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Of love and longing : a study of Ayatollah Khomeini's mystical poetry and its reception in Iran and abroad

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The Clergy's Role in Politics

1.1 Introduction

When Ayatollah Khomeini developed his theories on an Islamic form of governance, he was inspired by the political ideas of several clerics who had responded to political developments in late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Iran.¹⁴ To explain Ayatollah Khomeini's political thinking, and how he as a cleric was able to gain absolute power in Iran, I will start this chapter by examining the relationship between the clergy and the political powers from the nineteenth century, when Iran was in the hands of the Qajar Dynasty (r. 1785-1925). During this period the clergy's role in political affairs increased, partly because Iran experienced continuous political intervention by European powers, notably Russia and Great Britain. These powers wanted to benefit from Iran's military weakness by exploiting Iran at an economic and political level. The Qajar period can also be characterized as a period during which Iran was exposed to new technologies and to modernist European philosophical and political thoughts, greatly affecting the socio-political climate in Iran. The clergy's response to these developments is significant as it sheds light on the politicization of the clergy, foreshadowing their prominent role during the Islamic Revolution. The political theologies developed by Iranian clerics in the early twentieth century helped forming the doctrine of the 'absolute rule of the jurist' (*velâyat-e faqih*), which became the keystone of Ayatollah Khomeini's Islamic ideology. Following the referendum of April 1st 1979, *velâyat-e faqih* became a key element in the constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

1.2 Iran's Socio-Political Situation under the Qajar Dynasty (1785-1925)

Shortly after the Qajar family installed themselves as the new ruling dynasty of Iran, the country was confronted with the encroachments of two major foreign powers, Russia and Great Britain. It was not long before these powers had the ability to bring well-armed forces to the Iranian area, while the Iranian army had outdated military equipment and was not well organized. On its northern borders, Russia displayed an interest in Iranian territories. In its

¹⁴ I have used "clergy" and "clerics" to translate *ulamâ*, the class of religious scholars with diverse roles in the mosques, schools and courts, and as trustees and notaries, on the basis of their literacy and varying degrees of theological training.

attempt to dominate Central Asia and the Caucasus, Russia launched various attacks on Iran.¹⁵ The Shiite clergy looked with suspicion at the Russian invasions and became politically involved when Russia and Iran became embroiled in the first Russo-Iranian war, between 1804 and 1813. On several occasions, the clergy used their influential positions to declare *jihâd*, obliging Iranian Shiite Muslims to join in defending Iranian territory from Russian invasions. However, the Iranian army was not yet prepared to face modern warfare, and Iran had to cede large territories, including Azerbaijan and Dagestan, to Russia in the Treaty of Golestân (1813).¹⁶ Iran was again defeated in the second Russo-Iranian war (1826-1828), and lost the vassal states of Tâlish (present day Aruch), Nakhchivan, Karabakh and Yerevan under the Treaty of Turkmanchay (1828).¹⁷

Great Britain also continuously tried to expand its influence in Iran. It had succeeded in dominating large parts of the Ottoman Empire (1299-1922) to the West of Iran, on economic, military and political levels, and since 1600 had set up successful trade relations with India to the East, through the activities of the East India Company. From 1757, Great Britain also achieved military dominance in the Indian subcontinent, and expanded the British Empire into South East Asia. The Southern part of Iran was a strategic area for the British, to strengthen their commercial and political interests against Russia and other European countries.¹⁸

The only way for Iran to protect its territory was by modernization. Iran witnessed how several Islamic countries in the region that were part of the Ottoman Empire, but were dominated by Western powers, had quickly established strong modernized armies. The Qajar rulers realized that they had to modernize their army as well, if they wanted to withstand the invasions of powers such as Russia and Great Britain. They also realized that they would need a modern centralized bureaucratic system of government, to replace the local governors, who

¹⁵ A. Goldschmidt Jr., "The Historical Context," in *Understanding the Contemporary Middle East*, eds. D.J. Gerner and J. Schwedler, Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2004, p. 53.

¹⁶ See E.L. Daniel, in *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, under Golestân Treaty.

¹⁷ G.R.G. Hambly, "Iran during the Reign of Fath 'Ali Shâh and Muhammad Shâh," in *The Cambridge History of Iran*, Vol. 7, ed. W.B. Fisher, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991, pp. 145-146. For a full translation of the Treaty of Turkmanchay see J. C. Hurewitz, *Diplomacy in the Near and Middle East. A Documentary Record 1535-1914*, Vol. I, New York: Octagon Books, 1972, pp. 231-237.

¹⁸ A. Amanat, in *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, under Great Britain iii. British Influence in Persia in the 19th century, and V. Martin, *Creating an Islamic State: Khomeini and the Making of a New Iran*, New York: I.B. Tauris, 2003, pp. 1-9.

had operated independently from the central state and often had their own armies and tax systems.

There was also some modernization in education. The Dâr al-Fonun Institute, a polytechnic college, was established in Tehran in 1851 at the instigation of the Qajar government. European instructors were brought in to teach Iranians, primarily military officers, the military disciplines. In addition to military subjects, much of the teaching focused on technical subjects and foreign languages, particularly French. While military modernization was a primary goal in creating the institute, the students were also exposed to Western ideas such as liberalism, nationalism, and secularization. A few decades later other colleges inspired by the spirit of modernity followed in Iran, such as the Military College (founded 1885) and the College of Political Science (founded 1899).¹⁹ These colleges, and the parallel phenomenon of Iranian students studying in Paris, London or Berlin, led the development of a small but influential group of young Iranian intellectuals, who were inspired by Western ideas such as nationalism and constitutionalism and, as we will read in the next section, would play an important role during the constitutional revolution.²⁰

The modernization plans of the Qajar rulers were meant to strengthen Iran against foreign intrusions, but in retrospect it appears that the modernization campaign itself prolonged Iran's dependence on foreign powers. To generate money to finance modernization activities, the Qajar shahs, particularly Nâser al-Din Shah (r. 1848-1896), turned to both Russia and Great Britain. Both powers were willing to provide the Qajar Shahs with huge loans in exchange for lucrative concessions. Iran did not, however, become a significant military power. As V. Martin states, "The Qajars...came to recognize that more was to be gained in terms of defense by playing off the British against the Russians than by pursuing expensive and demanding military reforms that were unlikely to win them victory. This remained in essence their policy throughout the nineteenth century, and the military-driven reform was thus lost."²¹ Instead, the Qajar Shahs granted the Russians and the British multiple concessions. In 1872, Nâser al-Din Shah granted the British businessman Jules de Reuter the right to exploit mines, to build railways and to set up a national bank (the Imperial Bank of Persia) under the Reuter Concession. In 1874, the Shah gave the Russians, amongst others, permission to construct and exploit railway roads and telegraph lines in the northeast under

¹⁹ J. Gurney and N. Nabavi, in *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, under Dâr al-Fonun.

²⁰ For the role of the Iranian intellectuals in the political scene, see R.P. Mottahedeh, *The Mantle of the Prophet: Religion and Politics in Iran*, Oxford: Oneworld, 2009, pp. 51, 52.

²¹ V. Martin, *Creating an Islamic State*, p. 2.

the Falkenhagen Concession.²² And in 1890, the Shah granted a British company a monopoly in the tobacco industry under another concession.

The response of the clergy to all these economic and socio-political developments was far from positive. Many Iranian clerics observed them with distrust, fearing that modernization would circumscribe their power in the social, political and economic domains, which they had gained from their role as the ‘source of imitation’ (*marja’-e taqlid*) for the religious community. As we shall see, they responded fiercely to these developments, in particular to the tobacco concession. Both the clergy and the merchant class were outraged when they learned about the privileges granted to the British concessionary under this agreement. Merchants feared that foreign traders would threaten the Iranian consumer market by importing cheap products from the West. The clergy would receive less Islamic tax from the merchants if the latter earned less. Clerics had a central role in boycotting the tobacco concession, with the highest ranking cleric, Mirzâ Hasan Shirâzi (d. 1895), who resided in Iraq, pronouncing a *fatwa* declaring that Iranians were no longer allowed to consume tobacco.²³ The clergy in Iran followed Shirâzi’s example. In particular, Ayatollah Hasan Mirzâ Âshtiyâni (d. 1901), one of the leading clerics in Tehran, played a crucial role in mobilizing opposition.²⁴ When the Shah saw that Âshtiyâni, in his role as a leading religious guide, was able to attain an enormous response, the Shah personally sent him an angry letter in which he compelled him to withdraw his support for the *fatwa*, on pain of exile. A large crowd of Iranians responded to the Shah’s threats, forcing the Shah to abrogate his agreements with the British concessionary. The incident, which became known as the Tobacco Revolt of 1891-1892, was a turning point in clergy-state relations, since a large portion of the clergy turned their backs on the Shah.²⁵ The incident also showed the enormous

²² For consultation on these and other concessions see H. Amirahmadi, *Political Economy of Iran under the Qajars: Society, Politics, Economics and Foreign Relations 1796-1926*, New York: I.B. Tauris, 2012, pp. 28, 29, 63, 171 and V. Martin, *Creating an Islamic State*, pp. 5-7. See also W. Floor and M. Ettehadi, in *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, under Concessions.

²³ Mirzâ Hasan Shirâzi was the sole *marja’-e taqlid* during that time, residing in Iraq.

²⁴ H. Algar, in *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, under Âštiâni, Hasan.

²⁵ For the role of the clergy in the Tobacco Revolt see N.R. Keddie, *Religion and Rebellion in Iran: The Iranian Tobacco Protest of 1891-1982*, Abington: Francis & Taylor Ltd., 1966 and N.R. Keddie, “Iranian Revolutions in Comparative Perspective,” in *American Historical Review* 88, Issue 3, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983, pp. 579-598.

influence of Iranian clerics on the population, not only in religious affairs but also on a socio-political level.²⁶

In addition to their own economic interests, the clergy feared that the Western presence in Iran would spread political thoughts, such as democracy and constitutionalism, which, they thought, would undermine Islam, corrupt society and become a threat to the educational and Islamic judicial system, all of which were in the clergy's domain. Through journeys to Europe and through Western schools, such as the Dâr al-Fonun, the young intellectuals of nineteenth century Iran were exposed to enlightened Western ideas. Iranian reformists such as Fath-‘Ali Âkhunzâda (d. 1878), Mirzâ Yusof Khân Mostashâr al-Dowla (d. 1895), Mirzâ Malkam Khan (d. 1908), and several others were convinced that the progress of the West could be explained by the adoption of codified law and the concept of government under the law. They promoted the belief that only the establishment of a constitutional government, based on democratic tenets, could save Iran from further decline. Mostashar al-Dowla promoted the adoption of a codified law which would complement the common law (*‘orf*). He believed that Iran's ‘backwardness’ could be explained by the inability of its inhabitants to interpret the Islamic sources (the Koran and Islamic traditions). Therefore he composed a treatise named *One Word* in which he explained the congruency between the articles of western-inspired codified law and Islam by referring to various Koranic verses and Islamic traditions (*hadith*).²⁷ Mostashar al-Dowla is thus an example of a modernist and a constitutionalist who looked for a reconciliation between constitutionalism and Islam. As we shall see, some clerics were inspired by modern ideas such as constitutionalism.

1.3 Clergy-State Relations during the Qajar Period

To understand the reaction of the clergy to socio-political events such as the Tobacco concession, it is essential to have a closer look at clergy-state relations during the Qajar period. The Qajars seized power in Iran in 1785. Prior to that, from 1501 to 1722, Iran was under control of the Safavid dynasty, who adopted Twelver Shia Islam as the state religion, turning Sunnite Iran into a Shiite country.²⁸ The Safavids exerted strict control over religious

²⁶ For the role of the Shiite clergy in the Iranian political arena see N.R. Keddie, “Iranian Revolutions in Comparative Perspective,” pp. 579-598.

²⁷ A good source for Mostashâr Dowla's views and ideas on constitutionalism is his book “Yek Kalame,” which was translated and introduced by A.A. Seyed-Gohrab and S. McGlinn in, *One Word - Yek Kaleme: 19th-Century Iranian Treatise Introducing Western Codified Law*, Leiden: Leiden University Press, 2010.

²⁸ M. Momen, *An Introduction to Shi'i Islam: The History and Doctrines of Twelver Shi'ism*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985, pp. 105-123; R. Matthee, in *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, under Safavid Dynasty.

institutions, which in the end resulted in a strong religious Shiite body after years of Sunnite dominance. Many clerics acknowledged the benefits of connecting themselves to the Safavid state, where they held influential positions. Other clerics preferred to withdraw into exclusively religious roles, remaining aloof from worldly matters. In general, both worldly and non-worldly clerics respected the authority of the Safavid rulers, on both political and spiritual levels, since they had a claim to descent from the seventh Imam.²⁹

When the Safavids were succeeded by the Qajar dynasty, after an interim in which the Afshar dynasty (1736-1796) and Zand dynasty (1750-1794) ruled in parts of Iran, the clerical class had to adapt to a political system with no claims to blood ties with the Shiite Imams. On a political level, the majority of the Shiite clergy initially accepted the authority of the Qajar monarchy in return for patronage for their religious institutions. As V. Martin observes, “the clergy recognized the benefit to Shi’ism of living in an orderly state, and one with a Shi’i rather than a Sunni or infidel ruler.”³⁰ On a religious level, three new practices developed in the Qajar period. In the first place, since the majority of the Iranian clergy agreed that not the Shah, but only specific Islamic jurists, could exercise religious authority, the concept of *ejtehâd* (independent judgement) became widely accepted early in the Qajar period. This allowed certain high-ranking Islamic jurists, called *mojtaheds*, to independently interpret the Islamic law and to form their own jurisprudential opinions.³¹ *Ejtehâd* had been a point of discussion since the year 874, when the last of the twelve Shiite Imams went into hiding, and the legitimate leadership of the community became problematic. To what extent could Islamic jurists play a leadership role, in the absence of the law-giving Imam, that would allow ongoing responses to new issues? One fraction of the Shiite clergy, called *Akhbâris* (derived from the Arabic word ‘news’ or ‘report’) argued that Islamic jurisprudence should be based only on the Koran and Sunna (‘practice of Prophet and Imams’). The other fraction, called *Usulis*, believed that Islamic jurists were allowed to perform *ejtehâd* on the basis of four sources of Islamic law: the Koran, Sunna, intellect (‘*aql*’) and consensus (*ejmâ*).³²

In the fourteenth century (C.E) the *Usulis* were dominant and the clergy adopted the *ejtehâd* practice. During the seventeenth century the practice was abolished, as a strong body

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ V. Martin, *Creating an Islamic State*, p. 3.

³¹ For further consultation on the adoption of the *ejtehâd* practice see W.L. Cleveland, *A History of the Modern Middle East*, Boulder: Westview Press, 2000, pp. 30, 108-109.

³² For a discussion on the Usuli-Akhbari controversy see M. Momen, *An Introduction to Shi’i Islam*, pp. 117-118, 127, 204, 222-225 and A. Zysow, in *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, under *Ejtehâd*.

of *Akhhâri* clerics dominated the religious domain.³³ The ascendancy of the Qajar family (which in the view of the clergy was illegitimate because it lacked a link to the Imams), intensified the discussion on the role of clerics in the religious sphere. The influential Shiite scholar Mohammad Bâqer Vahid Behbahâni (d. 1792) ended the discussion in favor of *ejtehâd* and the *Usulis*, by pronouncing the *Akhhâris* to be infidels.³⁴ The re-introduction of *ejtehâd* greatly influenced the hierarchical structure of the religious establishment. High-ranking clerics (*mojtaheds*) who had specialized in *feqh* ('Islamic jurisprudence') and who could now independently form judgments on Sharia issues that were not explicitly settled in the Koran and Sunna, rose to the top of the clerical hierarchy, and had greater power and social influence.³⁵ The legitimation of *ejtehâd* also gave *mojtaheds* the right to collect the religious taxes (*khoms*) and alms (*zakât*), which each Muslim is expected to pay yearly, and which were previously collected by the state.³⁶ Another important socio-political consequence was that *mojtaheds*, in their role as the general vicegerents (*Nâ'eb al-Âmm*) of the Hidden Imam, were now also allowed to declare *jihâd* ('holy war').³⁷

A second religious practice that was widely accepted during this period was the need for *taqlid* ('imitation', 'following'). This means that all Shiite Muslims are obliged to blindly follow a learned *mojtahed* as a 'model of imitation' (*marja'-e taqlid*) in all worldly affairs, from personal private matters to social, political and religious matters.³⁸ The adoption of this title strongly influenced the power zones within the religious community, dividing the Shiite world into a small elite group of *mojtaheds*, those clerics that had studied jurisprudence and who had obtained permission (*ejâze*) from another *mojtahed* to independantly form legal judgments based on the Koran and Sunna, opposed to ordinary Shiite followers, the *moqalleds*

³³ See S.A. Arjomand, *The Turban for the Crown : The Islamic Revolution in Iran*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1988, pp. 13-15.

³⁴ See M. Momen, *An Introduction to Shi'i Islam*, pp. 127-128.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 225.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 206, 207.

³⁷ The idea of the clergy representing the Hidden Imam had been developed by Muhaqqiq al-Karaki (d. 1533), but initially only applied on his role as leader of the Friday prayer. Shahid al-Thâni (d. 1558), extended their representative role to all religious tasks of the Hidden Imam, including the collection of the Islamic taxes, but not the declaration of offensive *jihâd*. Though a theoretical basis was laid for the independent authority of the clergy during the Safavid dynasty, in practice the Safavid rulers did not allow the clergy to practice their authority. This was only put into practice during the Qajar period. See *ibid.*, pp. 190-191.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 190, 224-225.

(‘imitators of the *mojtahed*’).³⁹ The highest ranking *mojtaheds* gained enormous religious and economic influence during the nineteenth century. They were no longer merely leaders of Friday prayers, they had a crucial role in the daily life of all Iranians, where they functioned as ‘models’ in all conceivable matters.⁴⁰ These ‘sources of imitations’ wrote books entitled *towzih al masâ’el* or ‘explanation of issues’ telling their followers how to cope with questions, religious and worldly.⁴¹ At times, there has been broad consensus that one preeminent *mojtahed* is the ‘sole model of imitation’ (*marja’-e taqlid-e motlaq*); at other times the faithful chose their own ‘model of imitation’ from among the living *mojtaheds*. The acceptance of *ejtehâd* and *taqlid* and the subsequent introduction of the title of *marja’-e taqlid-e motlaq* further concentrated financial and political power in the hands of a small group of top-ranking clerics.⁴² The most recent sole *marja’-e taqlid*, Ayatollah Borujerdi, died in 1961. Some clerics, such as Ayatollah Tâleqâni (d. 1979), then argued that religious authority should no longer be concentrated in the hands of a single *marja’-e taqlid*.⁴³ Ayatollah Khomeini would later reverse this de-concentration of religious authority, by making the concept of *velâyat-e faqih*, the ‘governance of the jurist’, central in the Islamic Republic of Iran.

A third important event that greatly influenced the religious sphere during the Qajar period was the fact that shortly after the fall of the Safavid dynasty the center of Shiite religious authority had shifted from Isfahan to the shrine cities of Iraq. The move was the result of continuing threats on the address of the Shiite authorities by Afghan invaders who wished to turn Iran into a Sunnite country.⁴⁴ This shift of the Shiite religious authorities to Iraq allowed them to enlarge their sphere of influence and to act as an independent religious body. The Qajar monarchs were well aware of the influence of the clergy on the population and used them as mediators to ensure that people accepted government policies. In return, the clergy could act independently from the state and generated their own income from *waqfs* (religious endowments), Islamic taxes, and educational and juridical tasks. In addition to these religious developments, failures in the government apparatus increased the power of the

³⁹ Only after a cleric has received permission (‘*ejâze*’) from another *mojtahed* and after the public has recognized him as such, may he be called a *mojtahed*. (See *ibid.*, pp. 202-204).

⁴⁰ M. Momen, *An Introduction to Shi’i Islam*, pp. 203-206, 246 and J. Calmard, in *Encyclopaedia of Islam* (2), under *Mudjtahid*.

⁴¹ For the function of the *marja’-e taqlid* see J. Calmard, in *Encyclopaedia of Islam* (2), under *Mardja’-i Taklid*.

⁴² M. Momen, *An Introduction to Shi’i Islam*, pp. 206-207.

⁴³ For the position of the clergy vis-à-vis the function of *marja’-e taqlid* see J. Calmard, in *Encyclopaedia of Islam* (2), under *Mardja’i Taklid*. See also M. Momen, *An Introduction to Shi’i Islam*, pp. 190-191, 224-225.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 126-130.

clergy during the nineteenth century. As M. Momen indicates, in this period, “the people began increasingly to look to the ulama as their leaders and their voice vis-à-vis the government”.⁴⁵ On various occasions *mojtaheds* offered shelter to people who were persecuted by the government. Because of their semi-independent position, the clergy were able to assume this role.

While religious figures generally endorsed the Qajar monarchy in return for religious and judicial privileges, some clerics were critical of their authority and argued that only an Islamic jurist was authorized to exercise legislative and political authority during the absence of the twelfth Shiite Imam. One such cleric was Ahmad b. Mohammad-Mahdi al-Narâqi (d. 1831/2), who inspired Ayatollah Khomeini’s ideas on the Islamic state, as we will see. The highest-ranking *mojtahed*, Sheikh Ja’far al-Kabir Kâshef al-Ghetâ (d. 1813), issued a fatwa authorising the Qajar ruler Fath-Ali Shah (d. 1834) to launch a *jihâd* against the Russians. In response to this, Narâqi wrote a treatise in which he argued that only an Islamic jurist was allowed to represent the Imam Mahdi during his absence, both on a legislative and on a political level. The general response of the early nineteenth-century clergy to Narâqi’s treatise was negative: most accepted the Qajar monarchical system and remained distant, to some extent, from political affairs.⁴⁶ As we will see in the next section, several economic decisions by the state, such as the tobacco concession, triggered the clergy to actively enter the political arena.⁴⁷

1.4 The Role of the Clergy during the Constitutional Revolution (1905-1911)

As Iran entered the twentieth century, the role of the clergy in political affairs increased. Economically, Iran’s situation was still far from ideal, with a Shah who kept borrowing money from Russia and Great Britain to finance his European trips, and granted concessions to Western entrepreneurs to raise state income. The response of the clergy to the tobacco concession of 1890, in the form of a *fatwa*, is important as the first open sign of clerical involvement in political affairs in the modern era. The nation-wide response that the clergy generated shows their enormous influence among the Iranian population, in religious and

⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 143.

⁴⁶ See S. Akhavi, “Contending Discourses in Shii Law on the Doctrine of Wilāyat al-Faqīh,” in *Iranian Studies*, Vol. 29, No. ¾, 1996, pp. 229-268. See also V. Martin, *Creating an Islamic state*, pp. 117-118.

⁴⁷ M. Momen, *An Introduction to Shi’i Islam*, pp. 138-142.

political spheres.⁴⁸ That the clergy were indeed able and willing to use their influential position for political affairs appears from the role they played during the Constitutional Revolution some 15 years after the Tobacco Revolt. The Constitutional Revolution (1905-1911) started as a response by clerics and ‘merchants’⁴⁹ to changes that Mozaffer al-Din Shah had implemented in the custom rates.⁵⁰ When two Tehrani merchants were publicly punished by the Qajar government for not lowering their sugar price, after the government had raised the cost of imported sugar considerably, the merchants in Tehran responded by closing down the bazaar. They withdrew to the shrine of Shah ‘Abd al-‘Azim at the city of Rey, where they were supported by the clergy.⁵¹ As to why the clergy supported the merchants, Mahdavi argues that the clergy and the merchants in Iran have always had a close bond.⁵² As he explains, on the one hand the merchants needed the clergy for official services, such as legalizing contracts, and they depended on welfare facilities provided by the religious institutions, which the government often failed to offer. In addition, the merchants could always turn to the clergy for help (shelter, etc.) in difficulties with government officials. The clergy in turn had financial motives for supporting the merchants, since they depended on their religious alms, taxes and donations.⁵³ As Momen states, the clergy has every reason to maintain good relations with the merchants, since the payment of these taxes is not obligatory.⁵⁴ This also explains why, when the two merchants were punished, merchants and the clergy joined hands in large-scale demonstrations. The protests against the policies of the Qajar government were soon joined by secular intellectuals. This group consisted mainly of young Iranians, who had either studied in Europe or had attended a modern school or institute in Iran, such as the Dâr al-Fonun. These young intellectuals had been inspired by modern political ideas, such as democracy and constitutionalism. In their view, a constitutional government was the only way for Iran to withstand Western imperialism and curtail the

⁴⁸ B. Ghamari-Tabrizi, “The Divine, the People and the Faqih,” in *A Critical Introduction to Khomeini*, ed. B.A. Adib-Moghaddam, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014, pp. 214-216.

⁴⁹ The *bazaaris*, a collective name for those who worked within the traditional city market, such as merchants, artisans and bank-employees.

⁵⁰ V. Martin, *Creating an Islamic State*, p. 7.

⁵¹ For the sugar incident see R.P. Mottahedeh, *The Mantle of the Prophet*, pp. 35, 37 and V. Martin, in *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, under Constitutional Revolution ii. Events.

⁵² A. Mahdavi, “Significance of Private Archives for the Study of the Economic and Social History of Iran in the late Qajar Period,” in *Iranian Studies*, 16, 1983, p. 259.

⁵³ *Ibid.*

⁵⁴ M. Momen, *An Introduction to Shi’i Islam*, p. 207.

arbitrary and absolute rule of the Qajar monarchs. The opposition to customs reform seemed to be a perfect occasion for the intellectuals to get other groups, in this case merchants and clergy, on their side in demanding a Constitution.⁵⁵

1.5 The Clerical Response to Constitutionalism

Clerics responded differently to the constitutional movement.⁵⁶ Several *mojtaheds*, such as Sheikh Mohammad Kâzem Yazdi (d. 1919) fiercely rejected constitutionalism from the beginning, arguing that it would pose a threat to Islam, religious institutions and society. Most of the *mojtaheds* agreed with the intellectuals and supported constitutionalism. One of these was Mirzâ Sayyed Mohammad Tabâtabâ'i (d. 1920).⁵⁷ Tabâtabâ'i openly criticized the Qajar government and, in 1905, composed a personal letter addressed to Prime Minister Abd al-Majid Atâbak-e A'zam (d. 1926), in which he criticized the Qajar government for opposing a constitution. His main motivation for supporting a constitutional government was that it would prevent Shiite Iran from falling into the hands of infidel foreign powers, which could be the downfall of Shia Islam.⁵⁸ Another clerical proponent of the Constitution was Sayyed Abdollâh Behbahâni (killed 1910). While Behbahâni had refused to cooperate during the Tobacco Revolt, he openly supported the Constitutional Movement.⁵⁹

Another influential *mojtahed* who initially supported constitutional government was Sheikh Fazl Allâh Nuri (executed 1909). Nuri was connected to the court but became critical of the government. Nuri had many followers throughout the country. While later a fierce opponent of constitutionalism (*mashruta*), Nuri initially promoted constitutional governance, providing it was in accordance with the Sharia and supervised by the clergy. He called this form of governance *mashruta-ye mashru'a* or an 'Islamicized Constitution.' In his view, constitutionalism in this form would protect Islam and limit the absolute power of the Shah. In addition, he argued, it would protect Iran against foreign penetration. In his view, both constitutionalism and absolute monarchy were far from ideal, but since – in the absence of the Imam Mahdi – he had to choose between one of these two evils, he preferred constitutionalism, since power would at least not be in the hands of one person. Nuri played

⁵⁵ For the role of the intellectuals in the constitutional revolution see A. Amanat, in *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, under Constitutional Revolution i. Intellectual Background.

⁵⁶ For consultation on the groups that supported and opposed the constitution see *ibid.*

⁵⁷ N.R. Keddie, with a section by Yann Richard, *Modern Iran - Roots and Results of Revolution*, updated edition, New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003, pp. 66-67.

⁵⁸ V. Martin, in *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, under Nuri, Fazl-Allâh.

⁵⁹ A. Amanat, in *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, under Constitutional Revolution i. Intellectual Background.

an important role in the Constitutional Revolution, since he was responsible for the adoption of Article 2 in the Constitution of 1907, stating that Parliament should be controlled by a Council of Guardians, consisting of *mojtaheds*, who were to ensure that all governmental and legal decisions were in conformity with the Sharia.⁶⁰ After Nuri noticed that the *mojtaheds* who constituted the Council of Guardians were elected by the member of parliament themselves and thus had a completely passive role in the political process, he became a fierce opponent of the Constitution, which eventually led to his execution in 1909.⁶¹ Several of Nuri's ideas on the role of the clergy in politics, including the aforementioned article, inspired Ayatollah Khomeini's Islamic political theory.⁶²

The majority of the Shiite authorities in Iraq also openly supported the constitutionalists.⁶³ In 1909, Mohammad Hoseyn Nâ'ini (d. 1936), one of the leading Shiite clerics in Najaf, wrote an important treatise promoting the establishment of a constitutional government supervised by Islamic jurists (*foqahâ*).⁶⁴ It appears from Ayatollah Khomeini's work, such as *The Revealing of Secrets (Kashf al-Asrâr)*, published in 1943/4, that he was inspired by the supervisory role Nâ'ini had envisaged for the *foqahâ*.⁶⁵ Other leading Iraqi *mojtaheds* who supported the idea of a constitutional government were Abd Allâh Mâzandarâni (d. 1912) and Mohammad Kâzem Khorâsâni (d. 1911).⁶⁶

Generally speaking, one can say that the majority of the clergy initially supported the adoption of a constitution, in the expectation that it would respect Islamic laws. Tabâtabâ'i and Behbahâni in particular were seen as representing the religious support for constitutionalism, after they joined other constitutionalists in the 1905 'sit-in' (*bast*) at the

⁶⁰ V. Martin, *Creating an Islamic State*, pp. 7, 8 and V. Martin, in *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, under Nuri, Fażl-Allâh.

⁶¹ A. Amanat, in *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, under Constitutional Revolution i. Intellectual Background. See also the article's by V. Martin, in *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, under Nuri, Fażl-Allâh and V. Martin, *Creating an Islamic State*, pp. 7, 8, 55, 104, 106, 109, 117, 120, 123.

⁶² V. Martin, *Creating an Islamic State*, p. 104.

⁶³ M. Momen, *An Introduction to Shi'i Islam*, p. 249.

⁶⁴ V. Martin, *Creating an Islamic State*, pp. 7,8, 55, 104, 106 and F.M. Nūrā'ī, "The Constitutional Ideas of a Shi'ite Mujtahid Mohammad Husayn Na'ini," in *Iranian Studies*, 8/4, 1975, pp. 234-45.

⁶⁵ For Na'ini's influence on Ayatollah Khomeini's ideas in *The Revealing of Secrets* see V. Martin, *Creating an Islamic State*, pp. 103-112.

⁶⁶ For the role of the clergy in the Constitutional Revolution see N.R. Keddie, "Religion and Irreligion in Early Iranian Nationalism," in *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 4/3, 1962, pp. 268-295 and A. Amanat, in *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, under Constitutional Revolution i. Intellectual Background.

shrine of Shah ‘Abd al-‘Azim.⁶⁷ The clergy did not agree on the exact role of Islam within the proposed constitutional system. They realized they had to support a constitution to limit the authoritarian rule of the Shah and his appointees. But their primary motive was the need to modernize Islam itself, including its political ramifications, to enable Islam to withstand the encroachment of the powerful West. Under the influence of the pan-Islamic reformist ideas of Jamāl al-Din al-Afghāni (d. 1897), whose ideas were extremely popular in the Middle East, the clergy had become receptive to adapting Islam to modern conditions.⁶⁸ What had started in 1905 as small demonstrations by clergy and merchants against changes in the custom rates, ended up in large-scale country-wide protests, joined by millions of Iranians of different backgrounds, all participating in changing society by curtailing the power of the Shah and establishing a constitutional system.

The demands of the Iranians were answered by Mozaffer al-Din Shah in 1906, with the installment of the first *Majles* (parliament), followed by the adoption of a constitution one year later in 1907. The Constitution named Twelver Shia Islam as the state religion. But the new governmental system proved to be short-lived. When Mozaffer al-Din Shah died in 1907, he was succeeded by his son Mohammad Ali Shah (d. 1925), who strongly disapproved of the constitutional system and, in 1908, bombarded the parliament building and took all power into his own hands. Many pro-constitutional *mojtaheds*, in particular Nuri and the Iraqi *mojtaheds*, became disenchanted and ceased their support for constitutional government, seeing more future in a coalition between the clergy and the monarchy.⁶⁹ The constitutionalists however continued their attacks on the Qajar government, resulting, in 1909, in the abdication of Mohammad Ali Shah in favour of his son Ahmad Shah (d. 1925). Again an Assembly was installed and a constitution was adopted, but this time it was secular, with no room for religion or religious parties. This can partly be explained by the fact that a large group of influential pro-constitutional *mojtaheds* had dropped their demands for an Islamic (*mashru’a*) form of constitutional governance, siding instead with Mohammad Ali Shah after his 1908 *coup d’etat*.⁷⁰ The constitution did not bring what people expected. As H. Katouzian indicates “the Revolution’s triumph in 1909 led to growing chaos rather than law, order and democratic government, for chaos had been the traditional Iranian society’s response to the fall of the

⁶⁷ For this event see A. Amanat, in *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, under Constitutional Revolution i. Intellectual Background.

⁶⁸ For Afghāni’s life and thoughts see N.R. Keddie, in *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, under Afghāni, Jamāl-al-Dīn.

⁶⁹ Ibid.; V. Martin, in *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, under Nuri, Fażl-Allāh.

⁷⁰ A. Amanat, in *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, under Constitutional Revolution i. Intellectual Background.

state.”⁷¹ In addition to the political chaos, Iran was deeply affected by the First World War, as Britain, Turkey and Russia fought out their disputes on Iranian soil. In 1907, Russia and Britain divided Iran into zones of influence: Russia dominated the northeastern parts of Iran, the British dominated the South. Iran decided to cooperate with Germany. It was not until 1921, when Reza Khan (d. 1944) appeared on the political scene, as commander of the Cossack Brigade after launching a coup on the Qajar regime together with Sayyed Ziyâ al-Din Tabâtabâ’i (d. 1969), that peace and order, on both the societal and governmental levels, slowly returned to Iran. Tabâtabâ’i named himself Prime Minister, while Reza Khan was the new Minister of War. In 1925, Reza Khan abolished the Qajar monarchy, crowning himself the new Shah of Iran. Reza Shah appeared to be a strong leader, able to pull the country out of its post-war depression. In an attempt to turn Iran into a modern, strong and independent nation-state, he implemented large-scale reforms. He centralized and consolidated the government’s power by placing everything under heavy state control. In addition, he implemented a series of modernization plans, affecting the economic, educational, judicial, and cultural spheres. The army was modernized to protect the country against foreign threats, but also to reduce the power of Iranian tribes whose chiefs had often had their own armed forces and a degree of political independence. Many railroads were constructed to improve communication, extend government control, and to enable the industrialization of even peripheral areas.

1.6 The Rise of Reza Shah and the Curtailment of the Clergy’s Role

Reza Shah’s modernization policies also had far-reaching consequences for the religious institutions.⁷² Reza Shah was aware of the clergy’s influence on the Iranian population. Prior to his coronation, he deliberately sought the support of the clergy and merchants in his attempt to remove Prime Minister Sayyed Ziyâ al-Din Tabâtabâi from the government in 1921 and Ahmad Shah from the throne in 1924. He knew that he needed the approval of these two groups to put him in power. This explains the friendly relationship between Reza Shah and the clergy prior to his coronation in 1925. In this period one sees Reza Khan presenting

⁷¹ H. Katouzian, *Iran in the 21st Century: Politics, Economics and Conflicts*, Abingdon: Routledge, 2008, p. 1.

⁷² For a discussion of clergy-state relations during the early Pahlavi Era see A. Keshavarzian, “Turban or Hat, Seminarian or Soldier: State Building and Clergy Building in Reza Shah’s Iran,” in *Journal of Church and State*, Vol.45(1), 2003, pp. 81-112, and S.A. Arjomand, *The Turban for the Crown*, pp. 80-87. See also M.M.J. Fischer, *Iran: From Religious Dispute to Revolution*, Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1980, pp. 108, 109 and V. Martin, *Creating an Islamic State*, pp. 9-17.

himself as a true Muslim, visiting holy shrines and going on pilgrimages.⁷³ This changed once Reza Khan attained full power in Iran in 1925. He slowly began to undermine the religious institutions. As V. Martin argues, Reza Shah “perceived religion as retrogressive and the ‘ulama as backward-looking obstacles to progress.”⁷⁴ Therefore, he set out to limit their power, on the cultural, educational, legal, socio-economic, and judicial levels.

On the cultural level, Reza Shah’s first move was the 1927 Conscription Law, which obliged all men, including the clergy, to serve in the national army. One year later he introduced a dress code, the effect of which was to ban culturally and religiously defined clothing. Although these two laws did not apply to theological students and clerics who had tertiary-level religious qualifications, they were applicable to all the preachers who were not so highly qualified, limiting the influence of a large group of clerics. In 1929, Reza Shah banned two important religious enactments. The first was Shiite ‘passion play’ (*ta’ziya*) performances, a sort of public theatre in which actors depict the death of the third Shiite Imam, Imam Hoseyn.⁷⁵ The second was traditional annual marches to commemorate the martyred Shiite Imams.⁷⁶ In 1936, Reza Shah went as far as prohibiting women wearing the head scarf and other forms of *hejâb*. All these measures were intended to weaken religion and diminish the influence of the clergy in society. Reza Shah also tried to curtail the power of the clergy in education, by placing the educational system under state control and by making a sharp division between secular and religious education. This deprived the clergy of their dominant position in education. In a short period, thousands of secular schools with a western-inspired curriculum were erected throughout the country.⁷⁷

On a legal level, the clergy also experienced great setbacks. Traditionally, the clergy had been responsible for the registration and documentation of property. This changed after Reza Shah established a Land and Property Bureau in 1929, and the Registration of Documents and Property Act in 1932, obliging Iranians to officially register their properties. In 1934 Reza Shah also placed part of the administration of the religious endowments (*waqf*)

⁷³ M.H. Faghfoory, “The Ulama-State Relations in Iran: 1921-1941,” in *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 19, No. 4, pp. 414-416.

⁷⁴ V. Martin, *Creating an Islamic State*, p. 9.

⁷⁵ See the article by P. Chelkowski, in *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, under Ta’zia. See also M. Momen, *An Introduction to Shi’i Islam*, p. 251.

⁷⁶ A. Keshavarzian, “Turban or Hat, Seminarian or Soldier...,” p. 107 and M. Momen, *An Introduction to Shi’i Islam*, pp. 250, 251.

⁷⁷ See M. Momen, *An Introduction to Shi’i Islam*, pp. 250, 251.

under state control.⁷⁸ The reforms greatly diminished the income of the clergy, who had traditionally controlled these charitable properties and buildings, financed from donations by Muslims.⁷⁹ The legal services that the clergy had fulfilled as notaries, registrars, and administrators were greatly reduced by these legal reforms, leading to a great loss of income and social status and the clergy's semi-autonomous financial status.

The centralization of the judicial system under Reza Shah probably hit the clergy hardest. After dissolving the state judiciary in 1927, Reza Shah began secularizing the judicial system, by putting the entire system under the control of the Ministry of Justice. Through various legal reforms, Reza Shah was able to remove religious judges and lawyers from the judicial system. He replaced them with young, secular persons with a more modern education. In 1937, Reza Shah adopted a law stating that only those trained at the secular Tehran University were allowed to be judges in state courts. Through laws like these, the Qajar government was able to expel the clergy from the judicial system and deprive them of their role in policy-making.⁸⁰

1.7 The Clergy's Response to Reza Shah's Modernization Policies

Despite Reza Shah's assaults on religious institutions in the 1920s and 1930s, the majority of the clergy decided to refrain from political involvement.⁸¹ This can be explained first of all by the Pahlavi government's violent response to protests. While Reza Shah was aware of the enormous social influence of the clergy (the *ulamâ*), and initially tried to maintain a friendly bond with them, their critique of the 1927 Conscription Law led him to reassess this. As Faghfoory puts it, the Conscription law "was also the last time that the government submitted to the ulama's pressure, as government leaders realized that any further retreat was a tactic recognition of their own weakness and the ulama's power and influence."⁸² Thus, after 1927, Reza Shah increased his repression of religious institutions and did not shy away from the use

⁷⁸ Ibid. See also A. Keshavarzian, "Turban or Hat, Seminarian or Soldier..." p. 98.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ For the effects of judicial reforms on the clergy see V. Martin, *Creating an Islamic State*, pp. 13, 14 and M. Momen, *An Introduction to Shi'i Islam*, pp. 250, 251. See also M. Mohammadi, *Judicial Reform and Reorganization in 20th Century Iran: State-Building, Modernization and Islamicization*, New York: Routledge, 2008, pp. 80-108 and H. Enayat, *Law, State, and Society in Modern Iran: Constitutionalism, Autocracy and Legal Reform, 1906-1941*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013, pp. 113-144.

⁸¹ For this apolitical stance of the clergy under Reza Shah see B. Ghamari-Tabrizi, "The Divine, The People, and the Faqih," pp. 212-216.

⁸² M.H. Faghfoory, "The Ulama-State Relations in Iran: 1921-1941," p. 426.

of violence, even directed at the clergy. While the clergy's apolitical posture under Reza Shah was partly a question of fear, it can also be explained as a reaction to disappointment with the results of the Constitutional Revolution. Ultimately, the constitutionalists had completely ignored their demands for an Islamic form of governance. Cooperation with the Pahlavi government seemed to be a safer way for the clergy to secure their position in society.⁸³

There were other socio-economic motivations for the clergy's apolitical posture under Reza Shah. From 1922, work began on the construction of a new Shiite seminary in Iran, under the leadership of the most prominent *mojtahed*, Ayatollah Abdolkarim Yazdi Hâ'eri (d. 1936). This shifted the center of the Shiite world to the city of Qom in Iran, whereas previously the leading Shiite scholars had resided in the holy cities of Iraq. The new institute would enormously expand the influence of the Shiite clergy in Iran and throughout the Shiite world and was an important reason for them to cooperate with the Pahlavi state. As Ghamari-Tabrizi argues, "With the exception of a few high-ranking clerics, the clerical establishment was concerned more with defending the institution of clergy than asserting its political authority."⁸⁴ Of course, there was harsh criticism by the clergy of the Shah's reforms, in particular of the ban on women wearing the *châdor*. But Ayatollah Hâ'eri prevented wide-scale protests from the clergy, by issuing a *fatwa* in 1928, ordering his followers and students to refrain from political involvement. The *fatwa* was a response to an incident on March 21, 1928, when Iranians celebrated both the Iranian New Year (*Nowruz*) and Ramadan. On that day, Reza Shah's wife visited the shrine of Fâteme Ma'sume, the sister of the eighth Shiite imam, in Qom to attend a New Year celebration and, once inside, unveiled herself. When the Shiite clergy heard of this, they were outraged. In particular, Hâjj Sheikh Mohammad Bâfqi (d. 1946) forced her to leave the shrine, because she had shown disrespect by unveiling herself. Reza Shah had Bâfqi arrested. Ayatollah Hâ'eri stepped in to ensure peace, by issuing a *fatwa* forbidding any mention of the incident, and urging the clergy to take a quietist posture.⁸⁵ In a way, Hâ'eri represents the prevailing apolitical view of the clergy, who believed that in the absence of the twelfth Shiite Imam, it was their task to "afford moral

⁸³ B. Ghamari-Tabrizi, "The Divine, The People, and the Faqih," pp. 212-216.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 212-213.

⁸⁵ For the incident and the reaction of Ayatollah Hâ'eri see B. Moin, *Khomeini: Life of the Ayatollah*, p. 28 and see B. Ghamari-Tabrizi, "The Divine, The People, and the Faqih," p. 212. See also M.H. Faghfoory, "The Impact of Modernization on the Ulama in Iran, 1925-1941," in *Iranian Studies*, vol. 26, 1993, p. 296.

guidance in society and act as exemplary ethical leaders untainted by the corruption of governance.”⁸⁶

Under Reza Shah, an elite group of clerics developed, who received certain privileges and rights from the Pahlavi state, in return for their approval of Reza Shah’s modernization policies. The leading clerics, headed by Ayatollah Hâ’eri, accepted the 1927 Conscription Law on the condition that the leading clerics should be exempted. They also approved the ban on the annual commemoration of Imam Hoseyn’s death, a popular event not entirely under their control. Forbidding such religious expressions put more religious authority in the hands of the senior clerics. As Faghfoory explains, the Pahlavi government launched wide-reaching propaganda programs to demonstrate the un-Islamic nature of such popular religious celebrations, which in the eyes of the state were opportunities to launch demonstrations, and had nothing to do with Islam.⁸⁷ While the Pahlavi government feared such public commemorations for security reasons, since Shiite preachers had used them to mobilize large audiences against the government, the top-ranking clerics were suspicious of the ‘ignorant’ preachers who coordinated such commemorations. By supporting Mohammad Reza Shah’s ban, they could prevent low-level preachers from becoming too powerful.⁸⁸ Support for secularizing policies also enabled the top clergy in Qom to undercut the social standing of clergy who had only a preliminary seminary education, and so secure a uniform, exclusive and very influential social position, and greater power, for themselves.⁸⁹ Although they could not actively oppose Reza Shah’s secularizing policies, certain members of this group were secretly working out their ideas on opposing the Pahlavi government and were waiting for the right moment to rebel.

1.8 The Clergy under Mohammad Reza Shah

On August 25, 1941, the course of Iranian history changed when Soviet, British and American troops occupied Iran in the heat of the Second World War, claiming that Reza Shah sided with the Germans. In reality, this offered them an opportunity to create supply routes from the Persian Gulf to Russia. The allies deposed Reza Shah and replaced him with his young son Mohammad Reza Shah (d. 1980). The change in monarch also affected the social role of the clergy, who initially continued their apolitical stance, partly because of their fear of the

⁸⁶ B. Ghamari-Tabrizi, “The Divine, The People, and the Faqih,” p. 213.

⁸⁷ M.H. Faghfoory, “The Impact of Modernization on the Ulama in Iran, 1925-1941,” p. 298.

⁸⁸ A. Keshavarzian, “Turban or Hat, Seminarian or Soldier...,”p. 107.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 102.

powerful centralized government.⁹⁰ However Iran's continuing dependency on outside powers was grist for the mill of some opposition parties. The Tudeh Party, an Iranian communist party born in 1941, which became very popular, was Soviet-orientated and hoped to pull Iran from Western domination, in favour of a totalitarian regime.⁹¹ The National Front of Iran, which from 1949 was headed by Mohammad Mosaddeq (d. 1967), was also very popular. The National Front promoted parliamentary democracy and the nationalization of the oil industry. When Mosaddeq was appointed Prime Minister in 1951, one of the first things he did was to nationalize the Anglo-Persian Oil Company, which had been in the hands of the British since 1913.⁹²

Great Britain and America, in particular, objected to the nationalization of the Iranian oil industry. With the help of General Zâhedi and some former top figures in the National Front, such as Ayatollah Sayyed Abdolqâsem Kâshâni (d. 1962), who no longer agreed with Mosaddeq's policy, Great Britain and America secretly launched a large-scale anti-Mosaddeq project under the name of AJAX, intended to remove Mosaddeq from power. While at first hesitant, Mohammad Reza Shah also gave his support to the project. Great Britain's motive was mainly economic, while America's participation can be attributed mainly to its desire to prevent the Soviet Union benefiting from instability in Iran. With the help of the CIA, these three parties succeeded in toppling Mosaddeq in 1953, replacing him with General Zâhedi.⁹³ The political unrest surrounding Mosaddeq's rise and fall had large consequences for the socio-political situation in the country. After the *coup d'état* of 1953, Mohammad Reza Shah's regime became more dictatorial, treating political parties as a threat to stability and allowing Iranians little or no freedom of speech, and no political participation. The coup further diminished the role of the clergy in society. Their apolitical role during Mohammad Reza Shah's early years as monarch, can partly be explained as a sign of respect for the leading *marja'-e taqlid*, Ayatollah Borujerdi (d. 1961), the highest authority in the Shiite world, who had been the sole *marja'-e taqlid* since 1945 and who set the norms for the Shiite community in Iran. As V. Martin indicates, Borujerdi and the Shah had agreed that the clergy

⁹⁰ R.P. Mottahedeh, *The Mantle of the Prophet*, pp. 125-128 and B. Moin, *Khomeini: Life of the Ayatollah*, p. 65.

⁹¹ For the activities of the Tudeh Party see S. Zabih, in *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, under Communism ii. In Persia from 1941 to 1953 and T. Haqšenâs, in *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, under Communism iii. In Persia after 1953.

⁹² M.J. Gasiorowski, in *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, under Coup d'Etat of 1332 š./1953.

⁹³ For the 1953 coup see M.J. Gasiorowski, in *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, under Coup d'Etat of 1332 š./1953. See also V. Martin, *Creating an Islamic State*, pp. 18-20 and B. Moin, *Khomeini: Life of the Ayatollah*, p. 66.

would stay aloof from politics, as long as the Shah would not interfere in religious affairs.⁹⁴ According to M. Momen, “part of this accommodation between the *ulamâ* and the Shah was the leeway given to the *ulamâ* to raise a violent anti-Bahâ’i campaign.”⁹⁵ The clergy-state accommodation was severely tested in 1955, when the Bahâ’is were openly attacked on national radio by Sheikh Mohammad Taqî Falsafi (d. 2006), followed by numerous physical attacks on Bahâ’i sympathizers. The international community responded with shock, forcing the Shah to condemn the anti-Bahâ’i pogroms, although he had secretly allowed the clergy to launch the persecutions. After this incident of 1955, the former relatively friendly relations between the Pahlavi state and the clergy were never restored. This appears from Ayatollah Borujerdi’s public attack on the Land Reform Bill that Mohammad Reza was about to implement, as part of a new large-scale modernization program. Soon the clergy objected to other modernization plans.⁹⁶

1.9 Rise of Ayatollah Khomeini

The 1961 death of Ayatollah Borujerdi, the sole ‘source of imitation,’ greatly affected the religio-political climate in Iran. Since the leading clerics did not agree on which cleric could replace him and whether religious authority should be put in the hands of one or more clerics, a period of instability followed, in which several Ayatollahs could act independently.⁹⁷ During this period without any supreme religious authority, the Shah launched a large-scale modernization program, known as the White Revolution (1963-1979).⁹⁸ This included large-scale land reforms and extending the franchise to women. The modernization program greatly affected clergy-state relations, since the Shah ordered the establishment of state-governed religious institutions to further curtail the power of the clergy.⁹⁹ The Shah also adopted new local council laws, allowing both non-Muslims and women to vote. The clergy’s negative

⁹⁴ For information on Ayatollah Borujerdi see V. Martin, *Creating an Islamic State*, pp. 53-59 and H. Algar, in *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, under Borūjerdī, Ḥosayn Ṭabāṭabā’ī.

⁹⁵ M. Momen, *An Introduction to Shi’i Islam*, p. 253.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 253-254.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 254-255. See also B. Moin, *Khomeini: Life of the Ayatollah*, p. 70.

⁹⁸ For more information on the White Revolution see V. Martin, *Creating an Islamic State*, pp. 62-64. and R.P. Mottahedeh, *The Mantle of the Prophet*, pp. 21-22, 62. See also S.A. Arjomand, *The Turban for the Crown*, pp. 71-73.

⁹⁹ For more information on the opposition *din-e mellat* versus *din-e dowlat* see M. Momen, *An Introduction to Shi’i Islam*, pp. 255-258.

reaction was unprecedented.¹⁰⁰ A majority of the clergy openly resisted the Shah's social, economic and political oppression. During the demonstrations that followed, Ayatollah Khomeini, then a low-ranked cleric, rapidly gained fame by heading the religious opposition groups that were demonstrating, and by openly criticizing the Shah and his government in a well-known speech on June 3 1963.¹⁰¹ Ayatollah Khomeini objected especially to granting equal rights, such as the right to vote, to women. His view on women's rights at that time was totally opposite to the political role for women that he promoted after the Islamic Revolution.¹⁰² After his speech on June 3 1963, he was arrested and sentenced to death.¹⁰³ Ayatollah Khomeini's supporters backed him in large demonstrations. The uprising soon spread to other cities which resulted in total chaos throughout the country. Ayatollah Khomeini's followers included his students, large groups of merchants and the devout poor. They were impressed by Ayatollah Khomeini's pious way of life and the courage behind his momentous speech of June 1963. The government responded violently, killing hundreds of demonstrators. However, the continuous pressure of the clergy and Ayatollah Khomeini's supporters on the Shah resulted in the release of Ayatollah Khomeini in April 1964. The leading Ayatollahs succeeded in annulling the death sentence, by bestowing the title of Ayatollah on Ayatollah Khomeini and by falsely making the Shah believe that it was against constitutional law to sentence an Ayatollah to death.¹⁰⁴

Although Ayatollah Khomeini did not openly revolt against the Shah's policies, prior to the death of Borujerdi, in the 1940s and 1950s he had accumulated a substantial group of followers amongst his students to whom he entrusted his revolutionary religio-political ideas, sometimes in private. This group later developed into a well-organized Islamic Movement, the *Nahzat-e Eslâmi*.¹⁰⁵ Amongst these student and supporters were Ayatollah Morteza

¹⁰⁰ For the Shah's suppression of the clergy see S.A. Arjomand, *The Turban for the Crown*, pp. 84-86. See also M. Momen, *An Introduction to Shi'i Islam*, pp. 251-261.

¹⁰¹ For parts of Ayatollah Khomeini's anti-government speech see R.P. Mottahedeh, *The Mantle of the Prophet*, pp. 190-193. For Ayatollah Khomeini's anti-governmental movement see *ibid.*, pp. 188-191, 244-245, 308.

¹⁰² For Ayatollah Khomeini's ideas on women suffrage during the early 1960s, see V. Martin, *Creating an Islamic State*, pp. 60, 61.

¹⁰³ A. Milani, *The Shah*, New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2012, pp. 297-298.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 298.

¹⁰⁵ For information on the development of this movement, see V. Martin, *Creating an Islamic State*, pp. 48-74.

Motahhari (d. 1979) and Ayatollah Hasan Ali Montazeri (d. 2009), who were to play a crucial role in the Islamic Movement and Islamic Revolution.¹⁰⁶

After his release in April 1964, Ayatollah Khomeini continued to criticize the Pahlavi government. On October 27th 1964, when many Iranians had gathered at Ayatollah Khomeini's house in Qom to celebrate the birthday of Fâteme, the daughter of Prophet Mohammad, he delivered a sermon critical of the political situation. The Pahlavi government had just granted legal immunity to American military advisors in Iran, and had contracted another billion-dollar loan from America.¹⁰⁷ The media machine that Ayatollah Khomeini used to reach Iranians was crucial for the success of his revolutionary agenda. During the sermon, Ayatollah Khomeini's words were written down by some supporters, who soon spread them amongst the Iranian population through traditional networks, particularly the conservative merchants of Tehran.¹⁰⁸ As soon as the Pahlavi government heard of Ayatollah Khomeini's speech, it prepared to exile him. The plan was put into action only one week later, when he was arrested and immediately transported to Turkey by plane.

Ayatollah Khomeini spent his first year of exile in Turkey, where he was regularly visited by supporters from Iran, who often donated their religious taxes to him. Ayatollah Khomeini spent his days in Turkey travelling around the country and writing books. Since Ayatollah Khomeini quickly created a warm bond with the Turkish officials who were supposed to keep an eye on him, the Pahlavi government decided to exile Ayatollah Khomeini to Iraq towards the end of 1965, to prevent him from becoming too popular in his host country.¹⁰⁹ As V. Martin states, "The regime in Iran, justifiably perhaps, believed that there [Iraq] he would be eclipsed by the towering figures of long established ayatollahs and that his name would sink into oblivion."¹¹⁰ The opposite proved to be the case.

Iraq would be Ayatollah Khomeini's home until 1978. The news that Ayatollah Khomeini had moved from Turkey to Iraq spread rapidly in Iraq, and within days of his arrival a huge crowd, consisting of followers, senior Shiite and Sunnite clerics and Iraqi

¹⁰⁶ For information on Motahhari's life and thoughts, see *ibid.*, pp. 75-99 and B. Moin, *Khomeini: Life of the Ayatollah*, pp. 168-172.

¹⁰⁷ For Ayatollah Khomeini's sermon of October 27th 1964, see B. Moin, *Khomeini: Life of the Ayatollah*, pp. 122-127 and V. Martin, *Creating an Islamic State*, p. 64.

¹⁰⁸ For Ayatollah Khomeini's critique of the Pahlavi government in the period 1963-1964, see M. Momen, *An Introduction to Shi'i Islam*, pp. 160-169.

¹⁰⁹ For Ayatollah Khomeini's period of exile in Turkey see B. Moin, *Khomeini: Life of the Ayatollah*, pp. 129-139.

¹¹⁰ See V. Martin, *Creating an Islamic State*, p. 139.

government employees, came to show their respect. The leading Ayatollahs of Iraq, including Grand Ayatollah Mahmud Shâhrudi (b. 1948) and Grand Ayatollah Abu 'l-Qâsem Musavi Khu'i (d. 1992) also visited Ayatollah Khomeini soon after his arrival in Iraq. Not all Shiite clerics were happy with Ayatollah Khomeini's arrival. Ayatollah Mohsen ibn Mahdi Tabâtabâ'i Hakim (d. 1970), one of the leading Ayatollahs in the Shiite world, believed that Ayatollah Khomeini was too much involved in political affairs. In this period, many Shiite Ayatollahs were in favour of the separation of religion and state, with religion being the domain of the clergy in the absence of the Hidden Imam Mahdi, and politics a secular affair belonging to the Shah. Ayatollah Khomeini came into conflict with Hakim on the political role of the clergy.¹¹¹ The tense relationship never improved, illustrating the differences between top clerics on this issue. In Iraq, Ayatollah Khomeini wrote treatises, books and poetry and developed his thoughts about an Islamic government. In the 1940s and 1950s, Ayatollah Khomeini supported a constitutional government if the constitution was based on Islamic law. During his stay in Iraq, Ayatollah Khomeini advocated a new view of Islamic government, rejecting monarchy in any form. In 1969 and 1970, Ayatollah Khomeini gave lectures on this concept of Islamic government, which he later published under the title of *Islamic Government (Hokumat-e Eslâmi)*.¹¹²

Although Ayatollah Khomeini was exiled from Iran, the number of his supporters rapidly increased.¹¹³ His Islamic movement (*Nahzat-e Eslâmi*) owed much of its success and popularity to Ayatollah Morteza Motahhari (d. 1979), one of Ayatollah Khomeini's most loyal students, who became his representative in Iran during his exile.¹¹⁴ Motahhari collected the Islamic taxes of Ayatollah Khomeini's followers on his behalf and, most importantly, transmitted his messages to Iranians.¹¹⁵ Initially Ayatollah Khomeini's followers consisted of religious students, conservative merchants and the poor, who were attracted by the welfare facilities his Islamic movement offered, and which the Pahlavi government failed to offer. The well-organized structure of *Nahzat*, which utilized conservative networks such as the

¹¹¹ For this first confrontation between Ayatollah Khomeini and Hakim see B. Moin, *Khomeini: Life of the Ayatollah*, pp. 141-143.

¹¹² For an elaboration on *Islamic Government* see V. Martin, *Creating an Islamic State*, pp. 25, 115-124 and R.P. Mottahedeh, *The Mantle of the Prophet*, pp. 380-382. See also R. Khomeini, *Islamic Government: Governance of Jurisprudent*, Honolulu: University Press of the Pacific, 2005.

¹¹³ For the development of Ayatollah Khomeini's anti-governmental movement during his exile, see V. Martin, *Creating an Islamic State*, pp. 69-74.

¹¹⁴ For Motahhari's life and thoughts, see B. Moin, *Khomeini: Life of the Ayatollah*, pp. 168-172.

¹¹⁵ V. Martin, *Creating an Islamic State*, p. 77.

mosque and bazaar, conveyed Ayatollah Khomeini's messages to Iranians from all social classes and enabled the movement to organise enormous gatherings.¹¹⁶ Motahhari played another crucial role in this, by casting Ayatollah Khomeini's socio-political messages in a theoretical structure, which would later bear fruit in the establishment of an Islamic republic.

Ayatollah Khomeini's *Nahzat* was only one of the groups that arose at all levels of Iranian society, in opposition to the Shah's economic, international and modernization policies of the 1960s and 1970s. The National Front Party, which had played a crucial role in bringing Mosaddeq to power in 1951, found its support mostly amongst elite and middle-class Iranians. The communist Tudeh Party, founded in 1941, experienced a revival. In the eyes of the Shah, it was one of the biggest threats to his rule, in part because of its links to the Soviet Union, so it was heavily suppressed. Another socialist opposition group that gained a lot of support was the marxist *Fedâ'iyân-e Khalq* (1971), which consisted mainly of university students. As Ghamari-Tabrizi argues, "Ayatollah Khomeini's exile coincided with the rise of a new generation of Muslim intellectuals and military activists inside the country."¹¹⁷ One of these Muslim intellectuals was Ali Shariati (d. 1977), who became enormously popular among young Iranians during the 1970s. Shariati was an Islamic modernist, who condemned the apolitical posture of the Iranian clergy and pushed for a reconciliation of Islam with modern Western ideas.¹¹⁸

Some of the groups opposing the Shah's regime had a militant Islamic leftist character, and were a sort of guerrilla movement, consisting of intellectuals who were prepared to give their lives to achieve social and economic equality. The most important of these were the Liberation Movement of Iran (*Fedâ'iyân-e Eslâm*) and the *Mojâhedîn-e Khalq*. The *Fedâ'iyân-e Eslâm* had been founded in 1961 and was headed by the religious cleric Mahmud Tâleqâni (d. 1979) and by Mehdi Bâzargân (d. 1995). The *Mâjahedin-e Khalq* (1966), which had both an Islamic and a socialist character, also attracted many Iranians.¹¹⁹ Both Islamic opposition parties saw the need for Islam to reform. Ayatollah Khomeini and his

¹¹⁶ At Ayatollah Khomeini's request, the Association of United Societies, an organisation consisting of three bazaar societies working together to spread Khomeini's messages through prints, was established in 1963 (see V. Martin, *Creating an Islamic State*, pp. 67-69).

¹¹⁷ B. Ghamari-Tabrizi, "The Divine, the People and the Faqih," p. 226.

¹¹⁸ For an elaboration on Ali Shariati see M. Mahdavi, "The Rise of Khomeinism: Problematizing the Politics of Resistance in Pre-Revolutionary Iran," in *A Critical Introduction to Islam*, pp. 58-61.

¹¹⁹ A good source on the Mojâhedîn is the book by E. Abrahamian, *The Iranian Mojahedin*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989.

movement were greatly aware of the ideas such as socialism which were sweeping through the country and generating enormous interest. They also saw the need to modernize Islam to attract the young, without offending their bazaari supporters, who were very conservative.¹²⁰

As Mohammad Reza Shah's regime became more repressive during the 1970s, discontent among the population also grew. Besides the general critique of the Shah's dictatorial regime, each social group had its own reason for criticizing the Pahlavi government. The religious establishment and Shiite population were furious at the continuing suppression of religious institutions. Iran also entered a period of heavy recession and then inflation, after the 1973 foundation of the OPEC and the consequent increase in Iran's oil income, from which only a small group of Iranians profited. The merchants were outraged because of commercial reforms which Mohammad Reza Shah had implemented in the 1960s and 1970s destroying the traditional markets. The Shah's large-scale agricultural reforms had forced rural Iranians to move to the big cities, where they often had no work or income. Political parties such as the *National Front Party* (secular) and the *Tudeh Party* (Communist) were angry at the Pahlavi government because of their political suppression. In 1975, the Shah introduced a one-party government by setting up the *Rastâkhiz Party* (Resurgence Party) and forbidding any other form of political movement. The whole Iranian society was under strict governmental control, reinforced by the Iranian secret police (SAVAK), which had been set up in 1957 and was at its most active during the 1970s, sometimes arresting people without charge and using brutality. All these political, economic and social circumstances during the 1960s and 1970s had led to widespread dissatisfaction with the Pahlavi government, eventually resulting in nationwide demonstrations starting in 1977.¹²¹

Initially the anti-government demonstrations were supported by two groups: those with a political motive and those with a religious one. Protests started with members of the National Front Party distributing pamphlets in which they attacked the Shah's corrupt and repressive regime.¹²² The demonstrations were soon joined by members of the Association of United Societies, who came out in open revolt against the regime, charging SAVAK with involvement in the death of Ayatollah Khomeini's son Mostafa, who died on October 23 1977 in Iraq under mysterious circumstances. Several months later (January 7 1978), Ayatollah

¹²⁰ V. Martin, *Creating an Islamic State*, pp. 79, 80.

¹²¹ For the period leading up to the Iranian Revolution, see *ibid.*, pp. 20-27, 147, 148 and M. Momen, *An Introduction to Shi'i Islam*, pp. 282-289.

¹²² For the period leading up to the Iranian Revolution, see M. Momen, *An Introduction to Shi'i Islam*, pp. 282-289.

Khomeini was portrayed in a humiliating way in the semi-official newspaper *Ettelâ'ât*. On January 9th thousands of students took to the streets of Qom in response, demanding the return of Ayatollah Khomeini. They also urged the Shah to restore the Constitution and re-open the universities, which he had earlier closed. The Pahlavi police killed dozens of these students, and the clergy responded *en masse* to the slaughter. Even those who had previously stayed out of politics, such as Ayatollah Shari'atmadâri (d. 1986), responded to the incident. The 40-day long mourning period that followed led to further clashes with the Pahlavi police, and more deaths. Even in Tabriz, mourners were killed by the Pahlavi government, and the anti-Shah demonstrations then became nation-wide strikes. Government attacks on Iranian citizens continued. One of the worst incidents came on August 19 1978, when some 400 cinema visitors were killed in a fire in the city of Abadan. On September 7th that year, the Pahlavi Government forbade all forms of protest. However, demonstrators took to the streets again the next day. The Pahlavi police responded immediately, killing hundreds of protestors and imposing martial law.

After the massacres of September 8 1978, which became known as Black Friday, members of the middle class joined the political and religious groups mentioned above, in protest marches against the Shah's regime. From October 1978, nationwide strikes by groups such as bank employees and workers in the oil industry paralyzed the economy. In response, the Pahlavi government had Ayatollah Khomeini removed from Iraq to France, hoping to decrease his influence. But France proved to be a better place for Ayatollah Khomeini to lead his campaign against the Shah. Not only was he better able to communicate with Iran, it was also easier for him to communicate with the Western media, who immediately approached him for comments on the events in Iran. Through cassette tapes, Ayatollah Khomeini could provide his followers in Iran with advice and comments. The Shah's suggestion that Ayatollah Khomeini could return safely to Iran was rejected by Ayatollah Khomeini, who refused to return while the Shah was in power. On November 6 1978 the Shah dismissed Prime Minister Sharif-Imâmi and installed a military government.

During the month of Moharram 1978 (starting December 2nd), demonstrators succeeded in seizing government offices. Some soldiers responded immediately by opening fire on the demonstrators while others decided to surrender and join the opposition. The Shah's gesture of appointing his lifelong opponent, Shahpur Bakhtiar, as Prime Minister, to

placate the opposition and enable order to be restored, had no effect.¹²³ On January 16 1979, the Shah left Iran for Egypt at the request of Bakhtiar, under the pretext of a long holiday, but he never returned to Iran.¹²⁴ Egypt was the only country prepared to receive him. America, one of the Shah's closest allies, refused to offer him shelter. Only two weeks later, on February 1, 1979, Ayatollah Khomeini returned to Iran where he was welcomed by millions of Iranians.¹²⁵

Although initially the Iranian Revolution could not be characterized as Islamic, it later became Islamic. Oppositional groups such as the National Front Party realized that only Ayatollah Khomeini could mobilize the mass support needed to topple the Shah. From 1978, the lack of political freedoms led even the liberal and secular middle classes to join the demonstrations of the religious opposition, aware that this was the only way to express their criticism of the Shah's corrupt regime.¹²⁶

There are several reasons why Ayatollah Khomeini's movement succeeded in attracting such a large following while other opposition groups, who had a long history in the Iranian political arena, could not. First of all, Ayatollah Khomeini closely followed the political interests of young Iranians, realizing that their support would be crucial. He noticed that young Iranians had strong nationalistic tendencies and rejected Western interference. By combining this anti-imperialistic trend in his speeches with Islamic motifs, Ayatollah Khomeini was able to win a large and diverse following among young Iranians.¹²⁷ His exploitation of political trends and his charismatic character during a period of corruption, drew many people to him. As Mahdavi explains, according to Max Weber, "Social crisis, . . . , creates a non-rational need for charismatic experiences and revolutionary change."¹²⁸ The circumstances in Iran at the end of the 1960s and the 1970s, when almost all social classes were negatively affected by the Shah's regime, pushed Iranians *en masse* into the hands of Ayatollah Khomeini, who was able to win their hearts with his charismatic leadership. He did

¹²³ For the period leading up to the departure of the Shah, see M. Momen, *An Introduction to Shi'i Islam*, pp. 282-289.

¹²⁴ For Mohammad Reza Shah's departure from Iran in 1979, see V. Martin, *Creating an Islamic State*, p. 149.

¹²⁵ M. Momen, *An Introduction to Shi'i Islam*, pp. 282-289.

¹²⁶ A. Bayat, "Revolution without Movement, Movement without Revolution: Comparing Islamic Activism in Iran and Egypt," in *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, Vol. 40, No. 1, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998, pp. 136-169. See also M. Momen, *An Introduction to Shi'i Islam*, pp. 287-289.

¹²⁷ L.A. Reda, "Khatt-e Imam: The Followers of Khomeini's Line," in *A Critical Introduction to Khomeini*, ed. A. Adib-Moghaddam, pp. 124, 125.

¹²⁸ M. Mahdavi, "The Rise of Khomeinism . . .," p. 67.

this by using Shiite motifs, familiar to Iranians of all classes from childhood.¹²⁹ Ayatollah Khomeini often referred to the events of Karbalâ, in 680 AD, when Imam Hoseyn fought against Yazid and his army. The battle of Hoseyn's troops against oppression and tyranny was compared to the fight between the Iranian opposition and the Shah's regime. Each of Ayatollah Khomeini's moves was compared to the Karbalâ story. Ayatollah Khomeini's courageous behaviour was likened to that of Imam Hoseyn. The fact that Ayatollah Khomeini was in exile resembled the occultation of the Hidden Imam. Often Ayatollah Khomeini's supporters addressed him as Imam Khomeini, a title which in a Shiite context had previously been applied only to the twelve Shiite Imams, although in a Sunnite context the term is also used for the leader of Friday prayers. Although Ayatollah Khomeini rejected the use of titles, he did not protest when people addressed him in this way. The most important qualities that Iranians found in Ayatollah Khomeini, were those the Shah lacked. He was pious, courageous, anti-Western and not at all interested in material goods.¹³⁰

The Iranian revolution paved the way for the establishment of the first Islamic Republic and ended Iran's tradition of monarchies. Up to then, the Shiite clergy had tolerated various Shahs exerting political authority over the Islamic community, but Ayatollah Khomeini introduced an Islamic form of governance that had no precedent. I have tried to demonstrate in this first chapter that although Ayatollah Khomeini was the first cleric to actually implement an Islamic form of governance, there were precedents for his ideas in the work of several nineteenth-century *mojtaheds*, such as Narâqi, Nâ'ini and Sheikh Fazl Allâh Nuri. It appears that Ayatollah Khomeini was part of a long tradition of clerics who wrestled with the challenges posed by foreign powers, modern developments and European political philosophies. Many nineteenth-century Iranian clerics tried to develop a way to run a modern state based on Islamic principles, so as to meet the needs of modernity while safeguarding the country's Islamic Shiite identity. Previously, mainstream Shiite theologies had not allowed the clergy to meddle in politics, but Ayatollah Khomeini used the Islamic political theories of Narâqi and developed them further to a form of governance in which the clergy is allowed to represent the Hidden Imam in all matters, even in the political arena. By adopting the position of *vali-ye faqih* (Guardian Jurist) in the constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Ayatollah Khomeini politicized and modernized Twelver Shia Islam, attracting even young Iranians

¹²⁹ Mahdavi's explanation for Ayatollah Khomeini's widespread popularity in M. Mahdavi, "The Rise of Khomeinism...", pp. 65-67.

¹³⁰ V. Martin, *Creating an Islamic State*, p. 66.

who were impressed by modern ideas, who supported him in his political agenda to develop Iran to the level of other modern countries without losing its Shiite character.