatry. The centrality of this idea is unmistakable in the revolutionary slogans and pamphleteering, most notable in the application of the term *Highlit* (ungodly earthly power) to the Pahlavi political order. Its influence has become more pronounced since the elimination of the moderates and Islamic modernists in 1980 - 1981, and is easily noticeable in the speeches of the political elite of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Furthermore, Ayatollah Safi has no difficulty whatsoever in combining the advantages of the ideologies of Mawdudi and Qutb with

1- Abu'l-A'la Mawdudi, *Process of Islamic Revolution* (Pathankot, Punjab: Makteb-e Jamaat-e Islami, 1947); Eran Lerman, "Mawdudi's Concept of Islam," *Middle Eastern Studies* 17 (October 1981), 500; Yvonne Y. Haddad, "The Quranic Justification for Revolution: The View of Sayyid Qutb," *The Middle East Journal* 37 (No. 1. 1983).

2- Said A. Arjomand, "Ideological Revolution in Shi'ism," in Arjomand, *Authority and Political Culture in Shi'ism* (forthcoming, 1987).

the clericalist ideas of [Imam] Khomeini. For him, the government of the jurist on behalf of the Hidden Imam is the true government of God on Earth, vowed to the implementation of His Law. All other political regimes are ungodly orders, regimes of Ignorance and of *taghut*. The Islamic Revolution will continue until the overthrow of all these regimes.¹

C. The Old and the New in Revolutionary Traditionalism, and the Teleological Irrelevance of Progress

The Islamic Revolution in Iran should draw our attention to the neglected importance of reactive and reactionary elements in all revolutions, The ideology of proletarian revolution, as Mannheim has shown, incorporated many of the elements of the romantic, reactionary critique of the Enlightenment/²) On the other hand, Nazism, as both its ideologues and its historians (notably Braechler) have insisted, contained revolutionary as well as reactionary elements/³)

The Islamic Revolution constitutes a wry comment on the debate among historians as to whether the early modern European revolutions were conservative or liberal, reactionary or progressive. It also demonstrates that revolutionaries often act in defense of traditional values. Braechler is right when he notes, "contrary to appearances and accepted belief, conservative revolutions are supported less by the elite than by the people."⁴) Not surprisingly, some important teleological

1- Lotfollah Sail, *Nezam-e Emamat va Rahbari* [Regime of Imamate and Leadership] (Tehran: Bonyad-e Be'that, 1982 / 1361), 16-18.

2- Karl Mannheim, "Conservative Thought," in *Essays on Sociology and Psychology* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1953).

3- Karl D. Bracher, *The German Dictatorship* (New York: Praeger, 1970), 7-13: Carsten (In.. 45) 428.

4- BaechLer (t'n. 3), 108.

elements in the clerically led popular uprisings such as Carlism and the Custero movement.¹ find resonance in the Islamic Revolution in Iran: repudiation of foreign and cosmopolitan influences and values, and vehement opposition to anticlerical policies of modernizing governments, including, of course, atheism.

Marx's famous idea that the French revolutionaries parodied the Roman republicans because they had not yet developed a political language of their own should not automatically be generalized. The revolutionaries who draw on traditional imagery can vary greatly in their knowledge of and professional identification with tradition. The Ayatollahs were the official custodians of the Shi'ite tradition and knew their methodology of Shi'ite jurisprudence. In the past six years, they have proved this by their sustained efforts to Islamize Iran's judiciary system, by institutionalizing substantial political functions for the Friday prayer leaders, and by presiding over the strict enforcement of Islamic morals.

Islamic revolutionary traditionalism does have its modern trappings. The Constitution of the Islamic Republic pays lip service to equality and especially to social justice, and it guarantees freedom of the press, of the expression of political opinion, of political gatherings and groups -- provided, needless to say, that they are not contrary to the interests of Islam. Finally, there is another modern element that is more than a trapping: the Majlis, or parliament. The constitutionalism of the early modern European revolution was the idealization of practice, and closely linked to the aim of preserving local liberties. In Iran, even though constitutionalism entered as an imported panacea in 1905-1906, the mullahs used the constitutionalist ideology when opposing the Shah. Consequently, the Majlis is an enduring feature of the Islamic regime.

1- Hennessy (fn. 41), 258.

Its legislation, however, is rigorously supervised by the clerical jurists of the Council of Guardians. In addition, both the ruling clerics and the lay Islamic second stratum of the regime have a keen interest in technology. They love broadcasting, being televised, and being interviewed by the press, and they love organizing seminars and congresses and using modern sounding phrases such as "political - ideological bureaus."

When the notions of revolution and progress are linked, as they were in the 19th century and as they still are today, a line can clearly be drawn between revolution and counterrevolution. The evidence offered in this paper makes it impossible to draw such a line. It has been pointed out that all revolutions contain counterrevolutionary elements. The obverse is also true: all counter revolutions must incorporate revolutionary innovations in order to restore what they consider to be the traditional order. This is clearly the case with Islamic revolutionary traditionalism in Iran. As I have argued elsewhere, it has in fact brought about a revolution *within* Shi'ism.¹ Furthermore, the Islamic Revolution has stimulated considerable growth in the size of the state and the number of persons employed by it. One can legitimately see these factors as the continuation of a trend in modernization. It is, however, best treated as a universal trend making for continuity with the past rather than as specific to the teleology of this revolution as distinct from others.

D. The Teleological Relevance of Religion

Comparative evidence not only requires that we sever the conceptual link between revolution and progress, but also suggests that we link revolution and religion. Religion was an important factor not only in the Puritan Revolution, but in all early modern European revolutions

1- Arjomand (fn. 80).

except the Fronde/¹) Walzer is right in considering the Puritan Marian exiles of the 1550s to be forerunners of modern revolutionary ideologues/²) But the same is true of the clerics of the Catholic League 30 years later/³) In 1640, the Puritan preachers were calling the House of Commons God's chosen instrument for rebuilding Zion.⁽⁴⁾ In the same year, their Catholic counterparts in Catalonia were also engaged in revolutionary activity. Here is the commander of the Spanish king's forces in Rossello complaining of the sedition and licentiousness of the clergy:

In the confessional and the pulpit they spend their entire time rousing the people and offering the rebels encouragement and advice, inducing the ignorant to believe that rebellion will win them the kingdom of heaven.⁵

There are striking parallels between the Puritan Revolution and the Islamic Revolution. For Cromwell as Moses, we have [Imam] Khomeini as Abraham and Moses in one; for the Puritan Saints, we have the militant mullahs; and for the fast sermons of 1642 - 1649,⁽⁶⁾ we had, under the Shah, the gatherings at 40-day intervals to commemorate the "martyrs"; after the revolution, we have the Friday sermons at congregational prayers. Important differences, however, affect the teleology of these respective revolutions.

1-Zagorin (fn. 18), I. p. 741. 2-

Walzer (fn. 56), 92-113.

3-Roland Mousnier, *Social Hierarchies, 1450 to the Present*, trans, by Peter Evans (New York: Schocken, 1973), 50, 61; Zagorin (fn. 18), 11, chap. 10.

4 Stone (fn. 20), 90.

5- John Elliott, *The Revolt of the Catalans: A Study in the Decline of Spain (1598-1640)* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1963), 487.

6- Hugh Trevor Roper, "The Fast Sermons of the Long Parliament." in Trevor - Roper, *Religion, the Reformation and Social Change*, 2d ed. (London: Macmillan, 1972).

There were strong anarchic elements in Puritanism -- especially Independency, which considered itself the true Church within the corrupt church. Such anarchic inner-worldly millenarian precepts of the Independents militated against their acceptance of a Presbyterian national church government. These precepts could also lead in the direction of the Levellers' conception of man as a rational being in the image of God, and hence to natural rights.

The corporate solidarism of the militant Shi'ite clergy contrasts as strongly with the factionalism of the Puritan Saints as methodologically grounded legalism contrasts with the Saints' millenarian idea of Christ as the Law giver. Finally, the revolutionary Shi'ite clericalist theory of the sovereignty of the jurist is in sharp contrast to the idea of congregational representation - especially in Presbyterianism.¹

The situation *is* different with regard to the modern revolutions; but let us see how. De Tocqueville knew that the French Revolution had produced a new religion. It aimed at nothing short of a regeneration of the whole human race.... It developed into a species of religion, if a singularly imperfect one, since it was without a God, without a ritual or promise of a future life. Nevertheless, this strange religion has, like Islam, overrun the whole world with its apostles, militants and martyrs.²

The terms "secular religion" and "political religion" have aptly been used to describe communism and fascism.³ Modern revolutions *do* require political religions. The crucial issue is whether there is any

1- Tai Liu. *Discord in Zion: The Puritan Divines and the Puritan Revolution 1640-1660* (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1973), 50-51, 94-97, 146-60; Zagorin (fn. 18), 11, p. 166.

2- Alexis de Tocqueville, *The Old Regime and the French Revolution*, new trans, by Stuart Gilbert (New York: Doubleday Anchor, 1955), 13, 156.

3- Monnerot (fn. 75): Eric Voegelin, *Science, Politics and Gnosticism: Two Essays* (Chicago: Regnery Gateway, 1968). It is interesting to note that in 1949 Monnerot described communism as "the twentieth century Islam."

necessary incompatibility between religion and political religion.

The Bolshevik Revolution was militantly atheistic. But before we draw any conclusions, let us think of its totally imported ideology and of the exceedingly narrow social base of its political elite. What about the French Revolution? De Tocqueville did not see any incompatibility between Christianity and the political religion of the revolution. Anti-clericalism and the campaign against religion stemmed from the identification of the Church with the *ancient regime*, and not from any widespread anti-Christian sentiment. What about the fascist revolution? European fascism was often associated with anticlericalism, but this association is neither general nor fundamental. The Nazis glorified the mythical pre-Christian German tradition and were anti-religious. The same is true of other fascist movements in Western and Northern Europe. At the other end of the spectrum, however, the Rumanian, the Hungarian, the Slovak, and the Croatian fascist movements were emphatically Christian and aimed at establishing Christian corporatist states.

Clerical leadership and participation in the Slovak Republic established by Father Hlinka's People's Party (presided over by Father Tiso) and in the Ustasha movement in Croatia offer interesting points for comparison with Iran. But the most illuminating parallel is between Shi'ite revolutionary traditionalism and the Rumanian Iron Guards, the Legion of Archangel Michael. Both movements are characterized by extraordinary cults of suffering, sacrifice, and martyrdom. Priests figured prominently in the legionary movement, side by side with university students. Legionary meetings were invariably preceded by church services, and their demonstrations were usually led by priests carrying icons and religious flags. The integral Christianity of the Legionaries differentiated them from the Nazis and the Italian Fascists. This they knew. As one of their leading intellectuals explained, "Fascism worships

the state, Nazism the race and the nation. Our movement strives not merely to fulfill the destiny of the Rumanian people - we want to fulfill it along the road to salvation." The ultimate goal of the nation, Colreanu and others emphasized, was "resurrection in Christ."¹

Finally, we must consider Brazilian Integralism, the most important fascist movement in Latin America. Its founder, Plinio Salgado, met Mussolini in 1930. The meeting made a deep impression on him, and he certainly saw no incompatibility between the fascist political religion and Catholicism. He returned to Brazil to "Catholicize" Italian fascism. Taking advantage of an extensive network of lay religious associations, which had been brought into existence by Cardinal Leme, he founded the Brazilian Integralist Action with the aim of creating a corporatist, integralist state. Integralism appealed to Catholic intellectuals because of its promise of a "spiritual revolution" and of an Integral State "which comes from Christ, is inspired in Christ, acts for Christ, and goes toward Christ." Salgado accordingly criticized the "dangerous pagan tendency of Hitlerism" and lamented the lack of a Christian basis in Nazi ideology/²)

Few would find the statement that political revolutions are a modern form of millenarianism objectionable. Russian communism was the secular millenarianism of the Third Rome, and Nazism was the secular millenarianism of the Third Reich, "the Thousand Year Reich of

1- E. Weber (fns. 60 and 69); Nicholas M. Nagy - Talavera, *The Green Shirts and the Others: A History of Fascism in Hungary and Rumania* (Stanford, CA: Hoover Institution Press, 1970), 247, 266-70.

2- Stanley Hilton, "Acao Integralista Brasileira: Fascism in Brazil, 1932-1938." *Luso-Brazilian Review* 9 (No. 2, 1972), 12; Margaret T. Williams, "Integralism and the Brazilian Catholic Church," *Hispanic American Historical Review* 54 (No. 3, 1974), 436-40. In this typical search for "a third way," Salgado also sought to "Brazilianize" Italian fascism. He considered the two aspects of his project fully compatible, and declared, "My nationalism is full of God." *Ibid.*, 434-36.

national freedom and social justice. "W As was the case with religion and political religion, political and religious millenarianism are by no means mutually exclusive. The religious chiliastic element may predominate, as in the Taiping Rebellion which aimed at establishing the Heavenly Kingdom of Great Peace;⁽²⁾ or it may play an important subsidiary role, as in the Puritan Revolution in England and the Islamic Revolution in Iran.

In the Puritan Revolution we encounter two forms of millenarianism: the milder, more inner-worldly millenarianism of the Independent divines, and the better known, activist one of the men of the Fifth Monarchy. There can be no doubt that revolutionary political millenarianism played a crucial role in the motivation of the Iranian intelligentsia and other groups. But in addition, the Shi'ite doctrine contains an important millenarian tenet: the belief in the appearance of the Twelfth Imam as the Mahdi to redeem the world. This belief was as convenient for [Imam] Khomeini's revolutionary purpose as it had been for the founder of the Safavid Empire in 1501.⁽³⁾ Although Shi'ite millenarianism played an important role in the Islamic Revolution, it did not have any of the divisive and anarchic consequences of Puritan millenarianism because the clerics were firmly in control of its interpretation, and in fact partly derived their legal juristic authority from it.

Conclusion

The success of the Islamic revolutionary ideology is the novel and

1-Monnerot (fn. 75), chap. 3; Nicholai A. Berdiaev, *The Russian Revolution* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1961); James M. Rhodes, *The Hitler Movement: A Modern Millenarian Revolution* (Stanford, CA; Hoover Institution Press, 1980), 79.

2-Lewy (fn. 41), chap. 70

3-Arjomand (fn. 17), 269-70.

Ideologically distinct mark of the Islamic Revolution in Iran. The ideology is a powerful response to the contemporary politicized quest for authenticity. It has been constructed through the unacknowledged appropriation of *all* the technical advantages of the Western ideological movements and political religions, with the added - or rather, the emphatically retained - promise of other worldly salvation.

In a sense, it has a considerable ideological advantage over Nazism and communism, both of which clashed with religion. Rather than creating a new substitute for religion, as did the communists and the Nazis, the Islamic militants have fortified an already vigorous religion with the ideological armor necessary for battle in the arena of mass politics. In doing so, they have made their distinct contribution to world history.

The Role of Ideology,
Leadership, and People
in
the Islamic Revolution

By: Manoochehr Mohammadi

Domain of Field of Study

Socio-Political Condition of Iran Prior to the Revolution

- Political Power
- Communal Power
- Iran's Social Condition Prior to the Revolution

Elements of the Islamic Revolution's Victory

a. People

1. The Social Status of the Clergy
2. Economic Independence of the Shi'a Clergy
3. Establishing Communication

b. Leadership

Phase 1

Phase 2

Phase 3

Phase 4

c. Ideology

Accelerating Factors of the Islamic Revolution From Various Views

Domain of Field of Study

One of the most important problems in studying political science related phenomena, as in other social sciences, is the selection of the domain and field of the research. A crucial argument among social scientists is whether to study the subject in all dimensions and give it a totality or take the risk of losing many details and secondary elements and focus attention instead on specific elements and ignore their relationship with the factors that have been neglected.

This is in fact the analogy of not seeing the forest for the trees. One group of scientists take the whole and prefer the theoretical study (inductive analysis), while some believe in selecting specific elements and relying on experimental and historical research (deductive analysis).

Most social scientists today hew to the importance of both methods of analysis and consider them equally important; any progress in one area is thought to be effective in the progress of the other. Although there exists no specific basis and principal for making a distinction between inductive analysis, as the major theoretical method, and deductive method, as the unique technique of experimental analysis, it is only their different emphasis on priorities that distinguishes them from each other.

Given the limited domain of the field of study, the historical and experimental analysis can be useful and effective. Yet, with the expansion and complexities of political science's domain and its related phenomena, the possibility of presenting hard historical analysis is weakened and made more difficult for arriving at an integrated conclusion of the subject. For this same reason, the scope of political theoretical analysis in social sciences, including political science, has

vastly expanded in the breadth of its realm and rapidity of growth in its techniques of inquiry during the present century. Supplemented by the progress made in other sciences, a new and remarkable dynamism has appeared in this field. As a result, various theories have been presented for studying and analyzing socio-political occurrences.

Socio-Political Condition of Iran Prior to the Revolution

Political Power

Only societies in which the political power has shifted away from people and lacks a popular base, and therefore, a bipolar condition prevails in society, are apt to face revolution. In Iran, for a long period, such a condition has existed; i.e., political power has seldom enjoyed popular support and acceptance. In fact, due to the impoverishment of masses, this condition never existed.

With the beginning and expansion of western neo-colonialism in the past two centuries and its influence on other countries, Iran — given its strategic position and underground resources — was of prime interest to the big European powers. This had become another factor in the changes in Iran's political power. With the competition and conflict of interest between Russia and England prior to World War II; the United States' coming onto the international political scene; the development of global competition between the two super powers -- the United States and USSR - after World War II; Iran did not remain immune to these rivalries. In fact, this influence seeking by foreign powers had become a very important parameter in the consistency or lack thereof in political power in Iran.

The Pahlavi dynasty which had been founded by an adventurous and brute Cossack officer in 1924 and ended with his son in 1979, was the last dynasty in the monarchial system in Iran.

Prior to Reza Shah's coming to power, the Qajar dynasty ruled the country. The Qajars, who at times had influential and powerful kings too, had become weak towards the end. Ahmad Shah, the last Qajar, who was the son of the dethroned Mohammad AH Shah, was the weakest of all. Ahmad Shah's reign, as coincided with World War I, and Russia's Bolshevik Revolution. Prior to the revolution in Russia, they enjoyed great power and influence in Iran. Northern Iran was practically under their domination. Iran's Cossack Brigade was organized and commanded by Russian officers.

The British were not happy with the state of affairs in Iran and wanted to see a strong government in power so that, in addition to serving their vast interests in Iran, it could also check the danger of communism in the region. Their best choice in the existing condition was Reza Khan who, with the guidance of the British, organized a coup. But according to prior agreements, he (Reza Khan) instead of overthrowing Ahmad Shah Qajar, suggested to him to choose between confirming the coup-installed government and retiring from power. Obviously, the Qajar king preferred confirmation of the government to retirement, but practically lost all of his power and authority in doing so.

Four years later, Reza Khan who had strengthened the bases of his power in every respect, decided to end the Qajar dynasty and declare himself as the lawful king of Iran. The transfer of kingship was apparently done in a lawful manner by the Council of Founders. This council revised the 1917 constitution which had established kingship for the Qajar family and chose Reza Khan as a king and voted the kingship of Iran patrimonial in his family.

Reza Khan was crowned in Ordibehesht 5, 1303 (April 20, 1924) titling himself Reza Shah Pahlavi. The selection of "Pahlavi" as the name of this dynasty is also a point worth pondering. "Pahlavi" is the name of Iran's ancient language and Reza Khan in choosing this name showed a

preference for Iran's ancient traditions to the Islamic traditions governing over Iranian society.

During his rulership - which lasted over 16 years - this illiterate and common man, undertook tasks that later were pursued up by his son. Many of these projects were opposed to the religious beliefs of Iranian society. The unveiling of women and forcing them to put away the "chador", imitating western style of dress and suspension of the passion play and sermons dedicated to describing the tragedies of Karbala, were some of these measures.

Reza Khan made a miscalculation at the beginning of World War II which resulted in Iran being occupied by foreign armies and eventually led to his relinquishing the throne. This illiterate soldier, unaware of international affairs, who had been amazed by the German blitzkrieg and the fall of country after country to Hitler's forces, thought that Germany would win and Hitler's forces would abut Iran's boundaries. Thus, he positioned himself to be on the same side with the winners and enjoy the benefits of friendship with the victorious after the end of the war.

Reza Shah, later, was moved from the Island of Mouritius to Johannesburg in South Africa; and in July 1944, a year before the end of World War II, he died in exile.

Mohammad Reza and his twin sister, Ashraf, were born from Reza Khan's first wife on October 26, 1919, when Reza Khan was no more than a Cossack officer. Reza Khan, after reaching the throne, named Mohammad Reza his crown prince, and after finishing his elementary education, sent him to Switzerland for higher education.

Mohammad Reza was weak and sickly in his childhood. Reza Shah who wanted his son to be a serious and brute man like himself, sent him to military school; and living in military school changed Mohammad Reza's attitude. However, in 1941, when the allies agreed to select him

as the successor of his father after his resignation and exile, he was no more than an inexperienced and callow youth; and in performing the tasks of a ruler, he needed a strong advisor. The British designated Mohammad Ali Forooghi as his prime minister and virtual guardian.

Forooghi did not last in this position more than six months and he resigned because of illness. His successors were mostly selected by the British Embassy and Mohammad Reza Shah, who had witnessed the British take revenge from his father, did not dare to oppose them.

Mohammad Reza's reign can be divided into four distinct periods: The first period, from 1941-46, in which Iran was occupied by foreign powers. The second period, lasting seven years beginning in 1946, ended with prime minister Mohammad Mosaddegh's coming to power and the Shah's flight from the country. The third period, lasting two years from the returning of the Shah to Iran until the dismissal of General Zahedi as prime minister. And finally, the fourth period beginning in 1955, which was the start of his power reaching its zenith, until his fall in 1978.

In a more general division, it could be said that in the first 14 years of his rule, Mohammad Reza Shah was unable to achieve his father's power and authority; but from 1955 onwards, in approximately 23 years, he ruled Iran with the power and autocracy of a despotic and dictatorial king.¹

The first 14 years of Mohammad Reza Shah's reign was one of the most disturbed periods of Iran's political life. In this era's first years, in which Iran was occupied by foreign armies, the Shah had practically no power and authority. Most of the representatives of Iran's parliament were in fact selected through the influence and recommendation of the occupying powers and were submissive to their commands. In this time

1- Of course, the short period of Dr Amini's rule in 1961-2 with American support should be excepted from this period.

frame, in addition to the activation of religious-political forces under the leadership of Ayatollah Kashani and Nawab Safavi, two other political entities also emerged. One was the nationalist and liberal group led by Dr. Mohammad Mosaddegh and the other was Tudeh Communist Party. The National Front was fostered by the anti-foreign feelings generated by the occupation of the country and foreign interference in the internal affairs of Iran. Tudeh Party made headway with the open support of the Russian government, especially in the northern provinces under occupation by the Red Army.

After the end of the second world war, the issue of Iran's being freed from foreign occupation was raised. Allied leaders, in a meeting in Tehran during the war, had promised to evacuate Iran six months after the end of hostilities. However, the Soviet government which had been thwarted in their attempt to gain a concession for exploiting Iran's northern oil fields and would have lost all its control if she removed her army from Iran, decided to establish a base of power in the region. In carrying out this plan, an independent communist party, named Azarbaijan Democratic Party was established. Just before the planned troop evacuation, this group seized power in Azarbaijan territory with the Red Army's help.

One of the distinguished political figures at the beginning of Mohammad Reza Shah's reign, and one who was considered a political rival, was Qavam-ul-Saltaneh. Pretending to be close to the Russians and promising them the concession of northern oil, and finally, by allowing three Tudeh ministers in his cabinet, succeeded in convincing the Russians (who were also being pressured by the Americans) to end their occupation of Iran. Following the evacuation of the Red Army, the Russian supported government in Azarbaijan soon collapsed.

A short time after the fall of Qavam-ul-Saltaneh, the first assassination attempt against the Shah occurred; and with the would-be assassin

being killed, the truth behind this act was concealed, though the Tudeh Party was accused of having plotted the affair. This accusation led to its dissolution. Meanwhile, the nationalist-liberal group, led by Dr. Mohammad Mosaddegh, styling itself the National Front, expanded its activity with the new slogan of recovering Iran's rights from the British and Iranian Oil Company. At the same time, the Movement of Militant Clergy and the Islam's Devotees, who sought implementation of Islamic law and order, established a new danger to the Shah's regime.

The assassination of General Gholam Hussein Razmara, who was serving as prime minister, was the second important political assassination in Iran after the war. This frightened the Shah. However, he was in some respects very happy with the murder of this strong personality, because with the death of Razmara, the biggest threat to his power and authority was eliminated. But this happiness did not last long, for the political typhoon which came over Iran after the assassination shook the Shah's throne. Following the ratification of the Oil Nationalization Law, he was forced to select Mosaddegh, the leader of the National Front and one of his prominent oppositions, as prime minister.

Mosaddegh, who came to power riding on the crest of nationalistic and anti-British feelings, was in many respects a big problem for the Shah. His national support backed by religious leaders, especially Ayatollah Kashani, had practically taken away all of the Shah's authority and pushed him back to the impotence of the beginning of his reign. When Mosaddegh resigned because of the Shah's opposition to his choice for defense minister, the monarch faced a public uprising led by Ayatollah Kashani on Tir 30, 1331 (July 21, 1952). This forced him to reinvoke Mosaddegh to office within days.

The CIA, with cooperation of the British's intelligence services, started planning the removal of Mosaddegh from power, and the Kermit

Roosevelt of the CIA took over this mission.

It should be mentioned that at the beginning of Mosaddegh's government, the United States, due to the influence of American oil companies and their interest in Iran's oil, had more or less cooperated with Mosaddegh. However, after the United States' mediation failed in solving the British-Iranian oil dispute, which of course, guaranteed American interests too, the Americans also lined up against the Mosaddegh government. What intensified American opposition with Mosaddegh and CIA interference in this issue was the increasing power of the Tudeh Party in Iran and the danger of a communist coup d'etat in the country.

Another factor in Mosaddegh's fall was his loss of the support of the clergy and a majority of the people. Given the often stubborn and autocratic attitude Mosaddegh had undertaken, those who had a key role in his climb to power gradually moved away, and ultimately, raised against him. This hastened his decline as the absence of active involvement of people allowed the American coup to take shape and triumph very easily.

In carrying out its plans in Iran, The United States chose General Zahedi, who had worked for a while with Mosaddegh as his interior minister; and in executing the first phase of this plot, made the Shah discharge Mosaddegh from office and declare Zahedi as the new Prime Minister. But Mosaddegh refused to accept his dismissal order, and took this same order issued overnight and delivered by colonel Nasiri (one of the officers of the Imperial Guards who later became the head of SAVAK, Shah's terrifying secret police) as a coup against himself.

The Shah, who feared Mosaddegh's reaction and was afraid that his own arrest might be also ordered by him, escaped the country. However, the CIA put into execution the second phase of the plan, creating chaos and street riots employing elements of the armed forces. Mosaddegh's

government, which had been deprived of religious leaders' support and had to a great extent, lost its popularity, was easily overthrown.

The Shah, after his return to country, found himself a new source of support also, and considering the role the Americans had played in returning him to power, became increasingly closer to them. The era after the Mordad 28 coup can be called the era of the beginning of a new Iran-America -- or better to say, Shah-America -- relationship. In less than two years after this coup, the Shah succeeded in gaining American's consent to dismiss Zahedi from office. The era of Mohammad Reza Shah's absolute rule actually began from this date.

In 1960, simultaneous with the changes that were taking place on the international political scene, the Shah was also forced to change his style of rule. In order to give a more appealing appearance to his despotic regime, he encouraged Prime Minister Manoochehr Eghbal, and his Minister of the Court Asaadollah Alam, to establish two competing political parties of Mellion (The Nationalists) and Mardom (The People), respectively. Though every body knew that both groups were controlled through the same manger, their competition in parliamentary elections, and Eghbal's attempt to keep office through gaining a parliamentary majority, created a big political scandal. The Shah had to order the annulment of the election.

Eghbal resigned from office, and the second parliamentary election for Iran's twentieth National Consultative Assembly was carried out in early 1962. Meanwhile, John F. Kennedy had been recently elected the president of the United States, and America's internal and international policies were on the verge of special changes.

The inclination of America's policies towards liberalism affected policy towards Iran, Kennedy's cold personal relations with the Shah, who was accused of enforcing suffocating and dictatorial rule, caused some confusion in Iran. This ended with the fall of the government of

the time (Sharif Emami's cabinet), and Dr. Ali Amini's taking over as prime minister. Amini, was trusted by America's new government, and selected prime minister through direct American influence. At a formal party held in the Shah's honor during his visit to Washington in May 1962, Kennedy showed his support for Amini by explicitly calling him an "apt and competent" prime minister. However, the Shah who in almost twenty years of rule had learned how to play the political game, on that trip succeeded in acquiring Kennedy's trust to take responsibility for carrying out the changes that Kennedy had intended to be performed by Amini.

After returning from America, the Shah gradually raised barriers before Amini's progress and consequently, he was forced to resign office in July of the same year.

Land reforms was one of the programs the Americans had designed to be carried out by Amini. On the other hand, the Shah, in order to avoid the accusation of being the inheritor of Amini's government, and to receive the credit as the innovator of the land reform program and other reformatory programs, annexed some other schemes that interested the Americans. In a referendum, he obtained the "national approval" for the collection of the schemes dubbed the "White Revolution".

After the assassination of Prime Minister Hassan Ali Mansur, one of his cabinet ministers, namely Abbas Hoveyda, who up to that time had been little heard of, was selected as prime minister. Hoveyda's designation to this task was a hurried reaction to Mansour's assassination, and everybody considered his government a temporary one. However, Hoveyda went further than of his predecessors in obedience and subjection to Shah's wishes. With having this quality, he succeeded to hold the prime ministry for over twelve years, which is the longest term in the contemporary history of Iran.

This era could also be called the period of the Shah's outmost despotic rule. The government was obedient, the parliament lacked any power and the media was under heavy censorship. SAVAK suffocated any opposition immediately, nobody dared to oppose the regime, and there was not the slightest power to voice the smallest criticism.

In this period, certain incidents which could be considered as the results of accidents or suitable international conditions, increased the Shah's power, wealth and conceit. Gradually, the thought grew in his mind that he was really an extraordinary being destined to carry out a prophetic mission on earth. He gave religious weight to these ideas of his, because firstly, they would be more acceptable and digestible by common people; and secondly, he wanted to gradually assume the religious leadership, while he never was a true Muslim and didn't carry out any of the duties that a true Muslim should perform.

The luxuriant and costly celebrations of the Iranian monarchy's 2,500th year anniversary, held for the linking of Iranian history with its pre-Islamic period, manifested the Shah's way of thinking in that period.

The sudden rise in oil income, coupled with a lack of coherent economic programming to absorb it, engendered an apparently rapid move towards progress in the country. However, because of the burden of gigantic military projects and vast purchases of military equipment in line with the Nixon Doctrine, in addition to other ambitious and extravagant — and at the same time, useless — projects created inflation and heightened corruption in the country. At this conjunction of events brought about many new and complicated problems.

As Shah's age, and his rule, grew older, he became more and more cruel and inflexible; and gradually wished to experience his father's way of wielding power, while the conditions of his father's time were non-existent and he himself was, by nature, not as bold as Reza Khan in dealing with problems.

Summarizing and analyzing the political power ruling over Iran, which was a classic example of political power in any bipolar society that inevitably paves the road to a socio-political change, the following specific factors could be mentioned:

1. Iran's political power was based around the axis of a despotic king who lacked a strong personality. The people around him were not deeply involved in decision making and were practically incompetent, obedient characters.
2. The regime relied totally on its own army which was heavily armed, and whose top ranking officers were absolutely loyal to the Shah. Their reason for being faithful to him were the benefits of excessive wealth and welfare they enjoyed. Of course, this army was never tested in battle to assess faithfulness and ability.
3. The horrific secret police SAVAK suffocated any voice of opposition by applying the worst kind of terror and torture.
4. The regime relied on the acceptance and satisfaction of foreign powers, especially, the United States and Great Britain.
5. Corruption and bribery ruled over the administrative system, and the system's inflation and bureaucracy hampered its ability to perform routine tasks.
6. With rising oil prices, the regime's economic and financial power grew considerably but lack of a realistic economic and development program increased popular dissatisfaction.
7. Political power was diverted from people and most of the social groups, and the system evinced no eagerness to attract popular support. The only thing desired was their lack of opposition to the ruling order, which was obtained through terror and torture.
8. Considering the inaptness of the politicians and the dominance of wrong decision making which was mainly limited to one person, the political system was unable to solve even the simplest social, political

and economic problems.

9. The regime relied heavily on propaganda, pretense, holding celebrations and expensive ceremonies in maintaining its image inside and outside the country.

10. The regime ignored social values and traditions rooted in religion, and tried every device eliminate the ruling values and substitute them with values alien to the society.

It was in such conditions that social groups despaired of the political system of the country and coalesced around their leaders, thus creating a very powerful social force which provided, in the shortest possible time, the fall of the regime.

Communal Power

Social and communal power originates from the will and determination of the people who live in a specific place on the basis of a series of common interests and values. No community can exist and extent its existence without these common values. A valueless community will not endure and soon will break up. Common values can be of a materialistic or spiritual nature. However, naturally and inevitably, any society formed on and founded on solely materialistic values and interests, not only lacks intrinsic stability, but also exhibits insufficient communal power to defend itself against possible dangers.

A large segment of the society, especially the common people and the poor and deprived urban and rural dwellers who are faithful to their religious traditions and felt their beliefs endangered, removed themselves from socio-political activity and took refuge in specific aspects of religion, such as observation of dissimulation, adopting seclusionism, and remaining indifferent toward social occurrences. A very small group of people, mostly those from an academic background.

who could not stay indifferent to what was happening in their community, manifested their reactions in two ways: The group who because of contacts with western societies, especially educated European observed the scientific and industrial advances of those societies and were enchanted by their materialistic luxury they thought that the only way to solve Iran's problems and to make up for their society's lagging behind was to abandon their religious and cultural values and build a new society based on modern standards and western values.

This group was divided into two subgroups: the first was influenced by western liberalism and the French Revolution and believed in following on the heels of western societies. According to Taghizadeh, one of " the pioneers of this theory, "One must become, from head to toe, westernized in order to reach happiness, comfort and the advances that western societies have obtained". Members of this group belonged primarily to the urban rich who had the opportunity of having more contacts with western societies and sending their children to western countries for higher education. More importantly, this group found western liberalism more suitable for themselves.

The second subgroup, which also consisted of intellectuals and enthusiastic youth, were troubled by the injustice prevailing in Iranian society. At the beginning of this century, and especially following the victory of the Russian revolution of 1917, they were in contact with their Russian neighbors and they were influenced by Marxist-Leninist ideology and founded the leftist movements of Iran. This group, along with the negation of the traditional values ruling over the society, especially religious beliefs, were trying to build up a socialist society similar to what had been established in Russia. To this end, they tried to promote the atheistic and materialistic ideology of Marxism.

However, a third group that consisted mostly of clergymen and

religious leaders, related the backwardness of their society not to following of Islamic values, but in leaving them aside, they believed that Islamic societies, though they saved the appearance of religion, had been emptied of real essence. This theory was propounded by Seyyed Jamal-ul-din Assadabadi's movement, and held that the only way for Islamic societies, or better said, the Islamic nation, is that it truly return to Islam. They undertook an extended effort in achieving this end — the zenith of which could be observed in the tobacco, Constitutional and oil nationalization movements. Among the pioneers of this thought, after Seyyed Jamal, we could name Sheikh Fazlollah Nouri, Seyyed Hassan Modarres, Ayatollah Kashani and Nawab Safavi.

Now, to better understand the social power of the Iranian nation, it is necessary to make a brief review of the structure of the Iranian people from a sociological aspect.

Iran's Social Condition Prior to the Revolution

At the dawn of the current century, the greater part of Iran's population consisted of village dwellers, who mostly led a tribal life style. Tribes formed approximately 25% of country's population. In 1911, i.e., in the early stage of the Constitutional Movement, Iran's total population was about 10 million people, 20% of which lived in cities populated with more than 5,000 people. Tehran had 200,000 people, i.e. 2% of the country's total population. However, Tehran's population growth was so fast that the number of inhabitants soon reached a million, and shortly before the Revolution, it had numbered over five million people.

This rapid growth of urban population was due primarily to the incorrect and dictated policies of the Pahlavi regime. This caused the destruction of rural life and villages, and consequently, the migration of rural dwellers to large cities like Tehran. Thus, in 1978, Iran's urban

population had grown to over 20 million and surpassed the number of its rural population.

Villagers' life conditions, as compared to city dwellers, was quite unfavorable. Iranians in villages lived in houses built with clay bricks. 1976 census shows that there were about 65,000 villages in Iran. Only 18,000 of " the villages had populations over 250 people. This indicated one of the most scattered population in the world.

Backwardness, deprivation, and the dispersion of Iranian villagers in small communities had created a hard and unendurable conditions. High rates of illiteracy and death among rural people was the natural consequence of this condition. In 1974, only 39% of rural children of school age had benefited from government supported education. The rate for urban children was over 90%. Villagers had for centuries, lived under the constant pressure and exploitation of land owners and despotic rulers. Thus, tyranny and the pressures of government agents acted to make villagers feel nothing but distrust, hatred, and tear towards government and its agents. They viewed government officials as takers of bribes and dispensers of abuse, not as elements that gave protection and security.

Iran, until the early 1960s, was mostly self-sufficient in providing food and was also able to make good its shortages of foreign exchange by exporting cotton, fruits and nuts. However, it did not take long after the execution of land reforms of the Shah, which had been designed by the American government in the Kennedy era, that Iran became dependant on imports of food. Yet, in a survey conducted in 1947 by the American advisors Morrison and Knudson on Iran's potential for development, it was recommended that the country focus most of its activities on improvement of its agriculture. But the Shah in 1962, executing the imperialist policy of that same American government, destroyed Iran's agriculture to build upon its ruins, the dependent assembly industry.

In 1973, when Iran's oil income had grown rapidly, investment in the agricultural sector was a mere 8% of the national income.

Following the Shah's land reform program, and destruction of agriculture and expansion of urban living, the villagers, in the hope of finding suitable jobs, inundated the cities and created a new social class -- that of urban daily wage laborers. These people, who had mostly migrated to the cities as single men and had left their families and wives in the villages, were faced with a westernized city culture alien to them and for earning money and making a living, they had to work in buildings, next to luxuriant villas and palaces which were being raised at sky high expenses. Their income, though it seemed good, was often overwhelmed by the rise of sharp inflation.

With the beginning of 1976, construction programs decreased because of the slowdown in oil income. As a result, many workers were made redundant and since the situation of agriculture was very bad, they had no prospect of returning to their villages. Considering the religious background of most of them, this new class who mainly consisted of young people, at the beginning of the revolutionary political movement in cities, joined the core of the people's struggle and also became the links between cities and villages in the struggle.

The elements of social dissatisfaction that gave background depth to the revolution are numerous. Neglecting the prevailing religious values, indifference to religious leaders' requests, prevalence of prostitution and moral perversion, ignoring the communal continence, employing Bahai's and Zionists in key positions, and the control of society's economy by the Bahai' Sabet Pasal and the Zionist Elghanian, changing the Islamic calendar and returning to values and traditions of pre-Islamic times and enforcing and propagating them, were all factors that hurt the religious feelings of Iranian society.

Added to these elements was the large presence of foreigners,

especially Americans, shortage of social services, increasing unemployment of the middle and lower classes, and widening of the gap between the wealthy and other classes of the society.

These factors and the increasing reclusion of people from the political system, and also the inability of political authority to supply the minimum needs and requirements of the society had opened the path for a fundamental change in Iran's socio-political system. There were few who doubted that saving such a situation would be possible for a long time.

Of course, it shouldn't be forgotten that despite the increasing gap between the Iranian society and the ruling political power, the Shah's regime still enjoyed favorable conditions concerning economic, military and international affairs. This was the result of the oil price increase in the early 1970s. The government's income had increased many times over prior to the revolution's victory. The regime had become known as a generous lender among western and Third World countries. The Nixon Doctrine and selection of the Shah as the region's gendarme had provided an exceptional situation for rapid and extensive strengthening of the army which was the regime's main instrument of suppression and holding power.

Finally, in an international atmosphere of understanding between the world's big powers, the Shah's government enjoyed the material and spiritual support of all of the world's influential powers, whether East or West. Naturally, confronting such a regime which was at the peak of power, and providing the grounds for its fall needed a much powerful force which should be sought in the three essential elements of the revolution.

Considering the above arguments, this question arises as to why and for what reason did the changing of the existing situation end in a revolution? Despite all efforts, socio-political reform did not solve

Iranian society's problems but instead created a great and historic revolution. This is what we will consider in next section.

Elements of the Islamic Revolution's Victory

When a society becomes bipolar, and the possibility of healing and closing the gap between political power and social power vanishes, then socio-political change becomes inevitable.

As analyzed in the previous section, Iran's ruling political power was isolated from Iranian society and this accelerated in the last years of the regime's life. Very few doubted that the political system ruling over Iranian society could, with its existing structure, close the gap with society.

The regime had neither the ability to change and enhance its efficiency, nor were the people ready to submit to and accept the government or place any hope in it.

Thus, Iranian society had reached an explosive point at which any event could disrupt the existing situation and paralyze society's normal routine. Any effort to heal the existing wounds and lessen the gap between people and the political system was in vain. There was no possibility of deceiving people either. The Shah declared at some point that, "If the one party system (Rastakhiz Party) does not succeed, then there is no hope for the regime's survival."

However, the important question is: Why should a revolution, but no other forms of socio-political transformation that happen every day around the world, be realized in Iran?"

In a brief comparison with the world's great revolutions in the present century, it is observed that the victory of the Islamic Revolution happened in conditions wherein international conditions, from a political-military point of view, not only were not ready to countenance the event, but to make efforts to suppress it.

The two great revolutions in the present century which took place in Russia and China had happened in economic, social and political conditions suitable for such events. Russia's October Revolution which ended in victory in 1917, was not a victory in a struggle against the political power or the defeat of the Russian imperial army or dissolution of the ruling system; because they all had been weakened and almost dissolved in World War I. The only thing the revolutionaries did was take control of the society in an atmosphere of anarchy and disorder.

The Kumintang government in China had also become powerless in World War II consequent to foreign attacks on the central government. Except in Beijing and its suburbs, it had no control over the country. Thus there were no significant barriers against the progress of the revolutionary forces led by Mao Tse-Tung and their taking control over the country.

While, as mentioned before, international condition at the time of the Islamic Revolution's victory, contrary to the times of the two mentioned revolutions, were unsuitable for such an event.

The superpowers had reached an agreement on peaceful coexistence and established a harmonic imperialist universal system. The big powers were in agreement on maintaining existing conditions. Especially, considering the benefits that the survival of the Shah's regime had for both superpowers, they both supported it to the very last day of its survival to the limits of their abilities.

The Shah's regime also relied on a 700,000 man army heavily equipped with very modern weapons. It was in such local and international conditions that the Iranian Muslim nation rose against the monarchy and became victorious without use of weapons.

For understanding the reasons of the Islamic Revolution's victory, two basic points must be taken into consideration: 1. The historic background of the Iranian people's struggles.

The Iranian people, during the last one century, had made continuous efforts against the ruling political system in a reformist and conservative way, and though they had obtained sufficient experience, practically they faced very bitter defeats. The Tobacco Movement and Oil Nationalization Movement, which were for ending the control of foreigners, had finally ended in the American-British coup of Mordad 28th (August 1953) and the stabilization of the Shah's despotic regime and the increasing influence of foreigners in the fate of the Iranian society.

The said historic experiences proved that unless a basic and essential movement for completely cutting the roots of the system's political corruption and establishing a new system based on the heartfelt values and ideals of the people took place, the remnants of the worn out system would resurface and swallow all the achievements of the people's movement. Thus, all the pressures applied, from inside and outside the country, to impose a compromise, left no doubt for people and the movement's leadership that they must realize the mighty goals they had found possible by establishing Islamic rule.

2. The simultaneous and harmonious presence of all the three essential elements needed for realization of a revolution, i.e. people, leadership and ideology, in Iran's Islamic Revolution:

a. People

Looking at other great revolutions around the world, one could not find any phenomenon as vast as was observed in Iran. In the French Revolution, it was the metropolitan bourgeoisie that rose up and downed the system. That is why it was called "The Bourgeois' Revolution". In Russia's revolution, it was striking laborers at the Petrograd factories, along with a group of soldiers from the city garrison,

who succeeded in overthrowing the Czarist government. In China also, it was farmers and land peasant laborer who led and finalized a great part of the struggle, and thus, it became known as the "Farmers' Revolution".

While in Iran, except for a very few who had a close relationship with and dependence upon the Shah's regime and whose interests were closely linked to the survival of the Shah's regime, other groups and classes of the society, from farmers, labors, businessmen, government employees to university and school students in towns and villages all over the country, rose in unison without any need of a coalition or agreement on the different requests of different groups. They all stood up and repeated the same slogans.

Basically, the revolutionary movements of common people manifest strongly integrated determination. In the history of mankind, very few situations like that could be found. It is a political legacy that lawyers or philosophers try to analyze or justify as to its formation and organization. This has a theoretical aspect which has been less observed and as Michel Foucault puts it, "...like God or spirit, which perhaps can never be seen by eyes." However, in Tehran and throughout Iran, this phenomenon of an entire nation moving as a single person was observed and it has remained as an indelible historical observation. Thus, a sudden union was formed in the history of the Iranian nation based on their strong religious feelings.

This formed in relation to issues that the nation had suffered: the dominance and interference of foreigners, plundering their national resources, dependent foreign policies and the obvious interference of America. The emotions so aroused, presented the will of the nation to not only revolt against the mentioned impositions, but also to reject all the prevailing values which had influenced their political destiny from centuries ago and the cause of disasters and resentment. This national

union was not the result of any coalition of different political groups. Neither was it the consequence of any aggregate of social groups, each of them ready to sacrifice some of its goals or make compromises.

Although the revolutionary movement in Iran was initiated on the basis of values and ideals of Shi'i thought, the Sunnis (traditionalists) also supported and participated in it. Foucault in a discussion he had with one of Kurdistan's Sunni inhabitants writes: "When I asked him about his participation in the revolution and all of the religious and national differences that exist, he answered, "It is true that we believe in the Sunni tradition, but above all, we are Muslims". And again, "Why we did it? It is obvious. We are, before anything else, Iranian and we all have a share in all of Iran's problems and issues. We want the Shah to leave. Long live Khomeini. Down with the Shah!" The slogans in Kurdistan were the same as those in Tehran or Mashad."

What demonstrated the depth and intensity of revolution in Iran were two factors: One, the determination of people which had been politically formed and was not doubted by anyone -- not the enemies or even the Shah himself; and the other, their will and determination in realizing a basic and fundamental change in the socio-political system and values ruling the society.

But the most important element is the role of the clergy and the religious leaders in organizing and leading the movement, which needs more discussion. Religious leadership in Iran, and especially the Shi'i clergy, has specific features that were very effective in guiding and organizing events.

1. The Social Status of the Clergy

The great majority of clergymen come from the poor and deprived classes of the society and most are from villages. Thus, they have known the pains and sufferings of common people and have grown up with

them. In contrast, the intellectual and educated class, who in many socio-political movements take on the leadership of national struggles, create an elite class with a specific culture of its own and gradually disassociated themselves from the common people. Quite often they lose their spiritual contact with people. The clergy, however, never lost their spiritual and cultural relationship with them.

2. Economic Independence of the Shi'a Clergy

Unlike the Sunni clergy who are government employed, the Shi'i clerics have economic independence from the political system of the country and their living depends on the funds they receive through special religious taxes that Muslim believers pay. Naturally, this economic independence from the political system and reliance on people to provide for their welfare, has helped Shi'i clergymen to perform their religious - political activities free of any worry, and base them only on the needs and requirements of the people.

Here, it is necessary to mention two points: Firstly, the clergy often have tried to live a simple life without any luxury, and this alone has been the cause of their freedom and spiritual status. The second point is that provision of their welfare does not depend on the wealthy and it is mostly the lower and middle classes who, due to their beliefs in observation of religious law and order, oblige themselves to pay religious duties, such as Khoms (one-fifth tax), Zakat (obligatory alms), oblation wages, etc., and provide for the clergymen's limited needs.

3. Establishing Communication

As *ijtihad*, the exertion of true meanings of Islamic laws and orders, is still practicable in Shi'i Islam, and this by itself not only facilitates the constant growth of Shi'i jurisprudence, but also has given *ijtihad* and *taqlid* (conformity to the opinion of a leading jurist), a special significance

and necessity. Any Muslim must either be a qualified theologian himself, or conform to the opinion of a fully qualified jurist, known as *mujtahid*, the authority to be referred to, who has published a "book of practice". Naturally, not all people in various regions can make direct contact with high religious authorities. Therefore, clergymen play an important role in transferring the jurists' ideas and opinions, and without needing a special rank, take on the important mission of conveying the religious authorities' opinions and ideas to people. They relate the opinions and orders of high Jurists in mosques and sermons, and in return, reflect the people's problems and questions to the religious leaders.

Regarding the role of clergy and mosques in the struggle of the Iranian people, Graham writes:

"The fact is that the Shi'i clergy of Iran live among people and have a closer relationship with them, and consequently, are better aware of common people's feelings. The mosque is an inseparable part of the life of common people as is the Bazaar; and the Bazaar is the center of their normal life. When the clergy oppose government policies, their opinion has such legitimacy that even, in the most intensive dictatorial conditions, it is abided by people. Meanwhile, the clergy's communication network and mosque system provides them the ability to make contacts with all classes of people."

It was from this group of clergymen that political religious leaders such as the leader of the Islamic Revolution, his Holiness Ayatollah Imam Khomeini (R.A.) emerged.

b. Leadership

Here, we will not discuss what the revolution's leadership did; but will talk about what he was and what characteristics and features he had. Anyone who has met the Imam in person, has realized that this man was

an ideal human, with all the good features and attributes of a holy character. A combination of God-given spiritual, political, mental and moral abilities put this exceptional character in the position to shoulder such a great role in modern Iran. His power and ability, undoubtedly, exceeded, many times, those of an ordinary religious high authority. He was by all means the exemplification of perfection in self-understanding and self-control (as a true Muslim). Even non-Iranian Muslims, too, saw in him a great example of the ideal man of Islam.

Having these attributes and considering that he was the man who could, in less than a few minutes, bring millions of Iranians into the street in demonstration, but looking at his place of work and living, one could see nothing but simplicity and dignity. He used to sit on the ground behind his little desk, which was all that you could find in his working room.

One of the non-religious Turkish newspaper reporters, who prior to the victory of the Islamic Revolution, like many other journalists had gone to meet him to ask questions on minorities' rights, women's rights and so on, was so attracted by the Imam's character that ashamed of the questions he had intended to ask, he remained silent; and the only question he raised was whether the Imam would give him some advice in his personal life. Imam recommended that he study Islam and perform his daily prayers, etc.

One of the interesting features about him is that his political leadership role in the revolution which was unprecedented in history, has overshadowed his position as a grand master, philosopher and sage.

It is often thought by today's Muslims that the thought and psychology of a sage and philosopher is void of the realities going on in society and he generally abstains taking any political or social role. The reason for this perception is that some think that questions of the spirit and psyche have no visible relationship with the existing problems and

issues of the Islamic world. The life of Imam Khomeini, contrary to this notion, is an obvious proof of the relationship between the mentioned issues and manifests the fact that his program was not merely a strategic and political initiative, but was guided by a divine vision.

In Reza Khan's era, he wrote a book titled *Kashf-ul-Asrar* (The Discovery of Secrets) criticizing the Pahlavi dictatorship. In this book, he boldly and bravely criticized Reza Khan's regime, and especially his yielding to foreign powers.

Imam's attitude towards the regime was a completely irreconcilable and radical attitude which not only was unforgivable by the regime, but also not in agreement to the taste of many of the high authorities of Qom's Theological Center. This was because the center, despite all its power, was trying to save its position and be able to survive. In the period that Ayatollah Broojerdi had the absolute religious authority, the Imam was one of his confidants and advisors, but it does not necessary mean that his views were dominant among the advisors of the late Ayatollah Broojerdi.

Imam did not establish a party or organized group having a disciplined cadre and neither had a preplanned program. He merely made use of the necessary tactics for promoting his ideals in reaching an ideal Islamic society, and this was not done but by his intelligence, personal attractiveness, reliance on clear Islamic ideals, and standards, and also the kind of incisiveness that was his trait.

The period of Imam's leadership could be divided into four different phases:

Phase 1

Appearance of Imam Khomeini as a religious-political leader and his rapid acceptance by the masses. This period begins with his opposing statements regarding the Municipal and Provincial Councils Act and

reaches its peak in his famous speech on the day of Ashura. His subsequent arrest resulted in the uprising of people on Khordad 15, 1342 (June 5, 1963); and ended with his being exiled to Turkey after voicing his strong objection to the American imposed Capitulation Law and the compromising and perfidy of some high religious authorities, including Shariatmadari.

In this period of struggle, Imam took four essential actions:

1. By forbidding *taghyeh* (dissimulation) which was the reconcilers' excuse, he moved away the most important barrier against people's direct and forceful contention with despotic regimes.
2. By bringing the struggle to the main center of religious activity, i.e., Qom's Theological Center, he discarded, forever, the "separation of religion and politics" thesis. Even those who were reluctant to enter any political activity were forced to clearly declare their position.
3. By directing the sharp edge of his attacks at the main center of corruption, i.e., the monarchy and Shah himself, he ended the conservative means of struggle that had existed.
4. By directly attacking on all big foreign powers, with the United States at their head, he rejected any kind of political conservatism that had existed in the past, especially during the constitutionalism, and the oil nationalization movements, and selected a totally new method of waging the political struggle.

Imam, having an exact understanding of the past experiences, and his famous statement that "America is worse than England, England is worse than America, and Russia is worse than both, and all are filthier than each other. However, today our dealing is with these filthy entities, and is with America", closed the door to any hope of penetration by any followers of foreign policies into the revolutionary movement and stealing the fruits of the popular struggle.

Phase 2:

The second phase of Imam's leadership is marked by a long fifteen years of interregnum, starting with his exile to Turkey and ending with his expulsion from Najaf. In this period, though he, intermittently and in the context of the events happening in Iran, continued the fight against the regime by issuing statements, religious judgments and making speeches. He also maintained his spiritual relationship with the people and guided and advised them in their struggle. The most important action of Imam in this period, however, was his establishing himself as the revolution's theoretician. He did this by initiating a series of theological lessons, known as Islamic Government or Velayate Faqih (the Guardianship of the Jurisprudent). Accordingly, he laid the basic plan for the post-revolution government and made plain for those who did not have a clear understanding of the Islamic Revolution's concept, what kind of government and society they should intend to establish.

A revolution's leadership is manifested in three forms: ideologue, commander and champion, and finally, architect and head of the revolutionary government.

In this period, Imam shouldered the responsibility of theoretician of the revolution and performed this duty in the most competent manner.

Phase 3:

The third phase of Imam's leadership started with the first sparks of revolution in Qom in Dey of 1356 (January 1977), which ignited the fire hidden under the ashes. It did not take long before this fire encircled Iran's ruling system and terminated the 2,500 year long system of monarchy.

In this period, while realizing the appropriateness of the situation and popular awareness of the movement, the Imam did not hesitate and took the flag of the revolution. Armed with a correct understanding of

the wishes, determination, and abilities of the people, which were manifested in their demonstrations and opposition to the government forces by giving their lives, he declared an unflagging determination in continuing the struggle until the collapse of the Shah's regime. With the Imam's entrance to Paris, a greater opportunity of close contact with his followers was realized. Neauphle-Le Chateau, Imam's residence outside the French capital, became the focal point of Iranians desiring to meet the leader of the revolution. In fact, this Parisian district, for some time, turned into Iran's second capital — or more precisely, Iran's true capital. From here, the Islamic Revolution was transformed from words to practice and ultimately uprooted the Shah's reign.

Phase 4:

This period was the hardest and the most sensitive time of the revolution's leadership. It was in this phase that the leader of the revolution had to guide the turbulent ship of the revolution to the safety of the shores, both as the social leader, as well as spiritual guide of the government.

Here was a situation wherein the dictatorial system and political power had vanished and millions of people who had lived chained by the foreign dependent regime, had broken those shackles and there was the potential for anarchy prevailing over the society and the removal of control from the leadership's hands. Thus the leader of the revolution had to, contain popular agitation and prevent chaos while organizing the Islamic government he had designed on top of the ruins of the downed monarchy.

This question whether, as Marx put it, "People and heroes are made by history", or as Thomas Carlyle says, "People and heroes make history" are arguments that perhaps have no place here. However, in studying the Islamic Revolution's process of formation, and especially Imam

Khomeini's leadership, it can be said that he was himself made by the history of Islam, and at the same time, he made the history of the Islamic Revolution.

One historian compared Imam Khomeini to a candle which was burning down but with the force and power of a thousand nuclear bombs. Arabic journals made statements about him such as, [Imam] Khomeini has baffled and amazed the East and has shaken the West and has brought the Arabs to bay. He has attracted the thoughts of all people in the world.

c. Ideology

As mentioned in the section on ideology, one of the important tasks of a leader is to establish and present the revolution's ideology. Such an ideology contains rejection of the existing and unwanted system and its values and also portrays a favorable future in order for it to receive wide social acceptance.

In Iran, since long ago and from the early years of the present century, three different eastern and western ideologies have been attracted different social groups. These are Nationalism, Marxism-Leninism, and Islam. Their advocates have endeavored to gather followings by painting a picture of their ideal society.

Nationalism, in the minds of its western designers, means "taking a group of people having the same race, historical background, language, culture and traditions, who have gathered inside a set of geographical boundaries, and considering whatever is contained inside the domain of this unit's interests, prestige, and honor as friendly and otherwise as alien and enemy".

The Marxist movement, despite the extensive efforts made, was less successful than nationalism in Iran for two reasons: 1. The atheistic structure and materialistic nature of Marxism-Leninism

contradicted Iranian society's nature and their deep religious beliefs.

Thus, it could not find popular acceptability. 2. The extensive affiliation of Marxists to Moscow resulted in their

becoming regarded "as a result of the bitter experiences of Iranian-Russian relation", as a group of Russian puppets.

However, Islam as a divine school of thought, had historical roots in the minds of various classes of people. A society whith 98% of its members traditional Muslims, and most of them adhering to their divine book's commands, is well prepared to accept a divine ideology as the ideology for socio-political change, including revolution.

Among the main arguments against this ideology being used as the ideology of the revolution are:

1. Many years of western imperialist propaganda had inspired the notion that, "Religion should be separated from politics and has no relationship with socio-political issues. (Religion) has no prescription for solving complicated modern socio-political problems." This program had affected various classes of people and even some of the clergy and religious authorities.
2. The ideal society that Islam intended to establish belonged to 14 centuries ago and many believed it impossible to establish its orders in the modern era. Doubts existed whether it could answer the present epoch's conundrums.
3. Reliance on some of the Islamic principles, such as dissimulation and waiting for the advent of the 12th Imam in Shi'i tradition and obeying the designated guardian among the Sunnis, had left no room, not even in the minds of some true Muslims, for the idea that Islam could be wielded as a revolutionary ideology for changing the prevailing values.

Considering the above barriers, despite the efforts of the likes, Seyyed Jamal-ul-din Assadabadi, Ayatollah Nayeeni, AyatollahNouri, '

Modarres, Ayatullah Kashani and the Devotees of Islam led by Nawah Safavi, though effective in realizing many national goals, they did not succeed in establishing Islam as an ideology of revolution in the minds of the masses, and especially the revolutionary youth.

It was not until 1962 that the leader of the revolution, having an exact knowledge of the said problems, started systematically eliminate the obstacles and succeeded in changing people's illusion of Islam's incompetency. He began to establish Islam in their minds as the most suitable ideology for revolution by presenting it in a new way. Imam Khomeini, before anything else, forbade dissimulation and made telling the truth an obligatory action.

Following that, with the opportunity provided during his exile in Najaf, he presented the idea of Islamic government and guardianship of the supreme jurispudent. In doing so, he evinced a fundamental change in the views held towards Islam as a dynamic ideology that can function in the modern world.

The ruler of an Islamic society must have two traits: First, is comprehensive knowledge of divine orders; and second, he must be just and impartial in execution of those laws. In other words, the impartial jurispudent is, in fact, the successor of God's Prophet and the Holy Imams in administering the Islamic society and executing the divine laws. Thus, obeying him as the guardian of the divine commands is the equivalent of God's Prophet.

By presentation of this principal, the leader of the revolution defined and established three important points as the revolution's strategy:

1. Overthrowing monarchial rules,
2. Working to establish Islamic government, and
3. Guaranteeing such a government by executing the principal of Velayate Faqih (the guardianship of the jurispudent).

Then he explicitly defined the plan and the strategy of the struggle

for weakening, and finally, overcoming the ruling system as follows: We should:

1. Break all relations with government institutes.
2. Not cooperate with them.
3. Avoid any act that might be consider support for them, and finally
4. Establish legal, financial, economic, cultural and political agencies.

Accelerating Factors of the Islamic Revolution From Various Views

One of the points that attracts the attention of those analyzing the revolution and even partisan and opposition political groups after the victory of any revolution is this: Which factor (or factors) accelerated the socio-political changes and the chain of events that consequently ended in the victory of the revolution?

How and why did a country, that as late as January 1977 had been called by the US President Jimmy Carter as an "island of stability" and the Shah referred to as the "most powerful and competent leader in the Middle East", become so turbulent and in a period of a year was devastated by the triumph of the Islamic Revolution?

From the various theories presented so far and with regard to documents, analyses and information available, four major factors have been identified for the occurrence of the Islamic Revolution:

1. Execution of Carter's human rights policy.
 2. The Shah's illness.
 3. The Shah's attempt at rapid modernization of the country.
 4. And finally, publishing of an insulting article towards the leader of the revolution in Ettela'at newspaper which agitated the religious feelings of the people.
1. The first viewpoint argues that with the introduction of Carter's human rights Carter, the US president and the pressures he put on

the American affiliated Third World dictators, including the Shah of Iran, curbed the required force needed for controlling the opposition. The policy of liberalization in these societies which were not yet ready for the challenge of freedom, caused the tearing apart of the normal life routine and political organization in Iran.

The notion that the principal of American liberalism was imposed on the Shah had many believers, not only in the United States, but in Iran as well. In the United States, Republicans of all stripes, and even some liberals, have essentially accepted the view that Carter's efforts in executing human rights and moving away from the previous policy towards Iran, was the impetus of the Shah's fall.

For example, Jean Kirkpatrick, the former American permanent representative at the United Nations during the Reagan administration, accused Carter on this point. She says: "Carter's cabinet stopped the former policies and started a new period based on efforts to provide human rights. The result of this discontinuation of American foreign policy gave rise to substitution of friendly regimes with unfriendly ones. The Carter administration, while actively participating in the downfall of non-communist autocratic governments, was indifferent to communism's expansionism. The first victims of Carter's human rights policy were the Shah in Iran and Somoza in Nicaragua.

At this point, two questions arise. The first is, considering published documents, "was there really any pressure imposed on the Shah for implementing a policy of liberalization?" The second question is, "which groups benefited from the policy and were affiliated to it?"

taking the first query, it can be proved that there is no proof of coercion and much evidence to the contrary, i.e., the Shah's policy of openness had no relationship with Carter's human rights program.

The Carter administration made an exception in the case of Iran in the application of human rights policy. For example, Anthony Parsons, the British ambassador in Iran, says: "Many said that the establishment of freedom resulted from the direct pressure imposed on the Shah by the Carter administration... I did not agree with this view at that time and still don't. In fact, the first rays of freedom were observed in late 1976, i.e., two or three months before the transition of the presidency to Carter. I have no doubt that the Shah, with that usual opportunism of his, had so deduced that a more humane and democratic outlook on his part would have made him more dear to the new American president."

William Sullivan writes in his memoir that when he met President Carter for the first time as the new American ambassador to Iran, he was surprised that the only thing that Carter did not talk about was the human rights issue in that country. He so writes: "Before traveling to Iran, in a meeting with Carter, he emphasized Iran's strategic importance for the United States and our western allies. He then referred to the Shah as a close friend and trustworthy ally for America and warmly supported him. He also re-emphasized Iran's importance as a stability factor for the security of the critical Persian Gulf region. In the end, he talked about the oil price and other issues of interest between Iran and the United States, and told me to put forward any questions that I might have."

Sullivan noticed that despite the fact that Carter had entered the White House riding on the human rights slogan and during the election campaign repeatedly criticized the Republican presidents for their support of the Shah and selling arms to his regime, now mentioned nothing about the subject. He asked Carter's opinion on the matter. Carter reluctantly answers: "Of course, there are some problems regarding human rights, and he then asked me to convince

the Shah to moderate his general policy in that regard in my meetings with him."

The more important point is that Carter had promised to base his economic and political relationship and his security and military policies with other countries on their observation of human rights. Yet, we see that this essential principal of his administration's policy was ignored and the regime in Iran was the beneficiary.

Considering economic transactions, whit military services and sales excluded from the equation, it is observed that exports to Iran were greater than of any other time. Under the Carter administration, American exports to Iran reached USDS.6 billion. In addition, Carter signed a multi billion dollar contract with the Shah for building five nuclear power stations.

Carter, at the signing of this agreement, said: "We signed a nuclear contract with Iran that brings billions of dollars of business for the American industries and a lot of employment for American people; however it does not contradict our principal policy of not increasing nuclear arms." The only thing that Carter did not point out was the observation of human rights in Iran.

Regarding arms sales to Iran, Carter surpassed Presidents Nixon and Ford in satisfying the Shah's goals. Delivery of arms to Iran reached its peak (USD2.4 billion) in the first year of Carter's taking office. In addition to that, from January 1977 to December 1978, the cost of the arms delivered to Iran was more than that for the Nixon and Ford administrations. The debates between administration officials and congressmen on arm sales to Iran were quite revealing and illustrate the real policy of the Carter administration towards the Shah's regime. These discussions show that the new administration had not changed the previous Iran dealings in the slightest.

Selling sophisticated intelligence craft (AWACS) to Iran by the

new administration was a very good opportunity for testing Carter's human rights policy. When the State Department's Alfred Atherton, and Eric Von Marbod from the Department of Defense were questioned by the Senate's Foreign Relations Sub-committee as to whether the administration had made any links between arms sales and human rights in Iran, they left no doubt that as far as arm sales to Iran were concerned, the Carter administration had no intention of changing policy, and that, Iran was an exception.

Christopher Juandis, a Cypress born researcher, spent some time in Iran during the revolution. After a thorough investigation of the documents in the United States and the published documents discovered from the US Embassy in Tehran, deduced that, "Carter's human rights neither formed the Carter Trojan Horse in the Shah's court, nor was it an essential element in the appearance of the revolution. The revolution would take place sooner or later, with or without Carter's human rights policy. In fact, it was the Iranian society's inner conflicts which had increased with the extensive role Americans had played in Iran during the past 25 years. They had weakened an apparently stable and firm regime and finally destroyed it under the waves of the most genuine popular revolution."

Of course, it should not be ignored that since December 1976, some liberals and westernized Iranians had been energized by Carter's proclamation of human rights and some societies, communities and committees were formed. A few open letters and bold articles were written. They all were hoping that the liberal front would be able to ascend to power by making use of the open policy with America's aid. They foresaw preserving the existing relationship with America, and in the light of that assistance, were optimistic that reforms would be instituted.

Among the best known of these groups were the Society of

Supporters of Freedom and Human Rights. That included Mehdi Bazargan, Hassan Nazih, Abdolkarim Lahiji, Ali Asqhar Haj Seyyed Javadi and Moghaddam Maragheie as its elected board of directors. In the open atmosphere that had been created, they found the opportunity to write articles and make speeches. The mass media, in and out of the country, referred to them as an influential and serious opposition group. Haj Seyyed Javadi was supposedly their most liberal member. Another group under the guise of Writers' Center organized a 'Poetry Night' in the open air of Iran-German Club, under a foreign country's Hag, by invitation of the Goethe Institute. As Juandis relates, "Carter's human rights was especially important to part of the Shah's opposition, i.e., the liberals. Projection and application of human rights by opposing liberals created some opportunities for them in a country that had already entered a revolutionary phase and it only helped in making the regime more illegitimate. However, the role liberals played in the revolution was a trivial and secondary one. The essential role was undertaken by the Bazaar and the lower classes. The opposition liberals did not enjoy much popularity among these groups which received their incentive and leadership from the clergy. For the clergy and these groups of people, Carter's human rights and the Shah's liberalization policy were marginal and not as important as presenting their objections and complaints."

Bazargan, in an interview with Hamid Algar explains the liberals' strategy in making use of Carter's human rights policy. He says:

"When Sharif Emami was prime minister, some true freedom had been given due to the force exerted by Carter's human right policy. This opportunity provided for a couple of people to get together and discuss and try... At that time, the issue was elections and the idea whether we should or should not

participate was the main point. The liberalization movement's opinion, and others', was that election was a divine opportunity. What better opportunity than now since the government has reached a situation to it wants to give freedom of elections! ...Now, whether the election will go ahead, and some of the opposition's members -- whether religious or nationalist, from the liberalization movement or any other party -- 10 or 20 members would find their way to the parliament, or the election would not be held properly; then if they did not get into the parliament, it still won't be a problem, and the government's reason would surface, and we would say, "Mr. Carter, Mr. America, your human rights is a lie!"¹. The second theory with regard to acceleration of the events, and the revolution's getting out of the regime's control, is related to the Shah's cancer.

During a skiing trip in 1974, the Shah was diagnosed with a tumor in his stomach and cancer of lymph nodes by two French specialists. They put him under regime of chemotherapy from then on. Given his weak character, the Shah did not allow any body to find out about his illness. Even Ashraf, his twin sister who had a great influence on him and his decisions, apparently was not aware of the matter/²) The interesting point is that, CIA, with all the control it had on the Shah and matters related to his health and psychology, knew nothing on this subject.

The effects of this illness on the Shah's psyche has been discussed in two ways: a. The Shah, knowing that he would not live long, decided to make

1- Muslim Women's Movement. *Positions of the Liberalization Movement Towards the Islamic Revolution* (1361) p.128.

2- Marvin Zonis, Op cit, p.606.

Iran's political environment, both in his own time and after his death, suitable for his son's taking power. In his own words, he makes reference to this issue as such: "I wanted to transfer the throne to my son in a suitable and acceptable condition with regard to economic and cultural development, while I was still alive. I could not achieve this goal with bloodshed and using force."¹

- b. Another effect this illness had on Shah was the action of the drugs. Those medicaments affect the volition and decision making centers of the user and in the Shah's case, reinforced his previous beliefs in fate and destiny.²

Crane Brinton, the late history professor at Harvard University, had studied Western Europe's great historic revolutions and revolutionary movements of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and had come to the conclusion that "The victory of any revolution, more than being the result of the power and determination of the revolutionary forces, has been due to the weakness and retreat of the ruling powers".

This theory, like the previous one, has no sound foundation; because the Shah had a basically weak character. It was the support he received from foreign powers that gave him a pseudo sense of power and boosted his morale. He enjoyed the backing of the big powers through the last minutes of his reign. Meanwhile, he did not desist from any brutality and bloodshed in executing their requests and orders. During 1357 (1978-79), very few days and weeks passed for the Iranian people without scores of innocent people drowning in their blood. The catastrophe of Abadan's Rex Cinema, and the even

1- Shah's Confessions, p.21.

2- Ref. to: Shah's Confessions, p.58.

worse massacre on Friday, September 27, 1978 (which was a reminder of June 6, 1963) are some of the crimes the Shah, his police and military forces committed.

3. Another theory forwarded by the Shah's supporters which is in fact concocted for protecting him by confessing his mistakes but not his wrongdoings, is that since the Shah was a true servant of his country and wanted to compensate for its backhandedness in the shortest possible time and to bring Iran to the "Gates of the Great Civilization", he committed a mistake. That error was making too much haste in modernizing a country which was not yet ready for such a great leap. Their argument is that since Iranian traditional society could not digest the execution of all those modernizing projects in such a short time, it encountered complicated problems, dissatisfactions piled upon dissatisfaction and reached the point of explosion. This resulted in the fall of the regime. The Shah, himself, says:

I wanted to make up for the many centuries of backhandedness of my country through an urgent 25 year program. All the problems arose from this rush in executing this scheme. As a matter of fact, we should have foreseen a preparatory phase for executing this urgent work/¹)

Among others believing in this theory, we can again mention Anthony Parsons. He claims that in his discussions with the Shah, he repeatedly emphasized the point that the intense and sudden expression of the nation's feelings was the natural result of 15 years of pressure that the nation had born because of his insistence on modernizing the country. In Parson's opinion, the reason for the popular uprising was that modernization had trampled on the rights

1- The Confessions of Shah, p.12.

and privileges of the traditional classes of the society; it also had exacerbated the uneven distribution of wealth which had put the poor classes of the society at great disadvantage. It was then to be expected that the waves of popular feelings transformed into opposition and rioting¹⁾)

Very few doubt the baselessness of this theory, or the emptiness of the Shah's modernization program's content. A quick glance at the facts and consequences of the Shah's policy in the last 10 years of his reign gives strong evidence for rejecting this theory.

Despite the quadrupling of oil income which had reached USD20 billion a year, this extra income, without being fed to country's treasury, was handed to monetary and financial systems monopolized by western countries in the form of renewable, and practically permanent, long term bank savings, big loans to western or West allied countries, purchasing shares of floundering European and American companies and factories, and more importantly, madly -- and, of course, highly profitable for the sellers -- purchasing of weapons and nuclear reactors.

These great favors bestowed to foreigners and neighbors were all done in a country where most of its villages lacked hospitals, doctors, schools, teachers, communication networks, electric power, and roads. The remainder of the oil income was used, without any proper national planning, in an economic system marked by extravagance. A major part of the money was given in the form of recommended bank credits and long term loans to companies belonging to the Pahlavi Foundation and the royal family or the people affiliated to them. The funds were used for establishing assembly industries totally dependent on foreign countries.

1- Ref to: Pride and Fall p. 15.

4. The fourth theory, which has numerous believers among revolutionary people and the religious front and also many unbiased analysts, is that the element for the revolution's acceleration must not be sought for neither in Carter's human rights policy, nor in the Shah's illness or in the so-called modernization, but in the people's religious feelings having become injured. As already discussed, Carter's human rights policy was never executed in Iran. To the contrary, any time the Shah increased brutality and the murdering of people, it was followed by explicit support by the Carter administration.

In the tragic event of Shahrivar 17 (September 28, 1978), in which thousands of people were murdered in cold blood, the message sent from Camp David contained Carter's promise of unconditional support for the Shah's regime. More interestingly, some people in the Carter administration, like Zbigniew Brzezinski, were upset because the Shah did not exhibit enough force. The documents also clearly show that Carter did not pressure Iran for observing human rights in the country. Carter was even in favor of martial law and putting more pressure on people.

The best evidence for this claim is the memoir of Sullivan, who in this respect writes that when he had requested Washington about his duty with regard to declaration of martial law in Tehran, he received, within 48 hours, a rapid and clear answer stating that the United States would support an action by the Shah for enforcing his authority and stabilizing the situation in Iran. According to Sullivan, the message from Washington left him no doubt that the United States would support any initiative directed towards ending the crucial situation in Iran and suffocating the opposition¹⁾

1- Ret to: Mission in Tehran, p.121.

And it" there were a few who had put their hope in the human rights policy and using the space created by this political open air, they were those who neither had any role in the movement of the masses, nor approved of any revolutionary action to uproot the old system. Their actions had no effect on accelerating the revolution's process, while their insisting on conservative and reformist means attempted to slow the revolution's progress. This was, of course, nullified by the leader of the revolution's vigilance.

With respect to the effect of the Shah's illness and his medication on his ability to administer the country, as already pointed out, the Shah was a weak person. Overwhelmed by his father's mentality, he had not been able to build a strong personal character. Actually, it was not his ability administering the country, but that of the support of foreign powers, with the United States on the lead position, that gave him courage to execute their dictated policies.

We have already discussed about the baselessness of the third theory and the necessary documents and statistics in this regard have already been presented. Therefore, it can be said that considering the arguments and on the basis of historical documents, none of the above mentioned theories can be accepted as the primary accelerating element for the Islamic Revolution.

The fourth theory is that following the martyrdom of Imam's son, Haj Agha Mostafa and the ceremony carried on in this regard, and also the publication of the insulting article in Ettela'at newspaper on Dey 17, 1356 (January 8, 1978), the first sparks of the revolution rose came. People's religious feelings had been greatly hurt and the volcano of the masses' anger roared. Resorting to the traditions and religious ceremonies, like carrying the 40th day of the martyr's mourning, intensified this anger and turned it into a series of continuing confrontations that consequently uprooted the

monarchial system and marked the victory of the Islamic Revolution.

Since the publishing of the insulting article, which is said to have been clone on the direct order of Hoveyda (the former prime minister and the minister of the royal court at that time), the question has always been raised whether that act was another of the numerous mistakes of the regime, or was it a preplanned initiative and the beginning of a new phase for suffocating the nation and enlivening the era of complete suppression, as the regime felt endangered by the open political atmosphere. The Shah wanted to show the United States and the western world that the opposition had only a religious aspect and all of his enemies in the country were but a group of fanatic and closed minded clergy. Hence, giving them freedom would create anarchy and lawlessness, thus endangering the stability and security of the region, oil resources and international investment. Burning down of Abadan's Rex Cinema is thought to have been done towards this end. However, the Shah thought he had the means to stop the rioting, and did not know he was engaging in such a dangerous game that the vastness of its dimensions would cause the collapse of his throne and end the monarchial system.

The demonstrations in Qom on Dey 19, 1356 (January 10, 1978) turned into a bloody spectacle and many were martyred. On the ceremony held on the 40th day of their martyrdom on Bahman 29 (February 20), the people in Tabriz rose up and created such an extensive uproar the city got out of the regime's control. People manifested their anger towards the government by setting fire to movie houses, liquor stores, and the Rastakhiz Party's headquarters. Finally, the army moved in and a bloodbath ensued. By the end of the day, tens of people had been martyred. On the 40th day of mourning for Tabriz's martyrs, in another corner of Iran, the people of Yazd revolted. The Tabriz incident was repeated in Yazd on

Farvardin 9 and 10, 1357 (March 29 and 30, 1978). These chain events continued across the country with great intensity all through the year 1357 (1978), and many bloody, as well as, glorious days -- like Eid-e-Fetr, the Black Friday, and demonstrations of Tasua and Ashura — were created which eventually brought about the victory of the Islamic Revolution.

The evidence in all of these popular and mass movements prove that the essential accelerating factor in the revolution had a purely religious aspect and was related to the article insulting Imam, are as follows:

1. From January 10, 1978 till the victory of the revolution, all of the demonstrations had a religious aspect and were performed using religious traditions, ceremonies and festivities (like Ashura, the 40th day mourning ceremony, and religious festivals), and had no other distinguishing traits.
2. The starting and ending points of the demonstrations were at the mosques and the regime showed its enmity to religion by attacking the Great Mosque of Kerman, Habib Mosque in Shiraz, and Lorzadeh Mosque in Tehran, trying to stop these gatherings.
3. Invitation for the gatherings for street marches and the leadership of the demonstrations were accomplished by the clergy. Non-religious leaders never had any role in administering and leading the demonstrations. Even when the National Front, trying to test its power, declared a strike and street march on the 40th day of mourning for the martyrs of Black Friday, it was unsuccessful.
4. These initiatives had no relationship with the more open political atmosphere or Carter's human rights policy, but they were brutally and ruthlessly answered. Even the American supporters of human rights encouraged and supported the Shah in these acts of

brutality.

5. People's slogans and requests were religious and political, and were based on two axes: Firstly, the Shah's leaving and the fall of the Pahlavi regime, and secondly, establishing an Islamic state.
6. Non-religious groups had no choice but to join the Muslim masses and thus were forced to abandon their own slogans so as not to face popular objection.

It can thus be said that the victory of the Islamic Revolution was based on the leadership of the clergy, which started in 1342 (1963). In addition, it was the decisive leadership of the great religious authority of the Shi'a, Imam Khomeini, having the unconditional support of all Iranian Muslims which led the revolution to victory. The greatest role in the victory of the revolution in Iran was played by religion and the school of martyrdom. Any attempt to relate it to issues such as Carter's human rights policy, the coalition of various forces, nationalistic movements, and so on, is a distortion of reality and disagrees with documented historical facts.

Religion,
the Most Important Element
in the Victory of
the Islamic Revolution

Abbas Ali Amid Zanjani

Introduction

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Introduction

The victory of the Islamic Revolution of Iran was an important and amazing phenomenon for the world of the 20th century. In relation to regional and world politics, it played a major role and create unexpected changes. This political process presented Islam again as a determining power in the world and manifested the unity of the Islamic world to the eyes of all the Muslims and created a wave of fear and anxiety in the hearts of imperialists. A quick study of the Islamic Revolution's nature, its global reflection and the achievements it brought to Muslim nations, especially to the Iranian Muslim nation, highlights our conclusion that the Islamic Revolution was Iran's and the world's greatest event of the century. It was also one of the most important phenomena in the history of Islam — a divine miracle, which can be seen as a manifestation of the unending power of Allah against the secular powers, conditions prevailing over world affairs and the apparently unchangeable political and social situation.

The Birth of the Movement and the Victory of the Islamic Revolution

In the darkest days of political suffocation in Reza Khan's reign, Imam Khomeini had explicitly presented the issue of the Islamic state in his famous book *Kashf-ul-Asrar* (the Discovery of the Secrets) and called the task of establishing an Islamic state a divine duty based on the Quran's order and the everlasting command of Islam. The leader of the Islamic Revolution held this idea all throughout the religious leadership of the late Haj Sheikh Abdolkarim Haeri and the late Ayatollah Broojerdi, and looked forward to the opportunity to present it from the position of a religious leader, in order for it to be

better accepted by people and thus bring about the required changes in society.

Premier Ali Amini's government used American support to execute part of the United States' programs regarding social reforms and particularly the land reform program. With this deceitful act and a series of political games, he succeeded in keeping Iran away from the coming explosion for a couple of decades and made himself appear a patron of the people and a person having respect and love for the clergy.

On Rajab 13, 1381 (1962), he succeeded in entering Imam Khomeini's presence, but hearing what Imam said about the Pahlavi family's dictatorship and the American domination over the affairs of the country, he lost hope in deceiving the clergy.

With Assadulah Alam's taking over the government on Tir 27, 1341 (July 18, 1962), the Shah moved to the zenith of the power pyramid, and in continuation of his American "White Revolution", he implemented the land reform program, the bill for provincial and territorial councils and an overall suppression of the people.

Imam Khomeini, who for a long time had been looking for an opportunity to shatter the Shah's illegitimate power and the mock eminence of imperialist dominance, found that situation appropriate. Hence, he started a deep-rooted and magnificent movement.

This movement's first victory was cancellation of the bill for provincial and territorial councils. The second triumph was the regime's backtracking on the threat by the movement's leader with regard to an unveiled women's street march, and the third victory for the movement took shape with the regime's promise that the clergy would not be insulted in newspapers and other media.

On Farvardin 2, 1342 (March 23, 1963), Feyzieh Theological School became the scene of brutality and bloodshed during the

mourning ceremony for Imam Jafar Sadegh's (s.a.) martyrdom. With the statement issued by the movement's leader, the mourning ceremony for Imam Hossein in Moharram of 1373 (1963) turned into a demonstration and revolt against the crowned Yazid. With Imam's arrest, the uprising of Khordad 15, and the nationwide strikes, the movement entered a new phase.

The Capitulation Bill was a turning point in movement's history. At this time, the regime, in a hasty and unwise action, invaded Imam's house in Qom in 1963 and afterwards, exiled him to Turkey. Imam started his review and discussion on the theory of Islamic state from Bahman 1, 1348 (1970). Thus, the grounds for his widely accepted religious authority was being prepared.

After British forces left the Persian Gulf region and the United Arab Emirates was established in 1971, the United States selected Iran as the region's gendarme. The Shah began strengthening his base of power by extending friendly hands to the USSR and China.

The upsurge of the Islamic movement with the leadership of Imam Khomieni gathered significant forces into the political struggle. Armed political groups, such as the guerilla organizations Fedayean Khalq-e Iran (in 1971) and the Mojahedin-e Khalq started their activities.

The open political atmosphere policy (1977) was the Shah's first step in sacrificing Iran at the feet of America's new president. Jimmy Carter. With the first breeze of freedom, Imam Khomeini's Islamic movement gained new life and expanded the struggle more vigorously than before. The policy of limited political freedom added to the regime's problems.

The suspicious death of Imam's oldest son, Haj Agha Mostafa, created a wave of sorrow and anger among people. The catastrophic mass murder that took place in Qom during a popular demonstration

against the publication of an insulting article in Ettela'at newspaper signaled the start of mourning ceremonies in other cities around the country. The National Reconciliation cabinet failed, and the Shah's regime became entangled in a fatal whirlpool of events such as the tragic massacre of Black Friday. On the 40th day of Imam Hossein's martyrdom, the nation's uprising reached its peak with the Shah's escape. The return home of the revolution's leader made clear the victory was guaranteed.

Effective Factors in the Iranian Islamic Revolution's Victory

The victory of the Islamic Revolution is a great phenomenon in Iran's contemporary history and like all historical phenomena, was caused by a series of factors and elements, each having some effect on its manifestation.

Besides the sociological and historical roots of the revolution, what will be discussed here as the factors and reasons involved in the Islamic Revolution's victory, are those elements falling outside of the revolution's nature, which, as a series of obvious realities, impacted on its occurrence.

In order to understand the significance of these factors, it is first necessary to consider the Shah's despotic power and the scope of his dependence on foreign powers, especially the United States, plus the deprivation, political power he assumed through that relationship. Thus it must be established how, with such power and the guaranteed dominance of a regime, such socio-political changes can serially occur with such unconceivable acceleration that the political structure of the regime is destroyed, and control passes from the hands a powerful Shah who thinks of himself as supernatural and

having a divine mission.¹ Finally, the drama ends in the victory of the Islamic Revolution. Just a year before the victory of the Islamic Revolution, Carter, was a guest at a party given for him in Tehran, and said: Iran is an island of stability in world's roughest region. At this point, it is necessary to note the following three points:

- 1- What is clear in reviewing all the different theories and concepts about the reasons of the Islamic Revolution's victory is that most of the analyses, especially those given by western political interpreters, are based on a limited vision over a specific period of time, are abstract and fail to take into consideration the complex ideological grounds and the continuous historical origins of the event.
- 2- Every analyst, according to his own specific vision, thinking and background, has emphasized on one or more factors and introduced them as primary ones and other elements as being secondary and of less significance. The basis for these selections needs explaining that can not be found in most of these analyses.

The criteria for an element being primary or secondary can be its distance in time from the phenomenon; or the direct or indirect effect of the factor can be the criteria for its selection. We can also take the intensity of its effect as the base of our decision; or the importance of the factor and its nature. Other viewpoints which usually have a role in selecting a cause as primary or secondary, can be used in justifying the selection.

- 3- In all, it is a very difficult task to classify various viewpoints involved in the analysis and interpretation of the victory of Iran's Islamic Revolution. This difficulty is due to the close relationship that exists between political, social, cultural, economic and religious factors;

1- Ref to: Oriana Fallaci, *Interview with World's History Makers*, Trans, by Bidar Nariman, p12.

because in the creation of a political phenomenon, every economic or religious element will consequently be transformed to a political factor. All of the elements of a political phenomenon, despite their form or feature, will finally be counted as political ones. It is due to this problem that we avoid presenting any specific classification method in evaluating and studying various theories on the Islamic Revolution of Iran. The point that western political analysts have primarily considered the negative aspects and in discussing the Shah's fall while paying little attention to the positive factors of the Islamic Revolution is an important one.

If we see that in almost all of the theories of Iran's Islamic Revolution, the Shah's fall has been the essential axis, it is due to their dogmatic thinking.

Modernization Policy

Saving the prestige of the monarchial system needed a great deal of propaganda, for the popular concept regarding the regime was its backwardness and connection to the conditions of the Middle Ages. Thus, regional countries ruled by a monarchial system, where the king had extensive legal and political authority, needed to change public opinion and create a modernized image of the ruler.

Inside Iran, the Shah's regime tried to cover this major weak point by creating a clamors about the 2,500 year monarchial system. He exploited nationalism in linking Islamic Iran with the Iran of the Sasanid and Achaemenid dynasties, and by the efforts to misuse domestic and foreign researchers in the publication of books trying to revitalize monarchial culture.

"The Gates of the Great Civilization" was the last political and West favored gesture that the Shah used to justify his rulership for foreigners

and make it appear to be a modern system. However, Iran's modernization policy was focused on just two things: first, in the extensive and very costly propaganda that the Shah aired using local and international mass media; and second, through advertising and expanding prosaic western culture and importing their technology and the West's luxury goods, without any real program for making use of these sensitive advances.

The fact is that, the Shah's haste in executing this policy was tied to the continuation of his rulership. Authors like Michael Ledin and William Louis in their book titled *Carter and the Shah's Fall*, and William Foebis in his book the *Confessions of Shah* and the subtitle of *fall of the Peacock Throne*, and also statements by Anthony Parsons, the British ambassador in Iran, in the book *Pride and Fall*, and many of the Shah's partisan's who sympathized with him, all noted this undue speed as the major cause of his fall. According to them, the sudden rise of intense mass feelings was the natural result of the 15 years of pressure that he imposed on people in order to modernize the country. Because this policy impinged upon Iranian traditional culture and institutions, it ended in a situation in which the lower classes of the society were stuck in woeful conditions. Finally, these waves of emotion gave way to waves of destructive opposition to the regime and caused it to fall. According to the Shah's statements, his urgent program needed an emergency period; and it was in this same period that he became trapped in the crisis.¹ Not taking into consideration that this analysis arises from a western policy, it indicates the contradiction in the nature of this

• Ref to: Foebiss, W.; *The Confessions of Shah*; and also, Orianan Fallaci's *Interview with World's History Makers*.

public relations policy of the regime. The Shah on one hand glorified Iran's national traditions and on the other hand, pretended that they were useless for the trend of the country's modernization. They basically raised questions as to why and how the regime had not been able to prepare the nation for stepping on the road to modern development. Moreover, he did not honestly and clearly explain how and why the regime made mistakes.

But the important point in this unrealistic analysis is that the Shah and his professional analysts, who present this thesis in support of him, have ignored the fact that according to the law of cause and effect, phenomenon as magnificent as the fall of a regime enjoying the support of both the West and the East, and the victory of a rooted revolution having historical and ideological grounds, can originate from such a superficial element.

In reviewing this analysis, besides these ambiguities, we will come to many questions that remain unanswered by those presenting this analysis. Of the mentioned inquiries, we point to just a few: 1. In this analysis, in order to cover regime's weakness and emptiness, all problems have been imputed to the weaknesses of the nation, claiming that Iran's traditional society could not digest the execution of all these modern projects and was unable to cope with them. This insufficiency created its own complex problems, and thus society was forced to rise up.

How is that the Iranian nation which later made such tremendous fundamental change in its political, economic, cultural, military, and social structure, was not able to accept or digest the modern projects and the modernizing programs? What were the weaknesses of this I nation, that had been admired by the Shah as a nation carrying the flag of 2,500 years of imperial civilization, that stopped it from adopting a better life? Why had it reached to such a level of mental

inefficiency that it had even become more backward than Jordan and Morocco, whose kings were stepping on the heels of the Shah and executing similar programs for modernizing their countries?

2. Why was all that oil income, that had reached USD20 billion per year, was used as bank savings and practically permanent credit and big loans to western and West-allied countries. Why was it used for purchasing the shares of failing American and European companies and factories and for the unreckoned purchase of weapons and unnecessary machinery.

The world well knew that all this generosity was undertaken by a regime whose oppressed people in large areas of the country were deprived of the most elementary education, healthcare, and even communication networks. All that generosity was at the expense of the peoples of a country, in whose capital city, one could find horrific slums. Here, there existed no defined economic program except the system of unreckoned spending, collusion, and under-the-table dealing.

3. What kind of modernization was it in which even the existing weak industrial and agricultural system was driven to destruction, and billions of dollars of oil income went to purchasing of wheat from the Americans, rice from Thailand, potatoes from India, onions from Pakistan, oranges from South Africa, chicken from the Netherlands, eggs from Israel, cheese from Denmark, sheep from Turkey, frozen meat from Australia and bananas, consumer products and low quality industrial goods and out-dated weapons from western countries?

The result of that modernization was that inflation, with an annual growth rate of over 25%, swallowed all the income of the wage earners, and over 85% of employees were in debt to banks or big capitalists. Despite all these questions and ambiguities, the author of the book,

Rise and Fall of the Shah, insisted on proving as logical that the Shah had himself realized his rush in modernizing Iranian society would endanger his position. As a result, he decreased his absolute power and adopted a centralized power consistent with monarchial needs and a series of reforms in proportion with the needs of people were started. However, this action was taken too late.

The illogical thinking of analysts such as Fred Halliday in the article titled "Iranian Revolution: An Uneven Development and Religious Populism", goes far beyond the Shah's lost golden ideals in modernizing Iran and into the theory of the Shah being the victim of Iranian modernization. He compares the Islamic Revolution's ideals with the Shah's wishes and claims with such boldness that makes his honesty questionable, that "the next aspect of the Iranian revolution, after its being religious, is that the Iranian revolution rejects the idea of development and progress."

Emergence of the New Power

Some believe that the oil price increase in the 1970s, along with the political stability of the region and the Shah's military power, transformed Iran into a new power in the region that became a factor in international politics.

Paul Erdman in his political novel titled *The Fall of 79*, has tried to picture Shah's power in Iran as a gigantic monster, dreaming of creating World War III and coming out of it victoriously.

Oriana Fallaci in her book, *Interview with the World's History Makers*, with little hesitation says that the Shah was an ambitious and dangerous man because the old and the new features mingled in him and this was not just against his people's interests, but against Europe's, as well. Was it not true that Mohammad Reza Shah had the world's most durable oil wells? Was it not that his army lagged only an atomic bomb? Could he

not occupy, for example, Saudi Arabia or Kuwait and establish his forces all over the Persian Gulf? Wouldn't he become a night mere for America and the USSR, and neutralize both superpowers?

Fred Halliday in his book, *Iran, Dictatorship and Change*, writes that the economic development of the years after 1963 put new weapons in the Shah's hand and changed him to an awful power.

Due to this analysis that the West's fear of a new power in the region and international politics became the essential element in the Shah's fall, then Mohammad Reza Shah was, in fact, the second victim, after his father, who himself provided the means of his being overthrown.

Saighal in his book, *The Emergence and Fall of the Shah*, writes: The Shah's major goals were reinforcement of imperial power as the axis of politics and creating a powerful, developed and independent Iran able to become a world capitalistic power. In order to reach these goals, he followed a path of social and economic development in the direction of capitalism. It seems that a part of this concept is due to the Shah's claims and political maneuvers in his interviews which were related not from a strong position, but from a weak position and in order to cover his weak points.

Under pressure from Imam Khomeini's movement, the Shah took refuge in religion and said that he had been chosen by God to execute a divine mission; however, his power derived from a gun. In his interview with Fallaci he cast his power into the world's teeth by saying that "When three-fourth of a nation's population is illiterate, the only way to execute reform programs is having and enforcing an absolute power and being very powerful, otherwise, you will get nowhere..."

"We are very strong in military power, though we have no atomic bomb; however, I strongly feel that we can resist enough for World War III to begin".

"In fact, it is us who control the world's energy resources. For reaching the rest of the world, oil does not pass through the Mediterranean, but has to go through the Persian Gulf and Indian Ocean."

"I say that Iran is a universal key; or at least, one of the keys"¹ Robert Graham in his book, *Iran: The Illusion of Power*, writes that the Shah committed the mistake of counting too much on Iran's financial resources and ignored the country's ability to put to good use the excess income.

"He disturbed the Saudis' and other neighboring countries' peace of mind by developing one of the world's most complicated arms stock, and by interfering in the neighboring countries and the region's affair. He caused the Kremlin's anger and by ordering almost all of these extensive military purchases from the United States, and thus bringing about disequilibrium in non-military trade, raised the European nations' dissatisfaction. His despotic image on television provoked the American public's feelings against him, and Jewish society became deeply worried about Iran's military power."

There can be no doubt in the fact that the Shah, like his father, became afflicted with the illusion of power. However, this void illusion was not to such an extent to cause fear for the United States and western countries. The appearance and fall of Reza Khan showed that puppets can be put aside with the same ease and speed they are brought to power. History, again proved this fact with regard to Mohammad Reza Khan.

Fred Halliday pictures the Shah's pretension of greatness as having developed the opinion that he could rule over the country without loyal

1- Ret" to: Oriana Fallaci. *Intel-view with the World's History Makers*.

Supporters.¹

Such analyses as the Shah's illusion of greatness and power, can, to some extent, explain the West's cautious attitude toward their ally's fall, and answer the question: Why being an ally of the West, did he deserve such disgraceful fall?

Iran's Disorganized Economy

Western political analysts explain the role played by Iran's chaotic economic situation in the Shah's fall in the following two ways: 1- The rise of popular expectation's following a period of economic progress and in the recession that it created after that progress. This frightens people and helps engender a revolutionary attitude.

James Davies, in *Towards Revolution's Theory*, shows this process by a special curve, called the J-Curve, and says, "... Before reaching the top of the curve, more change means an increase in the possibility of confusion and instability". Referring to the J-curve, he concludes that revolutions most probably happen when following a long period of obvious socio-economic progress, there comes a short period of stagnation. It is at this time that people become worried and frightened and turn to rioting and protest.

Laurence Martin presents a similar analysis in his article, "The Role of Iran's Future Strategy", and claims that the factor causing the Shah's fall was the fact that economic progress may, at least in a certain phase, cause more chaos than stability. As mentioned before, Samuel Huntington also believes that economic progress sometimes leads to instability.

In justifying this theory, it is said that the sudden and high rise in oil

Fred Halliday. *Iranian Revolution: An Uneven Development and. Religious Populism*, Op cil.

prices placed a new and great financial resource at the disposal of Iran's economic development in the decade between 1960 to 1970. It was in this condition that Iran claimed to have the highest rate of economic growth in the world.

In 1975, oil production fell by twenty percent, and as a result, by 1976, the state owed over 3 billion dollars to contractors. The 1976-77 budget showed a 2.4 billion dollar deficit with significant resort to international loans.

Robert Graham, in mentioning this point, deduces that the Shah made the mistake of counting too much on Iran's financial resources and believed that slack economic growth was due to forces outside the country; and in this final conclusion, he relates that "income decreased and oil sales could not answer the new expectations."¹)

The very important point that has been ignored in this analysis and which all of the analysts who have talked about Iran's economic development in the light of the oil price increase have failed to mention, is where and how and to what extent did this supposed economic progress take place?

The theoretical aspect of the idea that, "a sudden and rapid economic growth rate increase will give rise to instability and discordance among the classes of the society" may be an acceptable statement. However, its application to the Islamic Revolution of Iran is applicable on condition that this type of political interpretation have, in the first place, enough evidence for proving the occurrence of such rapid economic development in Iran during a brutal monarchial era. For them, the increase in oil income has been mistaken for economic growth and their conclusion is not based on a logical deduction. 2. The second element presented by the followers of the economic

1- Robert Graham, *Iran: The Illusion of Power*, *Op cit* p. 28.

theory was the lack of a distinct economic program and enforcement of the ruinous policy of imperial extravagance in spending the country's wealth on nonsense issues, such as the ceremonies for the 2,500th year of monarchy, and unjust and unequal distribution of national wealth. In short, the corruption, aggression, extravagance, economic injustice, poverty and deprivation of a great majority of the Iranian people.

Though western analysts have paid less attention to this factor, there are a few among them who have shown an interest in this issue and mentioned it in their analyses.¹

According to this theory, due to the policy of extravagance, the increase in oil income was transformed into inflation and a deeper gap was created between rural and urban life. Uncontrolled immigration and the sluggishness in agriculture and farming in villages, intensive unemployment in the cities and inequality of incomes in urban areas and the resulting increased gap between classes of the society was the final result of that income growth.

According to one study, until the middle of the 1970s, only two percent of the urban population used about 40% of total expenditures; poor city dwellers suffered from a shortage of housing and had to spend over 70% of their income on rent. The population in some cities doubled in a decade, and the extensive corruption of the imperial family added to the intensity of the economic problems. In addition, a large part of government services and institutions expanded without any need or necessary planning just to provide pseudo jobs.

This analysis is worthy of note for it explains one dimension of the economic corruption of the Shah's regime which could easily be verified

1- Ref to: *Reviewing World Periodical* monthly magazine, The Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance, Morelad 1365, pp48-49.

by a simple comparison of the apparent life-styles of the rich and the poor of that time. However, the problem with this analysis is that, it introduces corruption and economic weakness as the reason for the Shah's downfall, and consequently, as the basic element in the victory of the Islamic Revolution.

One of the major reasons for the invalidity of this line of thinking is that, though the economic conditions improved after the victory of the revolution with regard to inequality and economic injustice, trade embargoes and pressure imposed by foreign powers and the imposed war with Iraq, the problems that arise with any revolution, presented new difficulties. This may have even created dissatisfaction even among the supporters of the revolution; but it has never stopped people from participation in political affairs and offering their unlimited backing for the revolution. Their active participation in the war fronts and bearing the heavy load of the aid sent for the war fronts are proof of this.

Needless to say that a third analysis about the role of economy in the events taking place in 1978-9 was presented by Marxist analysts, which was based on a predetermined international norm used for all of the world's changes and revolutions, and we don't think it necessary to be mentioned and reviewed here.

The Imposed Human Rights Policy

President Carter presented the human rights issue as a master key for solving America's local and international problems. He did more than resort to media propaganda and forced the despotic rulers affiliated to the United States, including Iran's regime, to provide an open political air.

The Shah himself believed in the concentration of power and dictatorship and hated western liberalism and democracy. He didn't

hesitate mentioning this conviction openly to foreign interviewers and reporters.

In his interview with Fallaci, the Shah boldly said, "I don't want that democracy. Don't you understand? I don't know what to do with that kind of democracy. Let all of it be yours! You will see, in just a few years, where that democracy would lead you to!"¹ The Shah considered the human rights policy and giving relative freedom as an imposition, and saw it in contradiction with his despotic policy.

According to some of western analysts and even a few Iranian interpreters, America's liberalization policy in Iran resulted in disruption of the normal course of the Shah's dictatorial system and the socio-political structure of the regime. When the regime lost the necessary tools for controlling the crisis, and political pressure through oppression, torture, imprisonment and deprivation of social and political rights decreased, the Shah's opposition was encouraged to intensify their struggle against him, and that eventually ended his reign.

Iran's religious liberalists welcomed this theory and referred to it in their analyses and wrote:

The brave and innovative step taken at the beginning of the year 1356 (March 1977) in support of political opposition and political prisoners was the establishment of the Iranian Association of Defending Freedom and Human Rights. This organization gained unprecedented relative immunity and limited practical facilities, by making good use of the new American government's human rights policy which was executed for their own interests and in competition with the Soviets, thus pressuring the Shah to mitigate his oppression and brutality and observe the

1- Interview in *The World's History Makers*, O. Fallaci, translated by Nariman. Bidar: P16.

Iranian nation's freedom and rights... Kissinger, in his later writings, referred to the execution of human rights in Iran as one of Carter's acts of treason against the United States and a decisive factor in losing the Shah and the victory of Iran's Islamic Revolution.¹

Sullivan implicitly accuses Carter in his memoir of having committed treason. According to him, Carter imposed his human rights policy on the Shah, ignored its consequences and chose to be indifferent towards it.²

However, examining Pentagon documents that were released indicates that human rights and the policy of openness in Iran was basically propaganda and Iran was an exception to this policy.

When the representative of State Department in the US Senate's Foreign Affairs Subcommittee was asked whether the Carter administration had created any relationship between selling arms and human rights in Iran, it was informed that the Carter administration had absolutely no intention of changing its past policies and with regards to these two issues, Iran was an exception.³

Thus, talking of Carter's human rights policy as a factor in the Shah's fall, or creation of a phenomenon as great as the Islamic Revolution of Iran, no matter how trivial and a second rate factor it might be considered, it would be an analysis that neither conforms with the facts and realities of the Islamic Revolution's process, nor presents evidence in proof of the claim.

The Carter administration had exempted Iran from enforcing this policy. Besides, we have the confession of Parsons, who while rejecting

1- Ref to: Revolution of Iran in Two Movements, by Mehdi Bazargan, Liberalization Movement, p25.

2- Ref to: Mission in Iran, W. Sullivan. P14-

3- Ref: An Analysis of Islamic Revolution.

the theory of political pressure by the Carter administration, explicitly states that the first rays of freedom had shown up in winter of 1976, two or three months before Carter's coming to office.

At the end of this discussion, we must also note that the idea of an open political atmosphere for which so many miracles has been claimed, was nothing but short-lived propaganda, and the Shah enjoyed the support of the White House at the peak of the brutality, torture, imprisonment and mass killings going on in Iran, up to the last days of his holding power.

Other Elements Accelerating the Revolution

Besides the four theories evaluated so far, many other hypotheses have been presented. Among these, we mention a few:

- 1- American policy toward Iran was confused, and lacked coordination.
- 2- The direct and very important role of international mass media, especially the BBC, with regard to what was going on in Iran.
- 3- The martyrdom of Imam's son and the commemoration ceremony held which led to a chain of demonstrations and incidents.
- 4- Publication of the insulting article by Ettela'at newspaper on Dey 17, 1337 (January 1977), which ignited people's religious sentiments.
- 5- The existence of oppression, suppression, torture, dungeons, and finally the ruthless killing of people which made the nation lose their patience with the regime.
- 6- Demonstrations by millions of people on different occasions which caused the regime to lose its courage to stand against the nation's will.
- 7- The policy of cutting expenses during Amoozegar's cabinet.
- 8- Coalition of different social groups, parties and political institutions around one common goal and strategy.
- 9- The Shah's losing the loyalty of his armed forces and thus not having

enough power to totally suppress the movement.

- 10-The Shah's cancer which had been diagnosed in 1353 (1974) by two French specialists which the Shah kept secret.
- 11- The Shah's deep belief in fate and his not using his full repressive power. This gave the opposition more courage to stand up to him.
- 12- The Shah being the victim of his own contradictory acts and policies.
- 13- The Shah's major goal was to strengthen the power of monarchy as the main axis of state policies, and therefore, he was caught in the web he had himself spun.
- 14- The extensive corruption that had spread throughout his court, the people surrounding him and the executive system of the country, plus his inability to control it, even among his closest coterie.
- 15- The Shah's awareness of being in the last days of his life and wanting to do all he could for the people and wishing to create a good image of himself.
- 16- The higher rate of literacy and education in the society which according to the theory that, "The more people learn, the faster the governments are toppled", created the dissatisfaction of individuals and groups and concentrated their attention on political issues and finally, the revolt against the regime.
- 17- The Shah's light treatment of his opponents; for example, sentencing Mosaddegh to only three years imprisonment and exiling Imam Khomeini, thereby, giving room to his opponents to act against him.
- 18- The Shah's role as the gendarme of the Persian Gulf region and his influence in OPEC which excited the envy of the rulers in the Gulf area, especially the Saudi tyrant, to compromise with large international oil companies in order to control the oil price and leave the Shah to his own fate.
- 19- The political weakness of the Shah's regime which lacked legitimacy.

He had, like his father, taken power through a coup and had no other means to rule the country but through dictatorship and thus drowning is the unquestionable fate of any dictator. 20-The Shah's weakness of character, his not being fully informed of the situation in the country, along with his being isolated, made him unable to deal with the problems in 1978 and eventually caused the loss of his crown.

De-Islamization Policy; the Decisive Element in the Fall of the Regime

Our review of the above analyses, some of which were presented and investigated and others that were just presented without being fully explained, and considering what we outlined earlier about the process of the Islamic Revolution, shows that each of the mentioned causes and elements was effective at a specific point in the revolution. However, in talking of the decisive factors in overthrowing the Shah, or the victory of the Islamic Revolution, it is not enough to identify an element that has somehow been effective. We must be able to find, among all those various factors, the element or elements that played the major role and gave birth to other factors. If we find such a basic element, then we should present it with documented historical evidence.

The Islamic Revolution of Iran, due to its Islamic nature, had developed in itself the elements needed for its victory. To better understand this, we must study the revolution from the inside.

If we look for any cause or effective element outside of the Islamic Revolution's nature, its ideals and historic roots, the only thing that could be found having a decisive role all through the revolution's course, from its birth to its triumph, would be the Shah's de-Islamization policy. He saw the continuation of his ruler and strengthening of his monarchy, and gaining more foreign support in removing Islam from people's lives.

Islam is a toe to any kind of dependence by Islamic society and government on foreign powers. It rejects reliance on secular powers and forbids their economic, military, political and cultural dominance over society. And the Shah could not continue his rule without relying on the world oppressing powers. Moreover, Islam opposes despotic rulership and the Shah's regime had no way of enduring save by use of force, and centralized power.

His presumption that de-Islamization could free him of the great obstacle of religion in continuation of his reign and solve the problem of his local and international policies started a battle as early as 1340 (1961). Since the nation was an Islamic one and people honestly believed in the clergy and the spiritual leaders, the Shah, from that first step, faced the resistance of the clergy who were the tongue of Islam and voice of the people in presenting their goals and ideals.

In the early days of the Shah's pursuing this policy, the people and their lack of knowledge about the depth of political issues and the Shah's political incentives and tricks, did not have complete unity and harmony. Achieving this unity needed time and leadership. They also lacked the necessary tools for standing against the regime's military machine and would have been easily defeated and suffocated. As a result of these two reasons, the religious authority, with Imam Khomeini at its head, took charge of the leadership and began the struggle against the Shah's de-Islamization acts.

The first phase in the strategy of Iran's Islamic movement led by Imam Khomeini was to stop Shah from following this dangerous plot. When the movement's leadership lost all hopes of stopping the regime from succeeding in its de-Islamization policy, it began the *second phase* of the struggle, which was resistance and negative opposition. This was done in order to weaken the regime and mobilize people through informing them over the course of years. It included sporadic, small

scale armed struggle.

When the regime reached a point of vulnerability and the nation had become united, the *third phase* began, during which, the destruction of the regime and fall of the Shah took place. From this emerged a new political system within the Islamic Revolution which was suited to the ideals and goals specified in the revolution. And with this, the explosion of light, the darkness of the night ended and the dawn of Islamic Republic brightened the horizon of the Islamic Iran.

Doubtlessly, in the course of the 15 year Islamic movement, led by Imam khnomeini and supported by the clergy and the Muslim nation of Iran, there has been one or more factors having an open or secret effect in the progress of the movements. Some of these were effective in all phases, and some were effective in certain periods in creating other elements.

If, with this new conception, we present the aforementioned elements in the course of events and the process of the Islamic Revolution, we see that they all had some effect in the progress of the revolution, yet they are not all of the effective elements. Looking deeper, we could find various other factors and elements along with the mentioned ones that had, more and less, some effect in the process of the Islamic Revolution.

A Comparative Study of
Various Theories on
Causes of the Occurrence
of
the Islamic Revolution

By: Sadegh Zibakalam

A Comparative Study of Various Theories on Causes of the Occurrence of the Islamic Revolution

1. Conspiracy Theory
2. Modernization Theory
3. The Theory of Economy as the Cause of Revolution
4. Theory of Religion as the Cause of Revolution
5. The Roots of Revolution: Despotism and Dictatorship

A Comparative Study of Various Theories on Causes of the Occurrence of the Islamic Revolution

When in December 1977, The former Shah of Iran, at a graduation ceremony of army university officers, declared in a loud voice, "No one can overthrow me; I have the support of laborers, farmers and a vast section of common people and intellectuals, in addition to indisputable support of the 700,000 man army of Iran",¹ undoubtedly he meant what he said. He was certain of his regime's power and thought his monarchy untouchable. In this evaluation of the stability of Iran's regime, the Shah was not alone.

Just a month after that speech, U.S. president Jimmy Carter, while in Iran, referred to the country as an "island of stability" and congratulated the Shah for his enlightened role.⁽²⁾ Part of Carter's comments could be taken as diplomatic compliments. However, the fact is that he also believed in a major portion of what he said regarding the stability and power of the Shah's regime. The best evidence of this claim seen in the analyses of the US intelligence agencies of Iran's situation. In September of 1978, i.e., while Iran was on the break of a full scale revolution, the CIA made the following famous summation of Iran's situation: Not only is Iran not in a pre-revolutionary situation but also there doesn't seem to be the slightest sign of any onset of revolutionary conditions.*³)

The CIA was not the only intelligence organization that committed the same mistake in understanding and evaluating Iran's political

1-Rastakhiz Newspaper, Azar 14, 1356 (1977).

2-Rubin Barry. *Paved With Good Intentions: The American Experience and Iran*. U.S., New York, Oxford University Press, 1980, p.203.

3-Ibid, p.204.

condition. The Defense Intelligence Agency organization¹ which feeds information to the Pentagon and US military services, in their evaluation of the Iranian situation reported a month later, "It is expected that the Shah will stay actively in power for the next two years."²

Believing in the untouchable power and stability of Shah's regime had been rooted so deeply in the minds of American authorities that the US ambassador in Tehran, when finally facing the reality that the continuation of his rule had become impossible, titled his historical report to his higher authorities in Washington: "Thinking the Unthinkable".³

Understanding why Washington thought the regime so stable and powerful is not difficult. A series of bonds and strategic considerations between the Shah and America during his 37 years of rule, especially after the August 19, 1953 coup, had made Washington believe that Iran's regime was so powerful that no one could seriously consider "Iran after the Shah." One high ranking members of Jimmy Carter's government stated this belief as such:

This belief that Shah ruled in his country with total power, and j this idea that his opposition was negligible, had been so deeply rooted in the minds of Americans that just a year before the revolution, that is when the avalanche of revolution began rolling, talking about the internal opposition of the regime was of little interest to anybody in the US government/⁴)

1- Defense Intelligence Agency

2- Stempel, John. *Inside the Iranian Revolution*, Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1981, p.6.

3- Sullivan, William. *Mission in Iran*, chapter 5.

4- Sick, Gary. *All Fall Down: American's Tragic Encounter with Iran*. New York, Random House, 1985, p. 41

Yet, the impossible became possible; and that terrifying and powerful regime was overthrown by empty hands, in the literal meaning of the word.

Even more surprising was the speed of inversion. The most optimistic opponents of the regime did not think that everything would end so quickly. Terms such as "premature revolution", "caesarean revolution" and "leaping revolution" that were commonplace discussions during the first months after the victory of the revolution, express this dimension of the Islamic Revolution. This aspect relates to the rapidity and unexpectedness of the revolution.

This feature, as will be described later, created important results in the theory and theoretical approach towards Iran's revolution. But before proceeding further, it is necessary to introduce the other uniquely important feature of the event, and then start analyzing the results of these two factors.

If we consider the total surprise of the Islamic Revolution's occurrence as one of the most important features, another salient point is the religious nature or the blending of this revolution with religion.

None of the modern revolutions have been religious. (The French Revolution, the October Revolution and the revolutions of China and Cuba have been basically anti-religious). During the last century, few uprisings and popular movements can be found that blended revolution with religion.

However, in the Algerian Revolution, as well as in the Constitutional Revolution of Iran or the oil nationalization movement, Muslims had an active presence and these movement's key personalities have basically been clergymen or pan-Islamists. Yet, none of these movements were for the religion and conducted in the name of Islam. In Iran though, the longing and desire for religion is the outstanding symbol of the revolution.

In the last quarter of the 20th century, a century dominated by secularism, a great social and political movement coming into being under the banner of religion was a source of great astonishment. What added to this bewilderment was the fact that Islam had revived in a society ruled by non-religious governments for over half a century. The question raised for every social and political researcher was how and from where did all of this religious passion, tendency and wide-ranging support toward Islam come into existence in Iranian society? Iran's revolution thus raised two basic questions: How the regime of the Shah collapsed as such in a matter of a few months? And then, why was this movement so attached to religion? Approaches to answering these two questions overwhelms many of the writings published so far on the Islamic Revolution of Iran. Finding an answer to these two queries in many of the works published about the phenomenon has been a hard task.

A general review of these efforts, clarifies the struggle of the writers to find an answer to these two points. Much of what has been published takes more of a theoretical approach toward the revolution than a descriptive one. We find few works in which the authors have tried to explain and describe the formation of the Islamic Revolution. Instead, analyzing and theorizing is the rule.

Why did this revolution occur and become so mixed with religion? Had the collapse of the Shah's regime been something expected for a long time and if the movement had been led by ordinary political forces (as in other struggles throughout Iran's history), then the Iranian revolution would have also been an ordinary revolution or political movement. It would have become a fight against a regime that had no political legitimacy and naturally, would not have had its special character.

Authors who were taken up the subject were not faced with clear

"hows and whys". All that would remain would be to describe its historiography. But with the Islamic Revolution of Iran, it was just the opposite of this. Those writing about it found themselves immediately laced with these two questions. Hence, we will attempt to give a general categorization for the answers to these two questions. These can be summarized in four main classes as follows:

1. Conspiracy Theory

This first group consists of a large number of supporters of the former regime or the so called "monarchists". The foundation of their thinking is based on the theory of a conspiracy. They do not recognize the Islamic Revolution as a genuine movement originated from popular will. Instead, they refer to it as a pre-planned foreign inspired plot. There is a unanimity among the proponents of the conspiracy theory regarding the foreigners who authored the design. They recognize the western powers, particularly America and England, as the cause for the fall of the Shah. Yet, there is no single opinion about the motives of these powers.

The former Shah and some of the monarchists believe that the western powers decided to overthrow him because of his insistence on increasing the price of oil in the first half of the 1970s. The Shah repeatedly expressed this idea during the unfolding of the revolution. For example, in a long interview with a prominent French journalist in June 1977, he stated that the demonstrations against his regime were the result of a conspiracy of the western powers, in retaliation for his policies in raising the price of oil/¹) Aside from oil, these theorists raise the idea of "the West's jealousy towards Iran's progress".

According to this view, the profound multilateral economic

1-Kayhan Newspaper, June 21. 1977.

developments that Iran had witnessed by 1971 and the potential of its agricultural, mineral and industrial products for reaching international markets, posed a threat to the interests of the western powers. Hence, to forestall Iran's progress and further success, they created circumstances that halted Iran's development. The Shah was convinced that western jealousy was a crucial reason for their opposition to his regime. He believed that, "Westerners cannot accept how Iran, in a period of 15 years, has advanced more than any other country in the world's history".

During the revolutionary period, he repeatedly questioned the American ambassador in Tehran, with vexation and surprise as to, "what has he done to the Americans that the CIA has thus set out against him?"¹ "Anthony Parsons," the British ambassador, was in the same situation during the revolution, with the difference that, because of radio BBC news and comments, the Shah viewed London with even more suspicion and hatred. He openly accused the British of having connections with his opponents. This accusation was repeated so often that at last Parsons, who had become tired of these comments, lost control and once said to him, "Any one who really believes that the British government secretly has anything to do with your opponents, belongs in a mental hospital."²

This conviction regarding the preparation for his regime's collapse is well illustrated by the title of a long and important post revolution interview with the famous magazine "Now": "How the Americans Overthrew Me."⁽³⁾ What we should keep in mind in reviewing the conspiracy theory vis-à-vis Iran's Islamic Revolution, is the fact that a tendency towards believing in the existence of conspiracy forms a

1- Sullivan, op cit, pp.110-111.

2- Parsons, Anthony, *Pride and Fall*, op cit, pp.158-159.

3- How the Americans Overthrew Me, *Now*, Dec., 1979, pp.21-34.

considerable part of Iran's psycho-political culture.

In conspiracy culture, the political, social and economic factors involved in making a political movement are not considered and analyzed. Instead, minds are stuck in general clichés, such as world powers, interests and farewell of superpowers, big power strategies, new world order, international equations, balance of power, and many such corresponding notions. Another element in conspiracy culture is believing in the presence of "visible and invisible foreign enemies" always planning to plot against and damage you. The factors creating conspiracy theories in our society is beyond the scope of this work.

Suffice it to say that censorship and the government ban on political activity being published, historic background of foreign powers political interference and influence in Iran, and finally, the lack of truly investigative spirit in political, social, historical and international research has assisted the formation of this culture in Iranian society. Therefore, instead of rationalizing and criticizing the opinions of the followers of the conspiracy theory regarding the emergence of the Islamic Revolution, we must engage ourselves in a more fundamental work, namely, battling with this social disease.

2. Modernization Theory

The second group of theories which appear regarding the "hows and whys" of the Islamic Revolution could be summed up under the heading of "Modernization Theory". This idea has been presented in a variety of ways. However, a common denominator can be posited for all of them. According to this theory, the essential reason for upheaval was the Shah's regime hurriedly and ill-planned modern reforms that attempted to quickly change and improve Iran's image. However, because of the traditional structure of Iran's society, many people were not ready for the transformation. As a result, cultural-social alienation

was created and people were faced with an identity crisis. With the increase of the gap between the populace and the Shah's regime, the identity crisis turned into a political-religious confrontation. From the heart of this storm the Islamic Revolution was born.

This theory was first tabled by certain western researchers. Later, it found proponents among Iranians too. The following analysis is a sample of the rationalization of this idea's supporters: "The roots of today's uprising originate from the headlong rush towards the 20th century which was designed by the Shah 15 years earlier. In 1963, the Shah began a number of reforms to lead Iran's feudalist society toward the new age. But modernization contradicted the traditional social and religious structure, and the traditionalists strongly opposed the process of modernization".¹

The most important criticism of this theory is that its supporters do not have any negative comments on the Shah's economic programs, nor do they have a word to say about his governmental policies. They rather criticize the Shah merely for his speed in implementing his so called "progressive programs".

"The Shah of Iran is now learning a bitter, but obvious, lesson. In his relentless endeavor to free his country from backwardness and the old system of feudalism, he couldn't take his nation along. Although his goals are eminent, they could not be reached easily without the extensive support of his people."²

Basically, considering the attitude that existed in the West toward the Shah, the appearance of this notion is not very surprising. Through many years, particularly after 1963 and the public relations media uproar of "The White Revolution", the Shah had appeared in the minds of

1- Dorman A. William and Omeed. Ehsan (Mansur Farhang), ©Reporting Iran the Shah's Way@, *Columbia Journalism Review*, January - Feb, 1979.

2- Ibid.

many westerners as a progressive leader who had made a series of modern social and economic reforms with extreme effort, and had changed the face of Iran. This basic unreality did not emerge solely because of the common interests between the Shah and the West. There have been many leaders in other Middle East countries, or other parts of the world, who have allied themselves with the West, but received nothing comparable to his acclaim. Apart from the Shah's speeches and interviews in the West regarding reforms and his efforts in that direction, this image came into existence through a mixture of politics, plans and in above all, the apparent image that Iran assumed in the last years of the reformist Shah's regime.

This opinion was not just limited to politicians and some analysts little informed about Iran. In the years coinciding with the revolution, well-known authors writing about Iran, such as James Bill, Marvin Zonis, Shaul Bakhash and even Nikkie Keddie had come to the conclusion that the Shah's westernized and modern policies like land reform, the right of divorce for women, female liberalization in general, and the literacy corps created dissatisfaction among the religious class, particularly the clergy, with the Shah's regime.

The logical conclusion derived from the modernization theory is that if the Shah had not taken such actions, then, no specific problem would have arisen. His problem purportedly begins when he embarked on these reforms in the beginning of the 1960s. Accordingly, until that time and the beginning of the modernization program, the regime did not have any problem. Whatever difficulties arose were linked to the start of the modernization process.

In reality, this was not true. Opposition to the former Shah's regime existed before that time, too. This contradiction arises from the fact that the modernization theory does not give much attention to the character, performance and political structure of the Shah's regime. Questions such

as, the regime's popular acceptance; the degree of people's political and social immunity; and, basically, the level of popular political participation are given little consideration. From this theory's point of view, the general structure of Iran's society can be summarized by comparing two separate sets of interests.

In one side are the Shah and his regime, trying hard to pull the country toward modernization. The other side consists of the traditionalists, for whom these reforms and advances are too premature, and consequently, they oppose and fight against them.

3. The Theory of Economy as the Cause of Revolution

It comes as no surprise that the idea of economic problems and ensuing chaos were the main factor for the emergence of the Islamic Revolution, has won numerous supporters. The followers of this theory can be divided into two more specific groups.

One party holds that the Shah's regime's economic problems started from the beginning of the 1970s and after the oil prices quadrupled in the world market. The second group, consisting mostly of radical Iranian movements does not forego any separation of before and after the oil price increase and maintain that the fall of the regime was the consequence of the combination of economic crisis and his dependence on world imperialism.

The basis of the first group's opinion is rooted in the quadrupling of the price of oil in 1973. In their opinion, the sudden increase in oil income urged the Shah to undertake a series of vast and speedy economic development programs. This resulted in economic growth which from the middle of 1970s, gradually manifested its negative consequences. Inflation, economic shortages, enormous profligacy executive organizations, shortage of merchandise, basic weaknesses in offering essential services, widening of the gap among social classes,

shortage of housing, prevalence of corruption and bribery, etc., forced the regime to put into effect an anti-inflation program (replacing Amir Abbas Hoveyda's cabinet with that of Jamshid Amoozegar's in August, 1977).

The new anti-inflation policies, in turn, brought about greater dissatisfaction. This halt in economic growth consequently turned into a political crisis, which brought political chaos afterwards. This state of affairs paved the way for the revolution. Bakhash and Nikkie Keddie, in addition to the cause of modernization, put their finger on the economy as well. Michael Fischer, Fred Halliday and Richard Cottam also presented an economic analysis on the "hows and why's" of the revolution. Cottam, the famous American Iran-expert, sums up the above theory as follows:

"Without doubt, the tranquility between 1963 - 1973, as opposed to the dissatisfaction and riots of 1977 - 1978, is due to the fact that in the first period, the income of the majority of Iranians increased. On the contrary, in the second period, except for the very rich, the rest of the society faced serious economic difficulties.¹

Bakhash, too, holds that even though the regime was not without economic problems before the increase in oil prices in 1973, those difficulties were not as such to be considered as a serious threat to the survival of the regime.

"... since there was a chance for most Iranian's to improve their living conditions, therefore, economic problems could not cause a serious threat to the regime. However, the explosion of the price of oil in the world market in 1973 resulted in profound economic and social complications in Iran."⁽²⁾

1- Cottam. Op cit.

2- Bakhash. Op cit, p. 11.

As noticed, from the point of view of this group of analysts, the roots of the Shah's regime's fall is hidden in the economy. More precisely, in the lack of success in economic expansion programs in the years coinciding with the revolution. Of course, this is not to say that up until then, the regime had no economic difficulties, though the depth of shortages and the amplitude of those complications were not of a magnitude to paralyze the regime and make its survival impossible. But in the middle of the 1970s, the dimensions of the country's economic weakness and chaos and the failure of many of the fifth five-year programs (1973-1978) was such that they disappointed a major section of the middle class, particularly the lower income people. The result was that many people arrayed themselves against the regime and ultimately revolted.

Radical Iranian groups, contrary to this group of analysts, do not recognize a certain time for the start of the regimes economic crisis. They basically consider the regime as the agent of imperialism or the comprador bourgeoisie, that, because of the dependency on world capitalism, was drowning in its own swamp of contractions. The Fedayean Khalq guerrilla organization analyzes the reasons of the regime's decline due to its dependent nature (to world capitalism), as follows:

"With the expansion of the general crisis of dependent capitalism in Iran which was deeply affected by the ups and downs of the general crisis of the imperialistic camp, a gap opened in the centralized and stable government of dependent monopolistic capitalism. With the intensity of the economic crisis and rent in the Shah's dictatorship, and the growth of contradiction among American imperialist groupings, the people's movement started to quickly develop. As it developed, it extended the general crisis of

Iran's dependent capitalism.¹

With the development of the economic crisis, living conditions, especially for laborers, worsened and people gradually arrayed themselves against Shah's regime. The guerillas see the first spark of revolution as the confrontation of the regime and the inhabitants of Tehran's squatter districts in the summer of 1977.²

Mujahedeen Khalq Organization, like the Fedayean see the growth of revolution in the worsening of living conditions of the deprived and the workers.³

But the Tudeh Party gives the most comprehensive analysis of "economy as a cause of revolution". The mentioned party, after giving an extensive review of the regime's class structure and its dependency on world imperialism and in particular American imperialism, describes the plundering of America in Iran and concludes:

The absolute majority of Iranians lived in an intolerable living condition. Laborers in the cities and towns were deprived of the most basic means of living, health and education. In this very painful inequality, in these very deep valleys between foreign and local looters, on one side, and the looted on the other side; between Iran's suffering people, on one side, and the criminal front of imperialism, with the leadership of America and the ruling class consisting of major dependent capitalists and feudalist landowners on the other side, the germs of Iran's eruptive movement also came into existence/⁴)

¹-*Kar Newspaper*, the special Journal of Fedayean Khalgh, 1st year, No. 47. Feb. 21, 1979, p.7...²-*Kar Newspaper*, the special Journal of Fadaiene Khalgh, 1st year. No. 47. Feb. 10.

³1979.1>-*Mojahed*, *The special periodical for Iran's Mojahedine Klialgh Organization*, 1st year,

No. 1, Aug. - Sept., 1979; No. 12, Oct. - Nov., 1979. ⁴-*Mardom*, *The special periodical for Toodeh Party*, 7th series. 1st year. No. 164.

Although the theory of economy as the cause of revolution is common among Marxist groups, considering the effects and influence of the leftists' opinions on political thinking in Iran, non-leftist Iranian writers have generally accepted this reasoning in pinpointing the reasons for the revolution.

Contrary to what was assumed in the theory of economy as the cause of revolution, peoples' actual condition had not worsened. And according to overwhelming evidence from the era of the revolution, the primary popular demand from the regime was political. During work stoppages, for example, the demands of strikers, from all sectors including the government, were all political. Review the contents of the announcements, speeches and the slogans of that period and it is clear that discontentment with the regime related to political problems, popular demands, and that of the leadership of the revolution, was political and not economic. The magazine "Tehran Economist", which was a reflector of the views of employers and the private sector before the revolution, describes the general process of salary hikes in 1976 as follows:

Salaries and wages are constantly increasing. These increases have become so abnormal that a father is ashamed of revealing his exact salary to his son. Because, despite his experience, the father makes less than his son who has just entered the job market. More important is the fact that the employees who lose their jobs because of frequent carelessness and other missteps immediately find a better job with better income ... people have high expectations.¹⁾

Fred Halliday in his famous work on Iran, published just at the verge of the revolution, in a chapter analyzing the condition of labor and wage

1- *Tehran Economist*, June, 1976.

earners, does not find any evidence supporting poor economic conditions, but on the contrary, asserts that these classes have gained considerable economic power..¹

Professor Ervand Abrahamian's reviews indicate with utmost clarity that in the last years of the Shah's regime's, workers' wages had definitely improved:

Between 1970-1977, the increase in salaries stayed ahead of the increase in prices, which was 90% ... The minimum daily wage which was set at 80 Rials in 1973, reached 210 Rials in 1977. The workers' average wage in 21 major industries increased by 30% during 1975-76, and another 48 percent during 1976-1977. The increase in living standards, particularly among skilled industrial workers, was more considerable in 1971. Industrial workers in Tehran received an average daily income of 220 Rials ... but the amount for workers in automobile plants went up to 1,000 Rials in 1977.⁽²⁾

Studies done concerning other social groups and classes, verify the correctness of Halliday's and Abrahamian's findings.

Robert Graham, in his review of the economic condition of the business class, concludes that this group was able to take good advantage of the economic prosperity resulting from the quadrupling of Iran's foreign exchange income, and had become richer than before.

In a 1976 study of the conditions of villagers that migrated to the cities, Dr. Farhad Kazemi, did not find economic distresses or desperation but did record that over 90% of them were satisfied (in comparison to their life in the village). The other important point in his

1- Halliday, Fred. *Iran: Dictatorship and Development*, Penguin Books. (U.K., 1978). pp. 173-210.

2- Abrahamian, Ervand. *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, p.85.

review is that, even if there has supposedly been dissatisfaction among this class, this dissatisfaction had not become a "concerned discontent" and "political opposition" to the Shah's regime, due to their low level of political knowledge and social awareness.¹

If other social groups are similarly diagnosed, they will give similar results. Keep in mind that by taking into account the prices in the 1970s, and a population less than half of today's, the regime made about USD20 billion a year only in foreign income. All we need is to take a look at the increasing number of families using washing machines, color TVs, refrigerators, freezers and private automobiles. An amazing increase in foreign travel, imports (whether consumable goods or capital goods), doubling of the number of students inside the country and abroad, employment of thousands of skilled foreign workers in Iran (from the Philippines, Afghanistan, India, Pakistan to Korea, Japan, Europe and America), and other criteria show this prosperity:

Electricity production had risen from 7,000 million kwh in 1970 to 19,000 million kwh in 1976. During the same period, the number of radio sets in the country had increased from three million to eight million, and the number of television sets from 200,000 to two million. School and college student enrollment had gone up from 3.6 million in 1970 to 7.1 million in 1976/²)

These increases did not mean that the regime had been able to make a fundamental economic transformation. The rise in living standards and people's relative economic improvement in the 1970s is directly related to the oil income. This income, especially in the last 10 years of the Shah's regime, grew at an incredible rate. From USD437 million or less

1- Kazemi, Farhad. *Poverty and Revolution in Iran: The Migrant Poor, Urban Marginality and Politics*, New York University Press, (U.S. 1980), p. 235.

2- Zibakalam, Sadegh. *An Introduction to the Islamic Revolution*, pp.100-102.

than half a billion dollars in 1963 it reached USD20 billion in 1978, equaling a fortified leap in 15 years. Whether or not all of this income was being spent correctly, is another argument. However, it had created income, jobs - though false - and a minimum of welfare.

4. Theory of Religion as the Cause of Revolution

The fourth and the last group of analyses explaining the cause of the Islamic Revolution, could be summarized under the theory of "religion as the cause of revolution". Waiving the theory of conspiracy, the two other analytical frameworks presented did not seriously consider religion and its role in the revolution. However, as we noticed in the theory of modernization, the role of religion in the revolution was recognized in an indirect manner, positing the religious class as the most important social group opposing the Shah's modernization programs.

Beyond that observation, the theory of modernization did not delve any further into religion. The theory of economy as the cause of revolution is even more indifferent toward religion. However, considering the fact that in this view, the economy and the productive economic forces are the foundation of political and social changes, assigning a negligible role to religion is quite possible.

Contrary to these two theories, in the viewpoint of religion as the cause of revolution, religion assumes an axial role and the ultimate cause of the revolution was the de-Islamizing policy which hurt Muslim sentiments, and instigated them to confront the regime. Accordingly, the reason for the dissatisfaction, opposition and finally, the revolt against the regime was because "the Shah stepped on Islam" and people demanded his fall for Islam and creating an Islamic government. Ayatollah A. Amid Zanjani and Dr. Manoochehr Mohammadi consider the de-Islamization policy as the essential and determining factor in the

fall of the Shah's regime.

The theory of religion as the cause of revolution has a basic common point with other theories. They all believe that the Islamic Revolution resulted from a certain alteration made at a specific time. One can think of it as the result of an attempt to rapidly modernize Iran, plus the result of the quadrupling of oil prices and the negative effect of it on Iran's economic structure. The third is the consequences of the intensifying class differences along with the negative effect of the crisis of the world capitalist system on Iran's critical economic situation, and the fourth, the result of de-Islamizing policies.

In the view of these theories, whatever has been the cause, it started from a certain time. For the supporters of the modernization theory, the starting point, is the execution of the White Revolution in 1962, and for the supporters of the theory of the economy as the cause of revolution, it is the first half of 1970s. The viewpoint of religion as the cause of revolution is not an exception to this general rule. The de-Islamizing policy, therefore, starts from a certain time which is the early 1960s, specifically 1963. The essential outlook derived from this observation is that, if that diplomacy or particular change had not taken place, no problems would have been created for the regime, and it would have continued on its course (although haltingly). Therefore the cause of the dissatisfaction that led to the revolution, must be looked for in that specific phenomenon.

The other common aspect of the theory of religion as the cause of revolution with other theories is in the presumption made regarding the reason of the revolution's occurrence. The modernization theory assumes that the Shah's regime was seriously intending to modernize Iranian society, meaning that a serious, lasting and organized policy was being undertaken. In the theory of economy as the cause of revolution,

the presumption was the worsening of people's economic condition. The theory of religion as the cause of revolution carries a similar idea which is the de-Islamizing policy by the government. The supporters of this theory have established the foundation of their thinking on the Shah's consciously, clearly and exactly carrying out a de-Islamizing policy from a certain period in time (and the Islamic Revolution was naturally the result of the reaction of people towards this specific policy).

The basic question here is whether or not such a policy has existed in reality. Just as we mentioned regarding the fundamental presumption of economy as the cause of revolution, had the people's economic condition really been impaired? Had, In reality, the people of Iran opposed the Shah because of his modernization of the country? Presenting such questions is not, of course, to deny the non-religious attitude of the Shah's regime. But the objection to the theory of religion as the cause of revolution and the same is relevant to the previous theories too, is that this theory looks at the Islamic Revolution as a phenomenon detached from the general process of contemporary political and social transformation. Hence, it considers a certain time for the beginning of the Islamic Revolution and does not place it in the context of the continuation of the contemporary political occurrences.

In fact, none of the theories that we analyzed takes the past of Iran into account because the regime's political background is not consistent with their analyses. The modernization theory sees the roots of popular dissatisfaction appearing against the Shah in his attempt to modernize Iran in the beginning of the 1960s. Thus political actions and reactions before that time are not useful for it. And the theory of de-Islamizing also holds that the occurrence of the revolution is the outcome of that policy, therefore, it does not look at the period before the enforcement of this policy.

From the viewpoint of the supporters of this theory, the reason for the revolution should be identified in this policy. In this theory, too, like in the previous ones, there are no answers to questions like, what had been going on in Iran in the past? What kind of political and social changes had been underway? What was the regime's condition? What was the popular opinion about it? How high was the rate of its acceptability? What was the rate of popular participation? How popular was the Shah? This line of questioning is absent. The reason for this is that the Islamic Revolution is considered a phenomenon detached from the contemporary history of Iran and not in continuation of it.

If we suppose that the stimulus for fighting against the Shah was popular dissatisfaction with that regime (regardless of the cause, the important question is when did this begin? Does it appear at certain period in time as in the previous theories, or had it always existed? Did discontent with the regime start from the beginning of modernization or the de-Islamization program or the intensification of the economic difficulties? Did it exist even before the execution of such policies? Even if we assume that, in reality, such policies were being exercised by the regime, the answer to the question is an important test for measuring the correctness of these theories.- If it is discovered that before the execution of these policies there had been widespread dissatisfaction toward the regime, then, logically, the "real" reasons for this tension must be investigated.

A quick glance at the history of the monarchy of Mohammad Reza Shah, particularly from the 1950s on (one decade before the enforcement of the modernization, or the de-Islamization policy) indicates serious grievances and opposition did indeed exist toward the regime. The uprising of July 21st, 1952 was a popular and definite sign of opposition to the Shah. One year later, during the coup of August

1953, the Shah had to flee the country and was able to return by relying on the armed forces and the plot of America and England, to restore his rule. Seven years after the coup, despite the fact that the regime had been severely suppressing the opposition, in 1960, as soon as slight political freedom was given, tens of thousands of the regime's opponents tried to take advantage of that small change and organize to fight against him.

In the tumult of June 6th, 1963, the regime was able to continue thorough nationwide military suppression. These changes were all happening in a period wherein there was neither a trace of modernization or moving against Islam, nor of an economic crisis. In other words, every time there had been a chance for the people to make known their discontent with the Shah's regime, they never hesitated in doing so.

And the opposition that we witnessed during 1977-78, was a link in the chain of previous opposition. What happened in 1977 was that again, after changes that led to a politically more open atmosphere in Iran, people took the opportunity to express real grievances against the regime. The key to understanding the reason for the Islamic Revolution's occurrence, in fact, necessitates comprehension of the basis for their discontent. The roots of this are to be found in the political nature of that regime.

5. The Roots of Revolution: Despotism and Dictatorship

Despite the differences observed in previous analyses, they all have a basic common point. None of the theories reviewed regarding the reasons of the Islamic Revolution's occurrence, analyzed this change within the framework of the process of the society's contemporary political and social changes. They tended not to place the fall of the

regime in a historic framework or exhibit any conviction in tracing the roots of the revolution in the heart of contemporary history.

What distinguishes these theories from one another, is the difference in their analysis of the nature and causes of the emergence of the complexities in the last years of the regime's life. Some point out the Shah's excessive haste in modernizing the society, and others focus on the quadrupling of oil prices in 1973. One group sees it as a result of the migration of villagers to cities, while others assert it was due to the Shah's turning away from religion and implementing his de-Islamization policy, dissemination of corruption and prostitution and so on. In conclusion, they all introduce the complications derived from these difficulties such as the high cost of living, poverty, inflation, etc., as the causes for the dissatisfaction of people with the regime and hence, their uprising.

In fact, these theories depict the revolution as a transformation distinct from the overall processes of political and social change in Iran, without considering the need to build a bridge between the conflict of 1977-78 and the contemporary history of Iranian society. In their opinion, regardless of what had been happening in and to Iran, the reasons for the revolution could be traced in the transformations of the last 10, or at the most, 15 years of the regime.

The view we are intending to give here, is the opposite of this vision. In our opinion, without understanding the entirety of the contemporary political, social and religious atmosphere of Iran, one cannot understand the reasons for the emergence of the Islamic Revolution and will not even be able to decipher simpler matters like the reasons for the discontent with the Shah's regime in a realistic manner. One cannot draw a line between the Iran of 1977 and that of 1971, and the Iran of 1971 and 1966; and conclude that, up until 1971 or 1966, things were

more-or-less orderly, but suddenly in 1976 or 1977, or even 1963, the Shah committed himself to this or that policy, made this or that mistake, the economy became so or inflation became such, and as a result, suddenly the system crashed.

In our opinion, what happened in 1977 has its roots in 1966, 1961, and its tendrils spread throughout the heart of the contemporary history of Iran.

We cannot draw a line between the Iran of 1966, and the Iran of 1971, or even 1961, and create a borderline and suppose that we are able to truly analyze Iran in 1971, without needing to know national conditions five or 10 years prior to that and what had been happening. What we see in 1971, is the result of Iran of 1961, even 1941, or before that. Describing Iran of 1971, with the colorless and disturbed signals and remnants of 1961, and 1951, is indeed a difficult and complex task. Of course, showing that what happened in Iran in 1977-78, had roots throughout the 37 year rulership of Mohammad Reza Shah (not saying that they go even farther back), is more difficult, and an even more essential task than to say that the roots originate from the fact that Shah modernized the country too fast, or because the price of oil quadrupled, or the Shah turned his back to Islam, or imperialism faced a crisis or had changed face, or the confrontation of national bourgeoisie with international comprador bourgeoisie took on broader dimensions, and problems such as inflation, unemployment and poverty had made laborers rebellious, and therefore, they revolted.

A line cannot be drawn between the changes of Iran in 1977, and the changes and political social structures of Iran in 1951. Neither can a border be created between the struggles of 1977-1978 and what the opposition accomplished against the regime prior to that time. Opposition to the Shah's regime existed in 1977, but it also existed in

1967 and 10 years before that in 1957. Opposition to the regime did not start from a particular year like, for example, 1963, or 1966. It is not as if nothing was happening up to 1977, and all of a sudden, in that year, the previous policies bore fruit:

The inflation rate gets out of hand, costs skyrocket, imperialism faces a crisis, corruption, prostitution, and infidelity soar, and finally, people pour into the streets, laborers go on strike, and the college students rise in protest.

The calm that seemed to prevail in Iran before 1977, wasn't an oasis; it was fire hidden under the ashes. All we need to do is to take a look at the number of political prisoners. During the last 10 years of the regime, the number of political prisoners rose from less than one hundred in 1967 to about 5,000 in 1977. We should not doubt that not only in 1977, but in any other period during the Shah's regime, especially since 1953, had the right conditions been provided, the majority of the society would have voted to oppose the government. The coup of Mordad 28th (August 19, 1953), in which the Shah was forced to stabilize his sovereignty by means of a coup and military power, is the outstanding example of that regime's lack of public support. After the coup, the regime did not allow any opposition. Apparently, it seemed that the political turbulence of the years after the fall of Reza Shah, street protests and popular involvement, strikes, and cabinet changes - which in some cases didn't last more than just a few weeks — came to an end, and peace and tranquility embraced Iran.

However, about seven years later, when the regime had to reduce the pressure, suddenly waves of oppositions appeared in the Bazaar, universities, schools and unions. In less than a few weeks, with the invitation of the opposition, nearly 80,000 Tehran inhabitants gathered in Jalalieh Square (now Laleh Park). In 1963, the regime was able to

maintain its sovereignty by resorting to widespread use of the armed forces. Prior to that, in 1959, the people forced the resignation of the Shah's favored government through wide-ranging protest.

The opposition that we witness in 1977, is not separated from this chain either. No certain and extraordinary event happened in this year. Neither the world capitalism faces crisis, nor the imperialism changes face and plot a new plan, nor the regime's internal contradictions related to the comprador bourgeoisie reached the point of explosion explains the situation. Neither high costs, unemployment, poverty, inflation and ... broke the laborers' back , nor the Shah's westernized and modern reforms acceleration, nor the regime's anti-religions policies find broader dimensions defines Iran's reality. What happened in this year, as we will describe in next pages, is merely that, the regime allowed people to breathe, though relatively; just as this same opportunity had popped up in 1960-61 and 1963-67.

We should either believe that the Shah's regime basically enjoyed the necessary support and these eruptions of opposition seen in those periods, are due to economic difficulties which the regime faced because of its dependency on world imperialism or we must accept the fact that the Shah's regime had not been genuinely supported by people and .governed solely by relying on its armed forces. Therefore, given the slightest opportunity, this fire under the ashes found an outlet and we witnessed an outpouring of dissatisfaction in those periods. If we think that the opposition to the regime had been a continuous process that always existed (regardless of the country's economic circumstances), we also face the fundamental question: What was the reason for this dissatisfaction and lack of popularity? The answer to this question is, in fact, our answer to the cause of the revolution's occurrence.

Before beginning our rejoinder, we have to bring up the two questions or criticisms that the theory of continuity of the struggle is confronted with. The first, which is perhaps from the historic aspect, is, had there always been one or some fixed reasons that created discontent with the regime? In other words, how could it be claimed that discord with the regime always existed and never, during the 37 years of the Shah's monarchy, had this element been dissipated?

The second question, which is raised from a sociological point of view, is that, had the social class or classes who were considered dissatisfied with and opposed to regime always been the same? Was there always one or some certain classes opposing the regime? If we suppose that university students, workers or religious elements, in the 1940s, the first years of his monarchy, were against him for any reasons; are they the same groups who opposed him in the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s? Could it be that the social conditions of the groups opposing the regime were stable all through the 37 years, and their positions remained constant? Was the motive of these classes in fighting and their dissatisfaction with the regime in the 1940s the same as what we witness some thirty years later in the 1970s? Was Iranian society a separate, closed and primitive society in which no changes were taking place and the class or classes that opposed the government always remained in the same condition?

A brief review of the process of struggle against the Shah's regime shows, firstly, the continuity of struggle; and secondly, enables us to answer the two mentioned objections to a certain extent. In the early years of the Shah, the Tudeh Party was considered the primary opponent of the regime.

Besides this group., another wave which consisted of landowners, tribal chiefs, relatively liberal and constitutionalist elements (some

belonged to landowners families and were typically considered as the remnants of the constitutional movement), and finally some of the educated and technocrats returned from Europe were also considered opponents of the court.

What this disparate collection had in common was the fact that during Reza Shah's time, they were either anathemized, had run away from the country or been limited to their own corner of isolation. Their main concern was not to have another Reza Shah in the country. Since the end of the 1940s and beginning of the 1950s, along with the rise of the oil nationalization struggle, the nationalists became the center of opposition to the regime. By the end of the 1950s, the more religious elements of the National Front, under the banner of the Freedom Movement of Iran, carried the opposition flag.

With the appearance of Imam Khomeini and the uprising of June 6th, 1963, Qom and the clergy become the focal point of protests against the regime. From the end of the 1960s till a few years later, the groups believing in armed struggle challenged the regime, and at the beginning of the 1970s, Dr. Shariati and Hosseinyeh Ershad were the symbols of opposition to the regime. There's no doubting that what the Tudeh Party had in mind was miles away from what the Freedom Movement believed in. Clearly, fundamental differences existed between what the nationalists and Dr. Mosaddegh were trying to establish, and what Imam believed must come into existence. Undoubtedly, Shariati's goal in fighting against the regime was different from that of the Fedeyan. The differences between these movements is quite obvious. Our intention is to show that the Shah's regime had constantly been the object of protest, and opposition, and the continuation of struggling against him had always existed during the 37 years of his kingdom.

But, during those years, was the opposition sociologically consistent

and was the society a static and unchanging one? Of course not. Dissatisfaction with the regime and continuation of the struggle should not be misunderstood as the static social state of the Shah's time. The society was definitely changing. In fact, this change best manifests itself among the social classes and groups fighting against the regime.

All we need is to take another glance at the list of movements opposing the Shah in different time periods of the regime's life. If its opponents in the 1940s and 1950s were structurally made up of Tudehs and nationalists, this structure changes in the 1960s and 1970s. The total number of Tudeh, Freedom Movement and National Front political prisoners from the end of 1960s till the revolution, would hardly reach 100. While, at the beginning of the 1960s, we basically have no political prisoners except the nationalists and Tudehs. In the middle of the 1970s, the percentage of these political prisoners decrease to less than 2 percent.

If in the 1940s and 1950s the non-Tudeh opposition was specifically formed of businessmen, unionists, national-religious men, clerics related to the nationalists, and the constitutionalist and reformist elements who mostly belonged to the wealthy class, in the 1960s and 1970s, regarding what we call vertical and horizontal classification in sociology, we will witness considerable changes in the opposition's spectrum. Vertically, the political prisoners' social center of gravity generally tends towards the middle class. Horizontally, the opposition's spectrum gradually expands and contains the ranks of college students, clergy, women, workers, university educated, teachers, businessman and students.

There is no argument about the nature and existence of these changes. The main argument is that, despite the differences that these groups had with each other, both from their social and class status and their ideological and world view, they had a common point in one

fundamental aspect. What was that common aspect? What was the cause that remained the same all through the 37 years of the Shah's reign and made the educated and intellectuals of the 1970s, for instance, have the same hatred for his rule that their predecessors felt in the 1940s? What made the businessmen of the 1970s as much dissatisfied with his rule as their fathers had been in the 1940s? What caused the students to oppose his regime in the 1950s as much as they had in the 1970s? What were the causes that made the opposition and discontent with the Pahlavi regime in the entire society in the 1970s be as widespread as 30 years earlier?

In our opinion, that common aspect goes back to the former regime's political nature and governance. It is this nature that, despite the economic and social changes accomplished during his reign, kept the elements of opposition to the regime constant and passed it along from one generation to another.

The economic reforms, developments and social changes during the 37 years of the Shah's kingdom, should not keep us from distinguishing and ignoring his government's other dimensions; dimensions such as political structure, popular participation in running the country, freedom of assembly and mass media, toleration of opposition, observing the rule of law and insuring individual and social immunity from violation of these rights. If changes had taken place from the economic and social point of view, nothing had been accomplished in the political arena.

Perhaps, the Shah's regime could be viewed as a dual entity. On the one hand, some development criteria and economic advancements are observed: Modern industries, advanced projects, modern buildings, a military with advanced equipment and the world's most modern weapons, and participation of women in social affairs (in comparison with other Islamic and Arabic countries). If alongside with the

supporters of the theory of modernization, we, too, take these criteria as reasons for economic advancement, then this wouldn't be hut one face of the coin. The other side of the coin, that did not appear in an apparent encounter, was the political structure of the society which had not experienced any changes. In fact, the modern Iran of the Shah did not differ much from the backward Iran of Nasserudin Shah of 100 years earlier.

The Role of Religious Leadership in the Islamic Revolution's Victory

By: Seyed Sadegh Haghghat

Introduction

Research Method

Various Approaches to Studying the Islamic Revolution of Iran

1. Emphasizing Cultural Importance of the Revolution
2. Emphasizing Importance of Economic and Sociological Factors
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Theories on the Victory of the Islamic Revolution

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Introduction

Revolutions occur at the crossroads of historical events and rarely take place. Social events are generally unrepeatable, thus it is usually impossible to determine the exact time of a revolution's occurrence or analyze exactly the elements effecting them. There are tens of macro and micro social, political, economic, and cultural factors that coalesce at a specific point in time, in order for a revolution to take place. A social analyst is not only unable to count all the effective factors but also has no standards by which to measure the level of each element's effectiveness.

The Islamic Revolution of Iran is no exception to these analytical problems. There are specific difficult ties related to the Islamic Revolution that make its analysis even more difficult. The existence of a powerful and experienced monarchy; international, and especially American, support; unprecedented popular participation in politics; and finally, the role of religion and ideology in this movement are among these complex questions. World's outstanding intelligence agencies, in general, and specifically America's, were unable to discern the potential of the Islamic Revolution's occurrence in the months prior to its victory. After its triumph, too, the revolutions' analysts confronted a number of theoretical challenges. The differences in the scope of these analyses is clear evidence of the variation in interpretation of this phenomenon.

Today, even though two decades have passed since the victory of the revolution, it must unfortunately be said that, there have been few documented and profound theoretical works on the Islamic Revolution and the causes of its victory. Many foreign authors have foundered in their analyses due to their lack of a true understanding of the revolution

and the forces involved in it. Among Persian references, too, we come across very few comprehensive and solid texts. The theories presented on the victory of the Islamic Revolution — namely the conspiracy theory, modernization theory, the theory of economy, the theory of religion and the dictatorship theory — though very different, each has faced various challenges in interpreting the hows and whys of the revolution. In any case, the existence of all these problems intensifies the necessity for new research into the effective elements in the Islamic Revolution's victory.

After over 20 years since the revolution's victory, questions may be raised concerning: Why should these issues be brought up again? What is the necessity of making theories about the Islamic Revolution? Is it not better to found our current strategies based on our national interests and forget the old issues and historic hostilities with the enemies of the revolution?

In this regard, it should be mentioned that forgetting past disputes and looking forward to the future in a practical way, as Nelson Mandela believes about South Africa, is different from the theoretical analysis of an important occurrence such as the victory of a revolution.

In fact, we need such analyses for two important reasons. In the first place, every people must be aware of their past and history. This is a virtue in itself. The second reason is that many of our present practical and theoretical problems have roots in the past's analyses and through either negligence or vanity towards Iran and the revolution's history, we would be at a loss and encounter a situation of having no policy at all. The following questions and examples all have a direct, or indirect, relationship with the method of analyzing the revolution:

- What was the share of each of the Islamic, nationalist, and Marxist groups after the revolution?
- What is the justification for eliminating Marxist or similar groups and

nationalist groups?

- How religious were our people during the revolution, or how much did they seek religion for their future?
- Did they have a clear picture of religion's interference in politics and the theory of (absolute) Velayate Faqih (guardianship of the supreme jurispudent)?

Thus, research about the whys and hows of the revolution's victory and the quality of religion's role in it, not only familiarizes us with our past history, but is also related to many present time issues, including the legitimacy of the present system as well.

Research Method

Methods of studying social and human sciences have important differences with the techniques used in investigating natural sciences. Events of the first group are usually unrepeatable and the elements involved are not to be easily distinguished from one another. Moreover, the issue of revolution has its own specific problems, too. Revolutions are rare historical events and the possibility of their repetition is also non-existent. One may, in his life, witness only one revolution; that, too, with its specific context. Therefore, generalization of the causes for revolutions' appearances seem impossible.

For a subject like this, the contextual analysis method has many advantages. This technique is usually juxtaposed against the historical, descriptive, analytical and interpretive (hermeneutical) methods. As Pissley puts it, "Contextual analysis is a phase in collecting information, in which, the context of relationship transforms into the information that can be summarized and compared with each other by making identical and systematic use of the rules of categorization. The conditions for contextual analysis are: Objectivity (performance of the research on the

basis of specific rules and methods), system (the contained circle being systematic, or the presentation of context or subjects being based on practical rules) and generalization (having a theoretical relationship with each other).¹

The contextual analysis method is very useful in understanding the revolution's slogans, the related documents and messages and speeches of the leader of the revolution. However, given our restrictions in this short article, it is not possible to deal with its methods, such as handing out questionnaires, performing field surveys and doing modeling research.

Our theory in this research, though having its own specific form, is of the multi-causal kind. On this basis, the issue of the regime's fading legitimacy should be considered as a separate matter from the question of the revolution's victory. Any regime loses the foundations of its legitimacy before it falls. The elements involved in the obliteration of monarchy's basic integrity and the factors effective in the victory of the Islamic Revolution may have some common features; however, they are two separate subjects having their own specific reasons and factors. Therefore, the influential elements in each of them must be separately introduced in this theory.

The most important factor effecting the negation of the monarchy's validity (and consequently, establishment of grounds for the Islamic Revolution), was modernization. Modernization of the Pahlavi kind had its own unique character: Accelerated movement towards the so called "gates of the civilization" and not paying attention to the lack of political development, and existence of cultural crises. Had the modernization process not started so rapidly in the 1960s, Iran's social and political

1- L. R. Holsti. *Context Analysis in Social and Human Sciences*. Translated by Nader Salarzadeh Amiri (Tehran: Allameh Tabatabaee University, 1373) pp.13-16.

changes would have, undoubtedly, taken a different course.

According to this paper's theory, the significant element in the victory of the Islamic Revolution is religious leadership. Leadership per se (and lacking the "religious" attribute) had very little effect in Iran's revolution. What can be introduced as the most effective element in the victory of the Islamic Revolution is "religious leadership". It was Imam Khomeini (R.A.), with his mystical, political, juristic and personal traits, who was able to navigate the revolution's ship to the shores of victory. If another person had occupied this position, it was most probable that this revolution would not have ended in victory.

If we divide the effective elements in a revolution into three groups, namely ideology, people, and leadership/¹) the third factor was the most effective in Iran's revolution. Though religious leadership is also the promoter and disseminator of ideology, the leadership factor should be distinguished from the ideology factor. Ideology can play its role through other religious leaders, jurists, and clergymen. Religious leaders may be numerous, of the same level and have charismatic characters; while the religious leadership in Iran's revolution is revealed in Imam Khomeini's distinguished and charismatic personality.

The above theory is multi-causal in that it, firstly, distinguishes the issue of the regime's loss of integrity and hence power, from that of the Islamic Revolution's victory. Secondly, it looks at modernization as the cause of the regime's collapse that was hidden with its heart the rapid, superficial, and uncoordinated development in the economy, and the lacking of political and cultural development.

Proof of the above theory requires many pages and a great deal of time. What is presented in this article is merely an introduction of this

1- Ref to: Manoochehr Mohammadi, *An Analysis of the Islamic Revolution*, (Tehran. Amirkabir, 1365) pp.85-117).

theory and the necessary evidence to enhance its credibility. If we wish to make a comprehensive review of the matter, we should refer to all the related texts and use methods, such as contextual analysis and field studies, which is impossible in such a brief article.

For proving the above mentioned theory, after looking at different approaches to studying the Islamic Revolution, we bring five other ideas -- namely the conspiracy, modernization, economy, religion, and dictatorship paradigms — and the reasons presented by their authors will also be discussed. In reviewing the basis of the rival notions and showing their shortcomings, the grounds for presentation of a new theory will be prepared. In that section, we will first introduce our hypothesis and then present evidence, though brief, to fit in this article, to familiarize the readers with the subject and prepare the way for future research on the subject.

Various Approaches to Studying the Islamic Revolution of Iran

According to one classification, approaches to the study the Islamic Revolution can be divided into five groups as follows¹);

1. Emphasizing Cultural Importance of the Revolution

For example, Ali Davani in his book, *Iran's Clergy Movement*, tries to prove that the Shah's fall must be sought for in Islam and the ability of the clergy in mobilizing people by using Islamic slogans. Hamid Algar in his book, *The Roots of Iranian Revolution*, also refers to Shi'ism and Imam Khomeini's leadership as materializing a tradition and presenting Islam as an ideology. Asaf Hussain in his book, *Islamic Iran: Revolution*

1- Ref to: Homeira Moshirzadeh, "A Glance of Various Approaches to Studying the Islamic Revolution". *Rahbord Mag.*. No. 9. (Spring 1375).

and Counter Revolution, invites researchers' attention to the element of ideology.

Besides the above authors who have a positive feelings towards the Islamic Revolution, some of the analysts with critical opinions towards the revolution, such as Said Amir Arjomand in *The Turban for the Crown*, also give weight to the Shiite religious authority structure, in addition to modernization factor. Of course, as we will see, his approach is of the multi-causal kind. Hassan-ol-Zein in his book, *Iran's Revolution, in Social and Ideological Dimension*, has also referred to religion as the most important element in the victory of the Islamic Revolution, though implicitly in his explanations of the events, he refers to leadership factor too. This approach, by emphasizing on culture, Shi'ism, and the clergy, almost ignores the role of other social forces and political and economic factors.

2. Emphasizing Importance of Economic and Sociological Factors

Robert Looney, in *Economic Origins of the Iranian Revolution*, relates that the regime did not pay any attention to development strategies, the relationship between goals and programs and the problems arising from inflation; and its extensive and integrated development programs created a crisis that ended in uneven distribution of income and dissatisfaction of the masses. Hodayoun Katouzian in his book, *The Political Economy of Iran*, refers to 1340-57 (1960-1978) as the years of "oil dictatorship". In his view, a combination of this factor with what he calls "pseudo modernism" forms the roots of Iran's revolution. Theda Skocpol in *The Rentier State and Shi'a in the Iranian Revolution*, mentions the existence of the rentier state and Shiite ideology, with its symbols -- such as martyrdom seeking -- as the significant elements in the occurrence of the revolution.

Here, it is necessary to mention two points: First, the emphasis on economic elements should not result in negligence of other factors; and second, it should be noticed that some views give more weight to the revolution's roots (like Katouzian's theory), while some others deal with the reasons of the revolution's occurrence (like Skocpol's).

3. Emphasizing Psychological Factors

Marvin Zonis, in *The Imperial Fall*, attempts to prove that if the Shah had not been psychologically weak, the revolution would have been preventable. The main point of the socio-psychological analyses is formed around the J-axis and the gap between the formed expectations and the level of satisfying the needs in the years prior to the revolution.

These kinds of analyses do not correctly explain individual and group expectations. Moreover, they ignore other factors. The relative deprivation of some groups in the process of the revolution led by the clergy, has not been explained in these analyses either.

4. Political Approach Towards the Revolution

Abrahamian is the speaker of functionalistic analysis of Huntington's type. In his thinking, the Islamic Revolution occurred because the Shah started modernization at the socio-economic level, and thus, expanded the new middle class and industrial labor force. However, he was unable to make any development at the political level. Another political approach is based on Charles Tilly's views. Misagh Parsa, in *The Social Origin of the Iranian Revolution*, refers to mobilization of the Bazaar and their common interest with other social groups, and Ayatollah Khomeini's leadership.

Functional analysis deals, to some extent, with the grounds for the revolution's occurrence; however, it is unable to present a system for

analyzing the reasons and factors involved in the revolution's taking place.

5. Multi-causal Approach

Many analysts of the Islamic Revolution emphasize the result of the coincidence of different factors. Michael Fischer, while highlighting cultural elements, in *From Religious Dispute to Revolution*, refers to the causes of the revolution as social and economic, and to the form, place and kind as being the tradition of religious objection. Nikkie Keddie has also referred to the Shah's accelerating reforms and Shi'ite ideology. Fred Halliday, in *The Iranian Revolution: Uneven Development and Religious Populism*, defines five basic elements for the revolution of Iran: Uneven and rapid development of capitalism in Iran, political weakness of the monarchial system, all around coalition of opposition forces, Islam's role in mobilizing their forces, and the changing and unpredictable international environment. Farideh Farhi, in "State Disintegration and Urban-based Revolutionary Crisis: A Comparative Analysis of Iran and Nicaragua", tries to go further by adding two factors to Skocpol's theory: Variable balance of class forces due to uneven development of capitalism, and greater understanding of ideology. John Foran's approach is also similar to Farhi's. Said Amir Arjomand brings together the political process (which caused the disintegration of the monarchial structure of domination), and theological element (i.e., the Shi'ite revolutionary ideology).¹

The multi-causal approach, though emphasizing the different elements and trying not to magnify any specific single cause, may fall victim to too many generalities.

Needless to say that numerous elements are involved in any

1- For the references to this part, see Moshirzadeh's article in this book.

revolution. However, the main point is, "which element, and to what extent, has had more effect in which phase of the revolution (The deterioration phase of the former regime's legitimacy, or the victory phase of the revolution)?" Logically, in a multi-causal approach it is possible to make a mistake between the cause and the effect, and the sign, or correlation of any two elements, or between the root factors and the accelerating factors of the revolution.

We do not intend to look at Iran's revolution through any specific approach different from those presented so far. The essential question and the present research hypothesis seeks to identify the most important factors in the revolution's victory and is being forwarded in order to find the true nature of this magnificent movement. The multi-causal approach is also a kind of analysis; but one should be careful not to fall into ambiguity. It must be shown exactly which factors and in what aspect and to what degree, have been involved. It is only in this context that the true nature of the Islamic Revolution could be understood to some extent and the reasons and factors involved in its victory defined.

Theories on the Victory of the Islamic Revolution

Before getting into any explanation of our hypothesis and trying to prove it, we present, as rival ideas, the different theories about the victory of the revolution. Outlining the shortcomings and challenges to these theories will lead into the presentation and proof of our research hypothesis. In general, and according to one classification, there have been five models presented about the victory of the Islamic Revolution.¹

1- Ref to: Sadegh Zibakalam, *An Introduction to the Islamic Revolution* (Tehran: Rouzaneh, 1372) pp23-94.

1. The Conspiracy Theory

Believers of this theory accuse primarily England and the United States, and sometimes the Soviet Union, of being involved in this event. Some believe that the Shah, after the coup of Mordad 28, 1332 (August 1953), became closer to the United States; and England wanted to take revenge from the United States. Another group holds that the West felt its markets in danger and thus overthrew Shah, so that a "second Japan" would not take shape.

If there was any doubts about the invalidity of this notion in the years right after the victory of the revolution, now that two decades have passed, the impotence of this idea has been proven. Basically, conspiracy-minded or simple-minded people try to free themselves from the complexity of any analysis by making up a conspiracy theory. The conspiracy theory (or the conspiracy illusion) has a long and enduring root in Iranian culture. The fact of enemies conspiring against any nation is, literally, an acceptable one. However, the proponents of this theory put everything in the framework of a conspiracy. The problem is thus set aside through this general approach, instead of making the effort needed for a deep analysis. Historically, British and Russian competition in Iran, and the incapability of Qajar kings, gave a basis to the belief in Iran that the answer to any problem is in the hands of foreign powers. The duplicity of compatriots and foreigners, friends and enemies, and so on, has been most effective in giving shape to this illusion in the minds of Iranians.^{1^}

Anyway, the conspiracy theory regarding the Islamic Revolution has been very weakly presented, and time will only increase its weakness.

1- See also Ahmad Ashraf, "Conspiracy Illusion", (*Joftegoo Mag.* No. 1 (Summer 1374).

2. The Modernization Theory

According to this theory, the Shah's economic development programs of the 1960s, given their superficiality and speed, as well as lack of coordination with social and cultural development, gave rise to contradictions and conflicts in the traditional and semi-industrial society of Iran. It was these social abnormalities that engendered the political change of the system.

In criticism of this theory (and in proof of the dictatorship theory), Zibakalam says:

... but in reality, it is not so. Opposition to the regime had completely existed even before the Shah started his modernization programs. Another problem with the modernization theory is in the fact that it limits the opposition to the Shah and the regime to just the religious strata of the society. The primary problem with the modernization theory is that it ignores the political element of the political opposition with the Shah's regime/¹)

The first criticism is not valid, since the uprising of Khordad 15th was mostly effected by modernization in the sense that it was the modernization process that prepared the grounds for Imam Khomeini's standing up against the regime. As we know. Imam's dispute with the Shah was on issues such as regional and provincial councils. Other opposition movements, such as the oil nationalization movement, though very important in the context of opposition to the Shah's policies, had fundamental differences with the Islamic Revolution since their leaders were neither trying to change the regime and establish the Islamic Republic of Iran, nor did they have the ability to mobilize all the people for their purposes. The modernization theory can not, in fact, explain the cause of the revolution's victory, but can define the grounds

1- Zibakalam, Ibid, p36.

for the beginning of it. As a matter of fact, if the events of the 1960s had not happened and the so called "imperial reforms" had not taken place, the basis for the Imam's and the clergy's confrontation with the Shah - to the point of overthrowing his reign - would not have existed, and the chance for the all around mobilization of people would also not have been provided.

3. The Economy Theory

This theory is widely popular mostly among western and Marxist and semi-Marxist Iranian authors. In this regard, Zibakalam says:

The foundation of the first group's theory is based on the increase of oil revenue and its quadrupling in 1973. The resulting inflation, economic shortages, and so on, forced the regime to put into effect an anti-inflationary policy/¹)

As Zibakalam points out, in the first place, the people's economic situation in the years prior to the revolution had become relatively better, and not worse. It is true that a recession had shadowed the country's economy in 1976-77, but this recession was not so noticeable against the relative welfare that people enjoyed. And secondly, if we accept that this question had any effect on people's dissatisfaction with the regime, it must also *be* observed whether any other elements were involved and whose effects may have been much more than the elements taken into consideration. What was really the role of the clergy and the leader of the revolution in mobilizing people? To what extent were the martyrdom of Imam's son and the insulting article by Rashidi Motlagh effective in inciting the people in Qom and Tabriz? Can it not be observed, by contextual analysis, that people's slogans and the messages sent by the revolution's leaders were not centered around the

1- Ibid, pp37-39.

axis of economic problems?

4. The Religion Theory

The Iranian revolution undoubtedly had a religious form; and the influence of ideology amazed many western thinkers and forced some of them to have second thoughts in their opinions.

As Amid Zanjani puts it, Shah's de-Islamization -- and the people's seeking Islam - was the essential cause of the Islamic Revolution.¹

The Shah's despotism and his implementation of land reforms in the early 1960s were all the effects of his de-Islamization policy. Mohammadi also believes that people, leadership and ideology were the basic factors in the victory of the revolution; however, he gives the highest priority to the element of religion.²

In all, it could be said that the religion theory is more realistic than any of the previous theories and more consistent with the realities of Iranian society. Hamid Enayat also, in his article, "Religion as a Political Ideology"³) points to the effects of religion and Shi'a ideology in the revolution.

Yet, there remains sufficient ambiguity about this theory to allow for the presentation of a new theory:

Firstly, the Iranian people were much more religious in the 1950s and 60s than in the 1970s. In other words, the development and reform process, coming closer to the West and its culture, importation of goods from the West, the presence of an increasing number of foreign forces in the guise of military advisors and the like, and airing on television and

1- Ref to: A. Amid Zanjani, *The Islamic Revolution and its Roots* (Tehran: Ketabe Siasi Publication, 1370) pp572-3.

2- Mohammadi, *Ibid*, p88.

3- Hamid Enayat, Religion as a Political Ideology, *Farhange Tose'a Mag.*, No.4, 1371.

in the cinema programs full of western cultural manifestations, all indicate that, as our society moved towards the end of the 1970s, it increasingly lost its cultural, traditional, and religious nobility.

The Islamic Revolution of Iran occurred in an era when people's sense of religion was decreasing and was increasingly being substituted by imitation of westerners, a cultural void and identity crisis. This claim can easily be proved by a field study or using a contextual analysis method. The numbers of junk and corruptive movies in the cinemas and on television, places of perversion, traveling abroad, the degree of inclination towards religious symbols -- like mourning, prayers, fasting, and so on — in the period between 1960 to 1979 can approximately be measured and evaluated.

Secondly, the requirement for Amid Zanjani's theory, as Zibakalam puts it, is that the regime be vulnerable at the time of the revolution's occurrence, while the situation was just the opposite/¹⁾

Thirdly, this theory, just like the other ones, does not present the Islamic Revolution in the context of Iran's contemporary political, social, and religious transitions.⁽²⁾ In general, no specific methodology guides this theory which could lead the researchers from the beginning of the argument to its end.

Finally, this theory makes no distinction between the two phases of the monarchy's fading legitimacy and victory of the revolution. It may be necessary to separate the most important factor in each of these phases.

5. Dictatorship Theory

Zibakalam, after showing the weaknesses of the above four theories, attempts to posit despotism and dictatorship as the essential element in

1- Ref to: Zibakalam, Ibid, pp 64-5.

2- Ibid, p65.

the Islamic Revolution's victory:

Religious fundamentalism -- both in Iran and in the world -- has prevailed whenever the majority of people have been deprived of their political and social rights by totalitarian governments. The modern Iran of Mohammad Reza Shah was not much different from the backward Iran of Nasserudin Shah of 100 years earlier.^)

Although Zibakalam accuses the other theories of lacking supporting evidence and of being merely theoretical, his substitution theory is also hurt by this same weakness. Nowhere in his arguments can one find any evidence to be guided to idea that the primary reason for the occurrence of the revolution was dictatorship and not the religion, economy, modernization, or conspiracy.

What he argues in favor of the dictatorship theory merely shows the literal effect of despotism in the process of Iran's revolution and is totally unable to prove its being the most important factor. How and with what evidence is it proved that the people's inclination towards freedom was more than their interest in religion? Is it not, perhaps, that people's love of freedom was simply the effect of their religious thinking? How is that Enver Hoxha's dictatorship in Albania lasted 40 years despite his harsh despotism? Regarding the claim that the common aspect of the revolutions of Algeria, Nicaragua, Iran and other countries around the world is the strangling atmosphere prior to revolution, firstly: How is it proved that this factor was the most important one? And secondly: What is the reason that it had a more profound effect than Other elements? How do we know that this factor's influence did not have the same level of influence as that of accelerating elements of the revolution? Most important of all: Did dictatorship prepare the grounds for the fading of the regime's legitimacy or was it

1- Ibid, pp 93-105.

the most essential factor in the victory of the Islamic Revolution in Iran?

In fact, it could be said that the author has dealt with the issue of despotism by way of introducing it, and has probably left aside the proofs for his reasons for some other time. At any rate, as far as the revolution is concerned, it seems too out of place to say that the factor of dictatorship overwhelms that of religion. Basically, the issue of liberation and freedom becomes a second priority for people who are living their every day life in the comfort provided by the rentier state. It is true that people in Kuwait and Saudi Arabia are in search of freedom and liberty from despotism, but the dollar-provided comfortable life has led them towards other priorities.

The effect of despotism in the Iranian revolution lies mostly in preparation of the grounds for the people's uprising and not in the reasons for the revolution's victory. Later in this article it will be shown why these two phases must be distinguished from one another. Moreover, the same criticism that he presents for other ideas is true for his theory, too. If despotism is the most essential element for the revolution, then how is it that no revolution of this kind took place in the period of 1964-1978? Which was stronger -- Reza Khan's dictatorship or Mohammad Reza Shah's? Finally, what other elements and to what degree, were influential in the process of Iran's changing for the revolution to take place in 1978?

Along with proving the theory of this research, we will see that despotism and the lack of political development was a factor in paving the way for the revolution, but not the most important element in its victory.

The Hypothesis of the Research

One of the problems with most of the above theories is that they do not draw a clear line between the elements that brought down the monarchical system and those that gave victory to the Islamic Revolution. The factors involved in the destruction of an old system are not necessarily the same as those involved in a movement's triumph. The question of the deconstruction of the Shah's system must be distinguished from that of the Islamic Revolution's growth and victory. The modernization theory explains the grounds for the emergence of the revolution and is well able to picture the crises existing in the years prior to the event. It cannot, however, be said that modernization was the essential factor in the Islamic Revolution's victory.

Perhaps a researcher like Keddie also intended to focus primarily on the roots of the revolution rather than explaining the elements involved in its victory. Amir Arjomand in "Iran's Islamic Revolution in Comparative Perspective" makes a clear distinction between the two groups of elements: First, the political process of rapid change in the social structure of domination in Iran (which resulted in the disintegration of the ruling system), and second, the teleology of the revolution, i.e., the revolutionary ideology of the Shi'ite that shaped the destiny of the Islamic Revolution.¹

The points in this research worth consideration are the distinction made between the prerequisite causes of the revolution and its teleology, and giving due consideration to various factors involved in the victory of the revolution. However, in considering different elements, firstly he has not made a serious effort at distinguishing the various factors according to their importance; and secondly, there is no demarcation established between the role of ideology (religion) and that of ideologist (religious leadership).

1- Moshirzadeh, Ibid.

In the religion theory lacks a profound discourse on whether religion was an essential cause of the Islamic Revolution's victory; or that it just played the most important role in shattering the legitimacy of the old regime, thus paving the way for the emergence of the revolution; or was the religious element important in both aspects? Later in this article we will show that, considering the disintegration of the monarchial system's integrity, the effect of modernization was greater than that of religion. Also, in explaining the victory of the revolution, confusion has arisen regarding the effects of religion and (religious) leadership.

It is certain that no foreign factor, outside help, or conspiracy, had any real part in Iran's revolution. Economy and economic motives were also of the least of priorities. If we consider any role for modernization and economic issues, they were in preparation of the grounds for the revolution, but not in its victory. Psychological analyses can hardly compete with sociological analyses. Other factors, such as the Shah's having cancer, his personality crisis, Carter's pressure on the observation of human rights, publication of the insulting article on Ettela'at newspaper (on January 7, 1978), cutting expenditures (in Amoozegar's cabinet), corruption in the imperial court, prevalence of prostitution in the community and an increase of literacy and education played such trivial roles that they should be seen solely as accelerating factors for the revolution.

Considering the challenges to the above ideas, the research must also answer questions such as:

1. If we accept that in addition to moving away from the 1950s and 1960s, western culture, with all its various tools, had penetrated people's lives, then this question arises: How in such an environment, in which religion had been excessively weakened, could a religious revolution emerge?

2. How did a nation that neither had any arms, nor relied on any foreign power, win against a regime armed to teeth and supported by a standing army of 700,000 troops, as well as being backed by all the foreign powers, while simultaneously stepping into the "gates of the great civilization"? Carter had called Iran "the island of stability". How and from where did the crisis start in this "island of stability" that amazed and dumbfounded every body in the imperial state, as well as western politicians and analysts?
3. Why did the United States, with all its interests in Iran, not make any clear effort in protecting the Shah, and just kept silent against the victory of the Islamic Revolution? Did they not know that with the Islamic Revolution's victory, their interests in Iran would face great danger?
4. Iran's revolution happened in an era in which people were enjoying a relatively good standard of living and economic comfort. What happened that people preferred to rise up, offer martyrs, ignore their material interests, and make so much sacrifice?
5. How should the span of the years 1963-1978 be understood? In other words, what was revolution's situation in this time period?

The idea presented here parallel to the above mentioned five theories is as follows:

Modernization in the 1960s -- rapid, superficial, and uneven economic changes without considering the lack of political and cultural development - emerged as the key factor in upending the monarchical system and led to the occurrence of Iran's Islamic Revolution. In this void, the basic element in the victory of the Islamic Revolution was the religious leadership (of Imam Khomeini).

A. Foundering of the Monarchial System's Legitimacy

Proving the above hypothesis will be accomplished in two parts: First, explaining the fading of the monarchial system's legitimacy and emergence of the factors for the occurrence of revolution; and second, identifying the most important element in the victory of the Islamic Revolution. Some of evidence that could be mentioned regarding modernization as basic to the system's loss of integrity and the occurrence of Islamic Revolution are as follows:

1. We should, firstly, have a glance at the beginning of the Imam's political movement. In the early 1960s, the United States tried to start some reforms through Prime Minister Ali Amini. The Shah, unwilling to have a rival, took on this responsibility and declared his own reform program.

The year 1961 coincided with Ayatollah Broojerdi's death. Considering Ayatollah Broojerdi's unquestioned authority in jurisprudence and out of respect for the late religious leader, Imam Khomeini did not take any action against the so-called reform program. Therefore, in the early 1960s and following Ayatollah Broojerdi's death, first of all, there was no unanimity of religious leadership and secondly, the Shah had already started his reforms.

Undoubtedly, the beginning of Imam Khomeini's movement coincides with the start of modernization in Iran. Our theory is beyond the merger of these two events. On this basis, it must be said that modernization facilitated Imam Khomeini's movement in the 1960s and the victory of the Islamic Revolution in 1357 (1979). In *Iran's Contemporary Political History* we read: Imam was looking for an appropriate time for [starting] the second phase, and this was provided when, after Ayatollah Broojerdi's death, the Shah attempted to link Qom's Theology

Center to his so called "White Revolution".¹

As Seyyed Hamid Rowhani relates, the Imam could not, at this point, declare his political goals explicitly, for, he would have been accused of being political, thus he presented them as a religious formula:

However, it was first necessary for an idea, motivation, or stimulus to have existed so that it could attract the attention of the common masses. The movement would have been an impossible task without a motivating issue for the masses to move and for the clergy community to get in step with the masses/²) The first contentious incident was the bill presented to parliament by the Alam cabinet on provincial and regional councils. The newspapers printed the details of the new bill on Mehr 16, 1340 (Oct. 7, 1961).

2. Now, we assume the opposite position: Would the basis for Imam's movement in 1963 and the elements for the revolution in 1979 have been established if the United States and the Shah had not had the intention of renewing and modernizing Iran?

Dictatorship and tyranny do not by themselves, lead to a revolution. The existence of economic, cultural, and social conditions is also necessary. Many dictators lived long and ruled despotically and their regimes saw no danger of being overthrown. Popular awareness and the sense of dictatorship is more important than just the prevalence of dictatorship. Economic and social conditions may serve such an awareness. It was modernization that played this role in the Islamic

1- Jalaleddin Madani, *Iran's Contemporary Political History*, vol.1 (Qom: Daftar Entesharat Eslami, 1361) p371.

2- Seyyed H. Rowhani, *An Analysis of Imam. Khomeini's Movement*, vol.1 (Qom: Daftar Entesharat Eslami, 1982) ppl07-9.

Revolution's victory.

The process of dictatorship intensified after the coup of Mordad 28, 1332 (August 19, 1953), and was intensified with SAVAK's coming into existence. Generally speaking, Iranian society was able to enjoy a small breeze of freedom in the two periods when Democrats were in power in the United States (Kennedy in 1961, and Carter in 1977). Had it not been for modernization, with its specific form in the early 1960s, the process of events of Imam Khomeini's movement would have surely taken a different course.

It is true that the general standard of living faced a decline in 1977, but this alone could not be the reason for the people's uprising. Economic conditions were still bearable. Iranian religious and traditional society, in facing the modern world, firstly received modernity in an incomplete and distorted form; and secondly, this modernity created an identity crisis for them. The political dictatorship would not allow the conscious creation of a synthesis between tradition and modernism. This factor is merely one element in the revolution but not the reason for its victory.

The speed of modernization was so high that the traditional classes could not tolerate it. Of course, the influences inserted by religion and the clergy, pressure groups, anti-regime coalitions, and so on, were also effective in this process. The modernization theory merely proves the foundations and establishes the analytical framework for researchers. Due to the fact that political progress did take shape and move along with the (defective) economic development, gradually, deep crises were created as fire under the ashes. In fact, the Shah unconsciously raised his own enemies in the heart of his system. 3. Another piece of evidence for this hypothesis is that Imam Khomeini

did not oppose the Shah's rule in the early stages and organized his movement in three periods: advising the Shah; standing up against his regime, and finally, the revolution.¹

Some believe that the Imam had the intention of downing the Shah from the beginning, and his advice to the Shah was merely doing his duty. In other words, they say that Imam had the mission, just like the prophets, to warn and advise the Pharaoh and Nimrod of the time before overthrowing them. There is evidence that weakens this probability. If the Shah, because of his fear of religion and the clergy's power, or for any other reason, had forgotten about the modernization process and, like his father and the Qajar kings, had reconciled with the religious authorities and the clerical system, it seems uncertain that the process of the movement and the Islamic Revolution would have taken the path that it did.

On the issue of the bill on provincial and regional councils, Ayatollah Imam Khomeini, Ayatollah Shariatmadari, and Ayatollah Golpayegani met in the Late Ayatollah Haeri's house on Mehr 16, (October 8, 1963) and after that meeting, each of them sent a separate telegram to the Shah. Seyyed Hamid Rowhani, in order to prove that Imam Khomeini did not originally intend to overthrow the regime, refers to this telegram of Imam Khomeini to the Shah:

...[Alam] terrorizes and suppresses the Muslim nation of Iran who wants to present its problems to his majesty and the Ulema.... This man has violated the constitution with the excuse of international obligations... I am obliged by the commonweal for the Islamic nation, to direct the attention of His Majesty to the fact that you should not trust those elements who, with their flattery and oral obedience, wish to pursue all the anti-religion

1- Amid Zangani, Ibid, pp 73-4

and unlawful activities that they want, and then attribute them to His Majesty.¹

According to Rowhani, in this message, Imam Khomeini avoids any direct objection to the Shah himself and he emphasizes the constitution.

4. More evidence for our hypothesis is the analysis of the slogans used in Imam Khomeini's messages in the course of his movement and in the demonstrations leading to the revolution. The most scientific method for doing this is the contextual analysis, that unfortunately, because of this article's limitations, is not possible to be presented here. However, we can approximately compare the slogans and messages during the period from 1961-1979. As we have seen, on the issue of Provincial and Regional Councils, neither the messages nor protests of the religious leaders were aimed at the Shah himself. The same is true of the people's slogans in their demonstrations against the omission of the three articles from the said bill. As we move closer to 1977, a general scheme of Islamic government becomes more visible in the slogans, until the issue of Velayate Faqih (guardianship of the supreme jurist), and then the absolute guardianship of the supreme jurist is presented after the victory of the revolution.

If such a claim can be proven by contextual analysis, it can be said that, firstly, the common Iranian people did not have a clear picture of Islamic government and change of the ruling system in 1962-63. Secondly, no clear idea of Velayate Faqih system had been presented to them before the victory of the revolution. Thirdly, "modernization" as a bedstream for revolution, paved the way for a mass movement in the process of time. Earlier initiatives were not aimed at obliteration

1- S. H. Rowhani, Ibid, PP. 155-8.

of the Shah's rule and establishment of Islamic government, and this opportunity shaped up gradually in the course of time from 1964 to 1979.

It is due to these ambiguities that different groups moved shoulder to shoulder until the revolution's victory phase; but after the triumph, they felt that they should either move out or would be moved out. Of course, this phenomenon is relatively normal, for, all of the Shah's opponents were united until the victory phase; and it is always after the victory of a revolution that the internal disputes appear.

5. This idea can easily explain the break of 1963 to 1978. With regard to the religion theory, this question is always raised as to how the 16 year break can be justified. If religion was the main factor in the victory of the revolution and if the revolution has roots in the events of the years 1962 and 1963, then how is this long interregnum explained? Was religion beset by weakness or strength in this period?

Answering these kinds of questions by means of the religion theory seems rather difficult but this problem is easily solved by the present theory: Modernization paved the way for the Islamic Revolution and the lack of harmony between (rapid, incomplete, and superficial) economic development and political and cultural progress, in the course of time created a crisis in the years 1978-9. Of course, we are not denying the role played by other factors such as, religion, Imam Khomeini's and the clergy's leadership, political movements, economic crisis, and so on, in building the foundations of the revolution.

6. Another proof for this hypothesis is that it is, to some degree, consistent with political-sociological analyses and also with many of the theories presented about Iran's Islamic Revolution.

H. Bashiryeh, believes that the modernization theory can be useful in analyzing the Islamic Revolution from a class analysis perspective. He says:

Iran, since the second half of the 19th century, given certain structural and social reasons such as the concentration of power characteristic of eastern despotism, weakness of ownership, and the enervation of social classes, could not embark upon the road to democratic modernization. The Pahlavi rulership took the responsibility to the hilt in laying the foundation of an absolute state.

Modernization in the Pahlavi era had two basic consequences: Weakening of the previous capitalist classes and the traditional community, and creating theories of the emergence of a mass society through economic reforms, expansion of urbanism, immigration, and so on. These two phenomena formed the basic drive for the Islamic Revolution. Traditionalist, bazaari, and clergy groups, who had each, in its own way, been damaged by the modernization process, was given an appropriate chance to mobilize the masses. However, one can not summarize the Islamic Revolution in just this dimension.¹

On this basis, the authors of the modernization theory have not been too far wrong in their interpretation of it as being "the revolution's foundation maker". Our essential criticism of the modernization theory is that it is not capable of explaining the reason(s) for the victory of the revolution. Looking again at the modernization process as an incentive for the revolution of 1979, one can find some positive points. If we set aside some of the exaggerated

1- H. Bashiryeh, "1976 Elections in Iran from a Class Struggle Perspective", *Rahe Now Mag.*, No. 8.

analyses of Keddie, such as the revolution being initiated by rural immigrants to cities, parts of her deductions could be useful in proving our research hypothesis.¹

She also points out the importance of using the J-curve for the preparation phase of the revolution.⁽²⁾ Approaches having an eye towards the importance of economic and sociological elements can also be helpful with regard to the basis for the revolution. As mentioned earlier, Robert Looney, pointing to detective development strategies, the problems resulting from inflation and means and ends, concludes that these problems led to an uneven distribution of wealth and a general dissatisfaction of the masses. Apparently his argument explains the origins of the revolution but not the reasons for its victory.

Katouzian also states that "oil dictatorship" and "pseudo modernism" form the roots of the revolution in Iran. His argument is true as far as introducing some of the origins of the revolution. In fact, it is because of the distinction between the origin and the reasons for the victory of the revolution that Skocpol, despite her economic and sociological approach and speaking of the "rentier state", pays attention to the Shi'a ideology too.

Abrahamian has also pointed to the effects of modernization, at the economic and social level⁽³⁾ which, by no means, contradicts our argument.

Michael Fischer studies the issue in a more exact form, stating that the causes of the revolution and the timing of its occurrence

1- See: Nikki Keddie, "Iranian Revolutions from a Comparative Perspective", *Iran Farda*, No. 17.

2- Ibid.

3- Ervand Abrahamian, "Structural cases of the Iranian Revolution", *Middle East Research and Information*, Project Research Report, No. 81 (May 1980) p21.

were economic and political, whereas its form and place were, to a great extent, due to the tradition of religious protest.¹

He has distinguished well between political and social elements, and the religious protest; however, he relates the former to time, and the latter to place.

B. Religious Leadership's Role in the Islamic Revolution

On one hand, it is very difficult to draw a clear and distinct line between the role of religion and that of religious leadership. Imam rose as a religious leader with the motivation of protecting the divine religion, as Shi'ism manifested in Imam's religious leadership. On the other hand, in some respect we should distinguish between these two factors. As mentioned before, in a revolution such as the Islamic Revolution, three factors can play role: Ideology, leadership, and people. If we take ideology as the main factor, it means that this ideology is anti-aggression in nature and from its commands, the obliteration of the old system could be understood. In this case, the leadership has a secondary role. Then the revolution could have ended in victory, even if another person had taken the lead, and the ideology played its part and had the effect it did.

However, if we take religious leadership as the main factor in the revolution, then it means that, despite the great role played by religion and ideology, it was the specific actions of the leader and his spiritual qualities that caused the ideology to have such an effect in that specific time and place. In this case, ideology has its own value but it is secondary compared with leadership. Since our approach is multi-causal, we do not intend to eliminate other effective elements in a great

1- See: Michael Fischer, *Iran: From Religious Dispute to Revolution*, (Cambridge: MA: Harvard University Press, 1980).

phenomenon like the Islamic Revolution. Our argument is focused on pinpointing the most important factor in the victory of the revolution.

As already mentioned, modernization created a void and a crisis that precipitated the occurrence of events leading to the victory of the Islamic Revolution in 1979.

Imam Khomeini's leadership played an essential role and brought people of all kinds, with varying interests into the struggle.

Some evidence (and not reasons) for the above theory is as follows:

1. In comparing religion and religious leadership factors and in providing proof for the second claim, it is enough to say that in the years just prior to the revolution, religious manifestations had suffered a great loss, and in such a condition, there was no reason for a religious revolution to take place by itself. Numerous pervasive centers and theatres, the increasing number of television viewers, the low quality of theatre and television programs influenced by western culture, the high number of American advisors and foreign tourists, low inclination towards moral and ethical symbols like personal devotion, and so on, can to some extent be measured and shown by figures and statistics. Before the revolution, about 40,000 foreign advisors lived in Iran; and Iranians traveling abroad was a normal thing. As Richard Cottam says, religion had weakened in Iran a great deal in the years 1977-9.

In all, we can say that the four criticisms about the religion theory are not valid according to our hypothesis.

2. Another proof for this hypothesis is the contextual analysis of the people's slogans, and the messages and statements of the leader in the course of the revolution. At that time, the issue of Velayate Faqih (guardianship of the supreme jurist), and especially the absolute guardianship of the jurist had not been raised. The concept

of an Islamic state was vague and sketchy. It may be possible to show with this method that the relative majority of the slogans were about the religious leadership of Imam. Moreover, it can be added that Imam and Ayatollah Motahhari, even in 1980, emphasized that the clergy did not intend to rule. Motahhari said that Velayate Faqih would play the role of ideologist and not ruler. In his opinion, nobody in the course of history had imagined that Velayate Faqih means ruling¹⁾

3. After the incident of the tobacco rebellion during Nasserudin Shah's reign, opposition to colonialism transformed into opposing despotism and dictatorship. In fact, Iranians found enough courage to take initiatives against the national government too. The main dilemma in the constitutional movement and the oil nationalization movement was lack of a unique and powerful leadership. This was not a problem with the Islamic Revolution. Imam Khomeini possessed a prominent, charismatic, brave, and determined character and was a great politician, faqih, sage, and a man familiar with the time he lived in. The spirituality of Imam was evident to every one. Many of his audiences fell to crying while listening to his sermons and speeches. The leadership of the revolution was mainly on the Imam's shoulders. If the clergy had a big share in leading the revolution, it was mostly due to their being followers of the great leader of the revolution. Motahhari, in proving that small political and non-political groups played no great role in the revolution, refers to different theories about the causes of the revolution. Interestingly enough, he unconsciously brings up religious leadership in his explanation of the religious factor²⁾

1- M. Motahhari. *About the Islamic Revolution*, Qom. Sadra, p87.

2- Ibid, pp.49-51.

This unique characteristic of Imam caused the people to trust his person more than the content of his messages. The Islamic state's visage was not very clear to people; however, due to the trust and faith people felt for their prophet-like religious leader, they moved in that direction. When Imam said, "Only Islamic Republic, neither a word less, nor a word more", people may not have had a complete understanding of its content, but Imam's word was unquestionable for them.

Zibakalam says:

Imam was a national and anti-imperialist leader for non-religious political forces, an anti-dictator leader to intellectuals and finally, a popular and beloved leader to millions of common Iranian men and women due to the picture that had been drawn of the Shah and his regime.¹

Keddie also says that Imam Khomeini had become the symbolic leader of revolution for many non-religious people²) Mohammadi -- who calls leadership, ideology, and people as the elements of the revolution — unconsciously explains the leadership factor in trying to explain the ideology factor³) Amid Zanjani also in explaining the revolution's elements, immediately enters into the issue of leadership. 4. Islam and Shi'ism are texts that could have numerous interpretations. Shi'a authorities have tried various tacts in the course of history, and they have not had the same perception and interpretation of the relationship that should exist between politics-and religion. The Shi'ism propagated by non-political authorities, such as Ayatollah Khomeini, could in no way be the originator of revolution. Since

1- Zibakalam, Ibid, pp90-91.

2- Keddie, Ibid.

3- Mohammadi, Ibid, pp95-112.

different interpretations of Shi'ism were presented parallel to each other, it cannot be said that ideology, by itself was the main cause of the revolution.

It was Imam Khomeini's interpretation of Islam and Shi'ism that gave people revolutionary energy and power. He answered the arguments regarding the confrontation with western civilization and modernism in the same way that the late Ayatollah Nayeeni did. Obviously, we should not expect to find any clear interpretation of modern phenomena in Islam and Shi'ism. In facing modernity and new phenomena, a religion needs leaders and interpreters who have the ability to adapt the old text with new conditions. This hard, and seemingly impossible, task was in nobody's power, but Imam Khomeini's.

Imam's Islam was a revolutionary Islam that could not coalesce with conventional and conservative interpretations. Of course, the effects of Dr. Shariati's books and speeches must not be disregarded either; and they were of great help in mobilizing people, especially the youth. His interpretation, like Imam's, had a revolutionary form, and assisted in mobilizing people. It must, of course, be noted that Shi'ism has always been the religion of protest and revolution.

Before Imam's interpretation of the religion and its relationship with politics, Islam and Shi'ism and even the concept of "guardianship of the supreme jurist", had existed in a general sense. However, it was Imam's characteristic that gave the half-dead body of Shi'ism and political thinking in Iran, a new life.

5. In addition to the major causes of Iran's revolution, there were numerous secondary and accelerating factors which provided the possibility of mobilizing the masses, and finally, the victory of the revolution. One of these elements was the Carter administration's

pressing the observation of human rights in 1356 (1977) and the United States' not showing any practical opposition to the trend of the revolution's victory. As Iran's regime stepped back, and the world powers showed no explicit opposition to the growth of the revolution, people, mostly consisting of the youth born approximately around 1961, became increasingly encouraged and brave. Yet, Iran's revolution did not have as many revolutionaries killed as other revolutions around the world.

Another accelerating factor was the Shah's cancer. He had been informed of his illness by two French physicians and this had a deleterious effect on his character. He constantly assaulted people's sacred beliefs and was unable to make correct decisions. Moreover, his mind had become infected by the conspiracy illusion. And since it was not possible for him to believe that people were empty handedly overwhelming his 700,000 man army, he insisted on the illusory idea that this revolutionary movement was the plot of foreign powers -- and even the United States'.

People, on the one hand, witnessed the regime's weakness and helplessness and the United States' keeping silent, and on the other hand, were encouraged by Imam Khomeini's firmness and dignity. As William Langer says, the victory of any revolution is more the result of weakness and retreat of the ruling power, than the force and determination of the revolutionaries.

6. In the view of political sociology, patrimonialism, or inherited dominance, is a type of political traditional rulership in which an imperial family enforces its aggressive rule through administering a system of its own making. In a neo-patrimonial and imperial system, political power is totally in the hands of a commander and dictator who allows no establishment of any politically stable group having

special privileges in the political realm of the country. Iran's imperialism was of the neo-patrimonial kind. With regards to a substitute for such a system, it has been said that one of the ways to make changes to a monarchial system is making use of force and revolutionary harshness.

According to Brinton and Waleh, "In the transition process of a patrimonial system, the middle class always takes the opposition's part". Huntington also says that, "The substitution pattern requires powerful opponents to change the balance of power in their own favor in order to overcome such a regime". Obviously, in this process, a charismatic and traditional leadership can be one of the substitutes. Considering that one of our political culture's features is the creation of heroes, this trait becomes more understandable.

Conclusion

In the early explanation of this research hypothesis, five essential questions were presented that somehow challenge the existing theories regarding the Islamic Revolution's hows and whys. Though the answer to these questions can easily be extracted from earlier explanations, here, we will take a quick review of them:

1. How did a religious revolution take place in an era that, from every aspect, religion was being weakened?

The effect of religious leadership was much stronger than the religion itself in the process of the Islamic Revolution's victory, though it is also impossible to draw a clear line of demarcation between these two elements. Considering the appearance of accelerating factors — such as Carter's human rights policy, lack of a practical initiative by the United States, the Shah's weakness of character and the atmosphere created after a period of suppression -

all helped in creating conditions for the effectiveness of the religious leadership of Imam Khomeini. The masses, relying unconsciously on the original and noble religious values, followed their leader and caused the blossoming of the Islamic Revolution.

2. How did Iran's unarmed people, with their fist and faith, overwhelm an armed regime having the support of all the foreign powers?

It is true that people had no arms, but they were encouraged by Imam Khomeini's leadership and their hearts beat for their religious values; while the United States made no overt attempt in stopping the revolution. The Shah, too, with his psychological imbalance, made wrong decisions -- such as rapidly changing impotent prime ministers -- which gave more encouragement to people in opposing him and added to the regime's difficulties. Of course, there other incidents that helped in transforming the "island of stability" into the home of the Islamic Revolution.

3. Why didn't America, which saw her interests in Iran and the region in danger, take any military action to stop the victory of the revolution?

The United States hoped to be able to somehow get along with the revolution's leaders, especially Bazargan's provisional government. In part, the United States' hesitation was due to their lack of a true understanding of Iran's condition. The reports sent to Washington by the American Embassy in Tehran, up to the last days, noted no chance of having a revolution. On the other hand, when the uprising became nationwide, policies like execution of a military coup and the like were of no use.

4. How and why did people choose the road to revolution, martyrdom and sacrifice over material interests?

Though people (of course, not all strata) lived in a relatively good condition, they were not satisfied with the prevailing conditions.

Poverty or wealth are not by themselves the cause of a revolution. It is the dissatisfaction with living conditions that encourages individuals and the people (as an integrated body) to rise up.

The common belief was that the Shah and royal family were abusing the country's wealth, he was America's puppet and had the intention of exploiting and dumbfunding the nation, and so on. Though the Shah's regime was facing a relative economic crisis in 1977 compared to the previous years - especially 1973, in which, oil prices had suddenly quadrupled -- it must be pointed out that, first of all, mere inflation and economic problems do not become the motives for revolution.

Secondly, the people, though having suffered some economic losses, were still not in a very bad economic situation. They were not suffering so badly as to want to change the situation with a revolution. It is not logical to claim that people revolted, sacrificed their blood and life and bore so many losses to achieve a better standard of living because the economic future of the country was quite unclear to them. Stated more precisely, people were ignorant of their future economic condition at that time. 5. How is the break in the years 1963 to 1977 interpreted and justified?

It is a fact that the Islamic Revolution had roots in the events of Khordad 15, 1342 (June 6, 1963). Therefore, it is necessary to somehow justify the question of relative Calm from 1963 to 1977. The lack of harmony between the (defective and superficial) economic development and the cultural and political progress needed time, for the grounds for revolution to be established. The requirements for this phenomenon had been provided in the course of the said years, but the need for clearing the barriers and creating the revolution's accelerating elements was felt. In 1977, both requirements existed

simultaneously lack of coordination of political and economic development) and the barrier clearance (i.e., America's open interference, or the presence of a strong army loyal to Shah). In addition to the accelerating elements (like Carter's human rights campaign and the Shah's cancer) acted as catalysts and speeded up the reaction. Finally, the religious leadership of Imam Khomeini arose as the most important element in the victory of the revolution and landed the last blow on the half dead body of the crumbling monarchial regime.

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