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## **Seyyed Hassan Taqizadeh: a political biography**

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**PART ONE**  
**A CONSTITUTIONALIST**



## *Chapter One*

### **The Young Taqizadeh**

Towards the turn of the nineteenth century, Tabriz, the capital of Azerbaijan province in north-western Iran, was in some aspects the country's most important city. This ancient city's unique location, its importance as a centre of commerce and its political standing greatly influenced the lives of its residents. In 1892, George Curzon considered Tabriz to be "the largest commercial emporium in Persia".<sup>18</sup> The people of Tabriz experienced changes happening beyond their borders at that time earlier than the rest of the country. Many were travelling regularly to the Caucasus, to Istanbul and even Europe for business or work. Due to the city's geographical proximity to Russia and Ottoman Turkey, Tabrizis could readily perceive the sweeping changes of modernisation taking place in those neighbouring countries, even without travelling further west into Europe where the influence of modernisation and change was more ostensible. The similarities between Azeri Turkish spoken in Tabriz and the languages of the Ottoman Empire and the Caucasus facilitated familiarity with new ideas spreading from abroad. Tabrizis were beginning to eagerly embrace the notion of modernity which had nurtured the movement of change. It was into this world replete with the idea of change that Taqizadeh was born on 27 September 1878, in an alley in the Nobar district of Tabriz called Hakim Khoie; home to affluent merchants who worked in the grand Bazar of Tabriz.<sup>19</sup>

#### **1:1 Tabriz, Centre of Change**

The Grand Bazar of Tabriz was one of the largest in the region which attracted people from all over Iran and other countries who came there to do business. Furthermore, Tabriz had been on the route of the main business trade caravans at least since the establishment of the Silk Road. The importance of Tabriz as the centre of merchandise transit had increased with the revival of the Tabriz-Trabzon trade route in the 1830s. According to Charles Issawi, "At its height, in the 1850s and 1860s, the Trabzon-Tabriz route probably

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<sup>18</sup> George N. Curzon, *Persia and the Persian Question* (New York: Routledge, 2005), 1: 518.

<sup>19</sup> Mojtehed, 18.

accounted for some two-fifths of Iran's total trade".<sup>20</sup> Iranian raw silk produced in the Gilan region was primarily exported to Europe over the Tabriz-Trabzon route. Sakamoto Tsutomu wrote:

Both Iranian and foreign merchants played roles in the silk trade. While there are no detailed records that show what percentage of the trade was handled by which merchants, an 1865 report by the British consul in Tabriz estimated that 60 percent of the trade was in the hands of Iranian merchants and 40 percent in the hands of foreign merchants. The most prominent group among the Iranian merchants were Turkish speaking Azerbaijan merchants who had their bases of operation in the most important trading centre, Tabriz. They bought up raw silk in Gilan region, transported it to Istanbul via the Tabriz-Trabzon route and then sent it into the European market. The commercial networks of these Azerbaijani traders had bases in Tabriz as well as Istanbul. In 1880 the Azerbaijani community in Istanbul numbered nearly 10,000.<sup>21</sup>

Alongside these commercial activities, new cultural ideas also permeated Tabriz and inspired intellectual discourse about change and modernisation. In the words of Taqizadeh himself, "The light came from Istanbul to Iran and in particular to Tabriz and gradually began to awaken minds".<sup>22</sup> Ahmad Kasravi wrote that in business and foreign trade, Azerbaijanis were more advanced than the other people of Iran and throughout the Caucasus the majority of business was in their hands. He added that in Istanbul and other Ottoman cities as well as some European cities they had a strong presence. These groups of businessmen endured the hardships of travelling. They gained wealth and led respectable lives, whilst increasing their understanding and knowledge about the world. At the same

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<sup>20</sup> Charles Issawi, "The Tabriz-Trabzon Trade, 1830-1900: Rise and Decline of a Route," in *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 1, no. 1 (1970), 22.

<sup>21</sup> Sakamoto Tsutomu, "Trading Networks in Western Asia and the Iranian Silk Trade," in *Commercial Networks in Modern Asia*, ed. Linda Grove and Shinya Sugiyama (New York: Curzon Press, 2001), 241.

<sup>22</sup> Hassan Taqizadeh, "Tahiyeh-e Moqaddamat-e Mashrutiyyat dar Azerbaijan," [The Background of the Constitutional Movement in Azerbaijan] in *Maqalat-e Taqizadeh* [The Essays of Taqizadeh], ed. Iraj Afshar (Tehran: Ofset, 1971), 1: 380.

time, they became more concerned about the state of their own country and its progress. This group of merchants played a crucial role in development of the movement of change in Iran. They were among the first who supported the Constitutional Revolution Movement, financially as well as ideologically.<sup>23</sup>

Besides trade, the spreading of modern ideas was additionally facilitated by the innovation of the telegraph. The telegraph connected Tabriz to other regions in Iran and to the outside world and, as a result, was one of the most influential means by which new ideas filtered into Iran during the nineteenth century. As Denis Wright stated, the telegraph “brought Persia into contact with the outside world as never before and was probably more responsible than any other single factor in stimulating those reformist and nationalist movements which began to stir in the last quarter of the nineteenth century”.<sup>24</sup> The main telegraph line from Europe which entered Iran at Jolfa crucially passed through Tabriz on its way to Tehran. A local network was also developed. According to Curzon, there were local wires “running from Tabriz to Namin, above Astara, on the Caspian, 136 miles; to Suj Bulak [Savojbulagh], in the Kurdish country, 125 miles; through Khoi to Bayazid, on the Turkish frontier; and through Khoi to Urumiah [Urmia], on the other side of the Shahi Lake”.<sup>25</sup>

During the Constitutional Revolution, the telegraph played a crucial role in Iranian political and social arenas. It put the people of Tabriz in regular contact with prominent religious leaders both inside and outside Iran, especially those in important Shiite centres like Najaf. In this way, the clergy could, at specific key moments, quickly and effectively transmit some of their Fatwas in support of the Constitution. On many occasions, constitutionalists in Tabriz were immediately informed by means of the telegraph about events happening throughout Iran and further afield such as pro-revolution protests and the closure of bazars. Thus, Tabriz was able to organise simultaneous demonstrations of protest

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<sup>23</sup> Ahmad Kasravi, *Tarikh-e Mashruteh-e Iran* [History of the Iranian Constitution] (Tehran: Amir Kabir, 1984), 1: 128.

<sup>24</sup> Denis Wright, *The English Amongst the Persians: During the Qajar Period 1787-1921* (London: Heinemann, 1977), 133.

<sup>25</sup> Curzon, 1: 531.

with other regions. News of political unrest and resentment from around the country, including communications about reaction to parliamentary decisions in Tehran reached Tabriz. As each new step was taken towards the establishment of the new constitution, the news would be a cause for celebration for the constitutionalists in Tabriz. All of this would not have happened so easily if it had not been for this modern means of communication. Telegraphs sent to and from Tabriz are some of the most important sources of information pertaining to the early years of the establishment in Iran of the Constitutional Revolution.<sup>26</sup>

A further factor, adding to the importance of Tabriz, had allowed the conception of an atmosphere of openness to and desire for change in that city and this would consequently play a part in shaping Taqizadeh's intellectual development. Since the time of Abbas Mirza (1789-1833), Tabriz had been the residence of the Qajar crown princes. Traditionally, the Crown Prince was appointed as the governor of Azerbaijan and lived there with his own court. As the Crown Prince and the commander of the Iranian army, Abbas Mirza led the war against Russia from Tabriz. Unsurprisingly, the Iranian-Russian wars (1804-13 and 1826-8) brought much change in Iran. The eventual defeat of the Iranians by Russia revealed how weak the Iranian military had become; it was poorly organised, tactically unsophisticated with outdated weaponry.

These wars allowed the people of Azerbaijan in particular to become familiar with European thought and culture. Seeking remedies to strengthen the military, Abbas Mirza initiated the enforcement of a new set of reforms with the intention that European knowledge and technology be consciously acquired in order to empower Iran. Although these reforms mostly concerned military and administrative sectors, other aspects of life were also affected. European ideas about technology and change needed to be translated and published so that they could reach a much wider audience. The first publishing house in Iran was founded in Tabriz, students were sent to Europe to study in various fields and newspapers began to be published and new factories built. Tabriz was the centre of Iranian foreign policy until the Constitutional Revolution and most foreign ambassadors came

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<sup>26</sup> Mansoureh Rafi'i, *Anjoman: Organ-e Anjoman-e Eyalati-e Azerbaijan* [The Assembly: Publication of the Provincial Assembly of Azerbaijan] (Tehran: Nashr-e Tarikh-e Iran, 1983), 156.



there for negotiations rather than to Tehran. According to Taqizadeh, until the middle of the reign of Mozaffar al-Din Shah, nearly all Iranian diplomats sent abroad were from Azerbaijan.<sup>27</sup>

All these developments gradually altered the atmosphere of Tabriz turning it into a city which now perceived the necessity for change and where people were increasingly eager to learn and acquire new knowledge. An eagerness to modernise the country as swiftly as possible led to the emergence of an intellectual discourse revolving around the various ways by which this could be achieved. This discourse first focused on ways to develop military and technological means to block the rising threat of a dominating Europe and later broadened to include wider social, cultural, educational and economic changes. The dominating discourse which emerged in particular after the Irano-Russian Wars, and which was proliferated by many intellectuals of the time, such as Akhondzadeh, Malkam Khan and Mirza Yousef Khan-e Mostashar al-Dowleh-e Tabrizi, concerned the necessity of importing, adapting and gaining knowledge practised in Europe and incorporating new technologies already being utilised there. Opposing this discourse about change was the powerful clergy who had little tolerance for the imitation or acquisition of any ideas or practices imported from Europe. In their view, modern technology and ideology from the non-Muslim lands could endanger their traditionally dominant power base.

The call for Jihad by the clergy, who had tried to galvanise people against the Russians during the Irano-Russian Wars, had failed and this was a further threat to the clergy's position. The disturbing image of a life under non-Muslim governance troubled the clergy and they began to be more tolerant towards the copying of European models of development which could prevent the dominance of Europe in Islamic lands, on the condition that they were not against Sharia law. Tabriz's geographical proximity to the lost territories and its close ties with the people of those regions meant that the discourse about adapting European technology and thought and the possibility of it becoming synchronised with Islamic teachings emerged earlier in Tabriz than in other places in Iran and had begun to develop there.

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<sup>27</sup> Taqizadeh, "Tahiyeh-e Moqaddamat-e Mashrutiyat dar Azerbaijan," in *Maqalat-e Taqizadeh*, 1: 378.

Tabriz was becoming a hothouse for radical thoughts and radical actions. By the time Taqizadeh was a young man this discourse of progress and a desire for change had reached its zenith in Tabriz. His early years were marked by experience of living in the dynamic milieu of this city; one in which religion, ideas of modernisation and progress, and the adoption and adaptation of new technologies were actively blending together. But influence too came from Taqizadeh's family.

### **1:2 Taqizadeh's Family**

Much of what is known about Taqizadeh's family, ancestors and formative years comes from what Taqizadeh himself wrote in his autobiography. According to Taqizadeh's writing, his ancestors had been landowners for generations. Being Seyyed or the descendants of the prophet of Islam had also accorded them a special status. Taqizadeh's grandfather, Mir Ebrahim, the son of Haj Nasir, had four sons and two daughters.<sup>28</sup> Taqizadeh's father, Aqa Seyyed Taqi Ordoubadi, the third son, was born about 1835 across the Aras River in a village called Vanand, which at that time was part of the territory Iran had lost to Russia. Taqizadeh's oldest uncle, Seyyed Ali, had helped and encouraged his brother, Taqizadeh's father, to go and study in Tabriz and later in Najaf. Having met this older uncle, Taqizadeh described him as a "very respectful and wise man".<sup>29</sup> The youngest of Taqizadeh's uncles was Mir Karim, who, according to Taqizadeh, was an erudite man, well read in poetry.<sup>30</sup> Taqizadeh did not meet his other uncle, Mir Mohammad, but it is known that one of Mir Mohammad's sons, Taqizadeh's cousin, did become the headman of Vanand. Taqizadeh's father, Seyyed Taqi, unlike his father and brothers, who were all land owners, had had a passion for studying since his early youth and had gone to Tabriz to pursue his religious studies.<sup>31</sup> Taqizadeh made little reference to the female members of his family so it is difficult to evaluate any possible influences they may have had on him as a young man.

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<sup>28</sup> *Mir* is an interchangeable synonym for Seyyed, a descendant of the prophet of Islam.

<sup>29</sup> Hassan Taqizadeh, *Zendegi-e Tufani* [A Turbulent Life], ed., Iraj Afshar (Tehran: Tus, 2011), 22.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 22.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*

While in Tabriz, Seyyed Taqi studied in Haj Safar Ali School, a School of Advanced Islamic Studies, and later completed his studies in the holy city of Najaf. Residing there for seventeen years, he took lessons from Sheikh Morteza Ansari, one of the most erudite and distinguished Shiite scholars. He was said to have led a very ascetic and frugal life, likely because of his discipleship to Sheikh Ansari.

Whilst in Najaf, Seyyed Taqi had married and had had two children but his wife and children had died prior to his return to Tabriz. Upon his return to Tabriz, Seyyed Taqi became the imam of a small mosque close to where he lived and later took over responsibility of a larger mosque. Initially he resided in the house of a landowning member of the clergy and soon married Masoumeh, the daughter of his next-door neighbour. Both her parents' families were major landowners in Shabestar, a small town near Tabriz. Masoumeh would provide Seyyed Taqi with eight children, some of whom died during early childhood. Taqizadeh was born when his father was already in his forties. Following in his father's footsteps, Taqizadeh's oldest brother, Aqa Seyyed Morteza, went to Najaf to continue his studies after having first studied theology in Tabriz. Like most knowledgeable students of Najaf at that time, Seyyed Morteza was eager to learn about modern science and used to encourage his brother Taqizadeh to also study these subjects.<sup>32</sup> Another of Taqizadeh's brothers, Baqer, became a respectable clergyman and upon the death of his father took over his position in the mosque and led a simple life. According to Mojtehed, Haj Seyyed Baqer was the opposite of Taqizadeh in many aspects. Taqizadeh was a reformist, while Baqer was a conservative who in all likelihood did not like the ideas that his younger brother was advocating and so distanced himself from him. As a result, when choosing a family name Baqer decided to choose the family name Ordoubadi, a name which his father was known by, rather than the name "Taqizadeh", a name which had become famous due to his brother's activities.<sup>33</sup>

Taqizadeh had two sisters; the older one was called Robabeh and after her first marriage ended in divorce, she married Taqizadeh's close friend, Mirza Mohammad Ali Khan

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<sup>32</sup> Mojtehed, 19.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

Tarbiat. Sometime after Seyyed Taqi's marriage to Masoumeh, he also temporarily married a widow whom he kept in a separate house. Two children were born from this marriage; a daughter called Soghra and a son called Javad (1883-1948).<sup>34</sup> Later Javad established a close relationship with Taqizadeh. Seyyed Taqi married again four or five years before his death. This, Taqizadeh says, was because his mother, Masoumeh, was ill and the new wife would be of assistance in running the household.<sup>35</sup>

Seyyed Taqi died of Salmonella on 14 March 1897 when Taqizadeh was nineteen years old and was buried in Wadi al-Salam cemetery.<sup>36</sup> Soon after, Taqizadeh's mother also passed away.<sup>37</sup>

### **1:3 The Influence of his Father**

The influence Seyyed Taqi had on Taqizadeh should not be underestimated. His father is the only family member whose character Taqizadeh comments on at length in his autobiography. Clearly his father's family commitment, deep seated religious conviction and respectable position all played an important part in forming Taqizadeh's character.

Taqizadeh writes that his father rarely accepted any invitation to attend social gatherings like feasts or parties, especially avoiding mingling with people connected with the government. Despite Seyyed Taqi's reluctance to meet with politicians and dignitaries, the attempts that these people made to meet with Taqizadeh's father were crucial in shaping an important element of Taqizadeh's future political identity; a confidence in dealing with men of power. Due to his religious status and simple lifestyle, his father had managed to court even the interest of the Crown Prince Mozaffar al-Din Mirza. The prince had tried in vain for many years to meet Seyyed Taqi, attending the mosque at which he preached and even visiting him at his home in order to converse with him. After Mozaffar al-Din Mirza became the Shah, his son Mohammad Ali Mirza took his place as the governor of

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<sup>34</sup> Soghra was born in 1877, she married a clergyman from Tabriz and had three daughters. Mojtchedi, 21.

<sup>35</sup> Taqizadeh, *Tufani*, 26.

<sup>36</sup> Wadi al-Salam is a historical Islamic cemetery located in Najaf, Iraq.

<sup>37</sup> Taqizadeh, *Tufani*, 26.

Azerbaijan and showed great respect for Taqizadeh's father. It is even said that he was one of Seyyed Taqi's disciples.<sup>38</sup> Taqizadeh had seen how these men of power operated, and despite a culture in which excessive flattery to the ruling class was part of common practice, he had seen from his father's approach that he could follow a more independent route towards success without having to resort to obsequious behaviour when dealing with men in high positions. As we will see later, Taqizadeh's success and reputation, especially as a member of the First Parliament, was largely due to his independent position and his disinterest in any material benefits. This enabled him to remain untempted by gifts or bribes, distinguishing him from many others.

If one takes into account Lotfollah Ajoudani's categorisation of the clergy of the Qajar period (1796–1925) in their dealings with the government and the Shah, dividing them into three main groups: the silent ones, those who co-operated with the government and those who were openly anti-government, Taqizadeh's father could be considered to fall within the "silent" group who were religiously conservative and had shown caution in their judgment of the government.<sup>39</sup>

In his autobiography, Taqizadeh describes his father as a man who would avoid religious bigotry. According to Taqizadeh, although his father rejected what the professional narrators of the tragedies of Karbala often preached, he refrained from challenging them.<sup>40</sup> Taqizadeh goes on to explain that his father did not save any money and had no property other than his house. As Mojtehedī stated, the Crown Prince Mozaffar al-Din Mirza respected him and had assigned a small pension to him, which would be cancelled by Taqizadeh while a member of the financial commission of the First Parliament.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> Nasrollah Fathi, ed., *Sokhangoyan-e Seganeh-e Azerbaijan* [Three Speakers from Azerbaijan] (Tehran: Khorrami, 1977), 124.

<sup>39</sup> Lotfollah Ajoudani, *Ulama va Enqelab-e Mashrutiyyat-e Iran* [Ulama and the Iranian Constitutional Revolution] (Tehran: Ketab-e Ameh, 2011), 18. For an overview of the Qajar Period see: Nikki R. Keddie and Farrokh Ghaffary, *Qajar Iran and the rise of Reza Khan, 1796-1925* (Costa Mesa: Mazda, 1999).

<sup>40</sup> Taqizadeh, *Tufani*, 25.

<sup>41</sup> Mojtehedī, 18.



Figure 1: Mozaffar al-Din Mirza, Crown Prince and Governor of Azerbaijan

Taqizadeh portrays his father as a very pious man who had never failed to uphold all his religious duties.<sup>42</sup> Being a pious Muslim, Seyyed Taqi treated his wife (Taqizadeh's mother) well and never broke the Shariah law. He was very strict in raising his children and banned them from the usual youth entertainment of the time.<sup>43</sup>

The fact that he chose to be known by his father's name "Taqizadeh" demonstrates Taqizadeh's positive feelings towards his father. Taqizadeh's admiration for his father's simple and disciplined lifestyle is apparent in his writing and could explain Taqizadeh's own inclination throughout his career towards a humble lifestyle, despite later having opportunities to lead a much more luxurious life. The position and status of his father afforded Taqizadeh some protection and to some extent laid the foundation for his future success. As we see in the letter which he sent to the Azerbaijani millionaire and philanthropist Taqiev, asking for a scholarship to study, he mentions that he was the son of the famous Imam in Tabriz, obviously knowing that this family connection could help in persuading Taqiev to accept his request.

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<sup>42</sup> Taqizadeh, *Tufani*, 25.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, 26.



Figure 2: Taqizadeh's brother, Seyyed Baqer Ordoubadi (died 8 November 1940)<sup>44</sup>

#### **1:4 Taqizadeh's Early Education**

Taqizadeh began his education early at the age of five. He went on to study theology and Arabic, the doctrine and law of Islam and other subjects which were necessary in order to acquire the rank of clergyman. Traditionally Taqizadeh's family's expectations were that he would follow the same education as his father and brothers. Taqizadeh's path was marked out for him and until his early twenties he had few opportunities to openly divert from the course that had been set for him. That is not to say that he did not gain some non-religious insights along the way. At the age of fourteen, possibly influenced by his older brother, he became interested in the ideas of rational science: astronomy, geometry and mathematics. At the same time his traditional education which was preparing him to become a Mulla focused upon traditional medicine, philosophy and religious laws. When Taqizadeh graduated as a Mulla his father had hoped to send him to Najaf to pursue further religious studies. Taqizadeh, however, was reluctant to go. Taqizadeh writes that he began to question his attitude towards religion at the age of sixteen and expressed his boredom with the curriculum of the school. Gradually he was moving away from his previous unquestioning faith and had come to have a more humanist stance on life; one which gave more value and agency to human beings. He had become more convinced of the importance

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<sup>44</sup> Courtesy of Taqizadeh's brother's family album in Tabriz.

of human agency and individual freedom.<sup>45</sup> This revelation would change his life significantly. In one of his letters, he describes the passion that this new outlook had created in him:

I was entering a realm that could be described by one person as civilization and by another as education but for me it was as if the scales had dropped from my eyes; I was no longer blind to the light and I could see my surroundings more clearly. I took a step out of the previous dark place around which I had been circling, like a blinkered horse carrying an unbalanced load, weighed down by the destiny forced upon me by the oppression of the men of power. I began to see that there was a whole new world outside Tabriz or Bushehr and beyond the small world that I used to know; I could see the outside world in flux; every nation was anxiously running towards progress.... I saw myself and my countrymen coming down the ladder of progress while the rest of the world were climbing up....<sup>46</sup>

It seems apparent that at this point, under the influence of new ideas, the young Taqizadeh no longer saw the human subject as the product of external forces or fate, as his traditional education would have had him believe. He attempted to free himself of the ideas and prejudices prevalent in his family and was, at this point, so eager to liberate himself from those old traditions and beliefs that he sought to found a new settlement near Tabriz where a more modern lifestyle might be practised.<sup>47</sup> In search of a new identity, a new foundation for thought, it is to the practice of modernity in Europe that he now turned for inspiration. He could be seen now to be searching for a new grand narrative; one which revolved around human agency and the rational mind rather than some external agency like the will of God. The extract from his letter above reveals that he was breaking with his past

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<sup>45</sup> Hassan Taqizadeh, "Azadi va Heysiyat-e Ensani [Freedom and Human Dignity]," in *Maqalat-e Taqizadeh*, ed., Iraj Afshar (Tehran: Ofset, 1972), 2:158.

<sup>46</sup> Taqizadeh to Taqiev, without date, in Hassan Taqizadeh, *Zendegi-e Tufani*, ed., Iraj Afshar (Tehran: Elmi, 1993), 421-26.

<sup>47</sup> Fathi, ed., *Sokhangoyan-e Seganeh-e Azerbaijan*, 127.



and traditional world-view and was establishing a new way of thinking. In this period of his life we witness that he perceived his previous world to be on the verge of collapse; it is during this time that he begins to systematically reject and question his former thoughts, beliefs, and experiences. Taqizadeh's religious duties were gradually being transformed into a more universal morality and ethical responsibility. His activities after this point reveal much about this transformation. The ways in which he attempted to influence his society through different means demonstrate that he was far more convinced of the importance of human agency and had begun to look to the West as a role model.

Taqizadeh's father would die a mere eight months after finding out about his son's attempts to educate himself secretly in the practices of sciences. For this his father had reprimanded him severely but he could not prevent Taqizadeh's on-going thirst for knowledge. Taqizadeh had begun to familiarise himself with sciences such as anatomy, chemistry, physics, mathematics, geometry, geography and astronomy. Together with his close friend Mirza Mohammad Ali Khan Tarbiat, who would later become his brother-in-law, he had also begun to learn the French language.<sup>48</sup>

Mirza Javad Nateq, the distinguished speaker of the Constitutional period in Tabriz, mentions another reason for the anger of Taqizadeh's father when he writes "At that time Taqizadeh had courageously written in his treaty that the people of Iran were waiting for the arrival of someone on a grey horse to save Iran...".<sup>49</sup> This was a clear reference to the return of the twelfth Imam of Shiites and thus would have been an insult to the religious beliefs of many, in particular a clergyman like his father. Taqizadeh's father's death gave him more freedom to pursue his European education as he was no longer restricted by the pressure of his father's strong conservative views and expectations.<sup>50</sup> He continued to live for two or three years with his other brothers in his father's house but later he and his younger brother Seyyed Javad moved to the house next door which had also belonged to his father. After his brother married, Taqizadeh moved to another house and lived there

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<sup>48</sup> Taqizadeh, *Tufani*, 30.

<sup>49</sup> Fathi, ed., *Sokhangoyan-e Seganeh-e Azerbaijan*, 124.

<sup>50</sup> In his autobiography the date he gave for the death of his father is 14 March 1897 but later in the letter to Taqiev he writes that he was seventeen when his father died.

alone with an aged servant. It was during this period that he was sent by his family to his father's birthplace on the far side of the Aras River to sell their inherited properties and bring back the proceeds.<sup>51</sup>

Taqizadeh did not want to take up his father's profession and given that his father had left little inheritance, Taqizadeh, in fact, faced financial difficulties. His older brother who had been supporting him had gone to Najaf to study and so Taqizadeh decided to generate some income himself in order to meet his living expenses and possibly to save some to invest in his education abroad. This was not easy because on the one hand he did not have enough money to start a business but on the other hand he wanted to do cultural work. However, some people were critical of him as that kind of work brought his family name into disrepute. It is worth quoting from one of his letters at length to emphasise his thoughts about his priorities:

I became convinced of my desire to complete my education in order to progress and be involved in the sphere of humanity. Since I had understood that I had the potential to flourish, I regretted seeing the fire extinguished under the ashes of despair and spoiling this talent which was granted by God. The only thing which perplexed me and hindered my passion was the absolute poverty, for my father had died when I was seventeen and he had left very little for us which could be capital to start a business.<sup>52</sup> That same year my mother and some other relatives also passed away. My brother went to Najaf to study and I resigned from my father's job, for I had to endeavour to live independently. I was so determined about it that it even overcame my passion for science. I said I must earn my living by my own labour and beside that save some money to study abroad, hoping to do something before I became too old to study. I was so busy working that during these seven years I endured the miseries of seventy years. But what can one do without money, being of a young age and without any help, suffering sneers

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<sup>51</sup> Taqizadeh, *Tufani*, 27.

<sup>52</sup> Although Taqizadeh states that he was 17, he was in fact 19 years old at this time. This could have been to help persuade Taqiev to grant his request.

and accusation of heresy from ignorant people in a dreadful place like Tabriz?<sup>53</sup> Hence, in the beginning, despite the reproach of people about transgressing decency, I began to do some business in the field of education. I managed to establish a lithography printing-house in the hope that, in that way, I could succeed in actualising some of my wishes and do some good for people. Unfortunately, I was not successful....<sup>54</sup>

In his autobiography Taqizadeh writes that at the age of twenty he became more engrossed in European science and began to increasingly read books in French, Ottoman Turkish and Arabic from Egypt together with the works of modern-minded Iranian writers who advocated change. Among them Talebov-e Tabrizi and Mirza Malkam Khan had the biggest influence on him. It was during this period that he gradually became more interested in political ideas and the concept of liberty. He regularly read newspapers which were published in Istanbul, India and Egypt, such as *Akhtar* [Star], *Soraya* [Pleiades Star], *Parvaresh* [Training], *Hekmat* [Wisdom] and *Habl al-Matin* [Strong Cord]. He also read the famous book of *Siyahat Nameh-e Ebrahim Beyg* [Travel Accounts of Ibrahim Beyg] by Zeyn al-Abedin Maraghei which was among the forbidden books at that time. He would also read the Young Turks magazines, like *Shoraya-e Mellat* [People's Council] which were then being published in Paris. Reading these, his ideas flourished to such an extent that at the age of twenty-one, he and some of his friends established a coterie of forward-thinking people of Tabriz which would later grow. Mirza Seyyed Hossein Khan 'Edalat, Seyyed Mohammad Shabestari (Abol Zi'a), Mirza Mohammad Khan Tarbiat and Mashhadi Ali Asghar Ordoubadi were among the first members; they each brought different experiences and talents to the group. Mirza Seyyed Hossein Khan 'Edalat had gone to Russia when he was young and had stayed there for a while with his cousin who was the Iranian consulate in Haji Tarkhan before travelling to St. Petersburg where he had learnt Russian and become familiarised with various aspects of European civilisation. In St. Petersburg, he became the companion and associate of Seyyed Jamaleddin Asadabadi (Afghani). Seyyed Jamal had influenced him greatly. Mirza Hossein Khan later became

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<sup>53</sup> At that time Mohammad Ali Shah was the Crown Prince and Governor of Azerbaijan. He did not tolerate modern-minded people. He had created secret police in Tabriz.

<sup>54</sup> Taqizadeh to Taqiev, without date, in *Tufani* ('Elmi), 421-26.

one of the members of the Provincial Assembly of Tabriz. He, together with Seyyed Mohammad Shabestari who also had progressive ideas and Mirza Mohammad Ali Khan Tarbiat and Taqizadeh, created the core of new ideas in Tabriz. They worked together for about ten years until the beginning of the Constitutional Revolution.<sup>55</sup> Mirza Hossein Khan had also established the *Al-Hadid* [Iron] newspaper in Tabriz. In 1909 when head of education in Tabriz, he published another newspaper, *Sohbat* [Conversation], in Turkish which caused public outrage because of its criticism of religion.<sup>56</sup>

At the age of twenty-one Taqizadeh began to further study anatomy, physiology, pathology and physics with Mirza Mohammad Kermanshahi known as Kofri (The Blasphemous One). Taqizadeh insisted that the only reason that Mirza Mohammad had been accused of blasphemy was because his scientific ideas had challenged superstition. Taqizadeh revered him and called him his very learned master. According to Taqizadeh, after receiving a traditional education, Mirza Mohammad had gone to Europe and studied medicine in Paris for nine years before returning to Iran to begin work as a physician and a lecturer. Taqizadeh believed he had been one of the greatest scientists of Iran and was masterful in Arabic science and Eastern literature as well as the new Western science.

According to Taqizadeh, he had an impressive library filled with Western scientific books and, furthermore, had a very good command of French.<sup>57</sup> In a letter to Jamalzadeh, Taqizadeh claimed that up until that date, 1955, no Iranian had reached the same scientific rank.<sup>58</sup> Taqizadeh was later accepted as a teacher of physics in the Dar al-Fonun of Tabriz, where he had previously studied in the past.

Taqizadeh clearly had a positivist interpretation of subjectivity and wanted to actualise his idea of “progress” by promoting science and technology in his society. He began to take practical steps in order to ensure that this became a reality. During this period, he

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<sup>55</sup> Taqizadeh, “Tahiyeh-e Moqaddamat-e Mashrutiyat dar Azerbaijan,” in *Maqalat-e Taqizadeh*, 1:384-5.

<sup>56</sup> Iraj Afshar, ed., *Nameh-hay-e Mashrutiyat va Mohajerat* [The Constitution and Migration Letters], ed., Iraj Afshar (Tehran: Qatreh, 2006), 172.

<sup>57</sup> Hassan Taqizadeh, “Mirza Mohammad Kofri,” in *Maqalat-e Taqizadeh*, 2: 89-92.

<sup>58</sup> Taqizadeh to Mohammad Ali Jamalzadeh, in *TINA*: 28000033.

founded a school based on modern European methods in order to teach science and foreign languages. This he did together with his three friends; Mirza Seyyed Hossein Khan 'Edalat, Seyyed Mohammad Shabestari and Mirza Mohammad Khan Tarbiat. They called their school Tarbiat which means education. This school was one of only a few at that time which offered modern science and foreign languages. Taqizadeh's attempts to open this school caused uproar. The announcement of the school's opening was published by a publishing house, newly opened in Tabriz. The school advertised that it would offer to teach the subjects of French, English, Russian and the sciences such as geography and physics. The list of curriculum subjects and the advertisement itself were considered heresy among the more conservative clergy. Some fanatic members of the clergy started angrily preaching against the opening of the school and galvanized public opinion. This ended in the closure of the school before its official opening. The pressure of this public opinion caused the governor to send Seyyed Mohammad Shabestari, the manager of the school who had signed the announcement, into exile. Taqizadeh who had put all his energy into setting up the school was very disappointed and he writes in despair:

I took great efforts to establish the ill-fortuned [Tarbiat] school which was the first private school in Tabriz and it inspired the opening of other schools. In order to establish it I suffered a lot but one month after its opening when it had become well known, it was wiped out by the ill-intentions of some men of power and savage acts of ignorant people....<sup>59</sup>

Taqizadeh, who was more protected than his colleagues because of his family's standing and position in society, was able to avoid exile but retreated into some isolation whilst continuing to read, write and secretly organise political activities.<sup>60</sup> It was during this period, in 1902, that he translated *Les Merveilles Celestes* [Wonders of the Heaven] by the French astronomer Camille Flammarion. It was translated by Taqizadeh under the title of

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<sup>59</sup> Taqizadeh to Taqiev, without date, in Taqizadeh, *Tufani* ('Elmi), 421-26.

<sup>60</sup> Taqizadeh, *Tufani*, 33.

Tamaddonat-e Qadimeh [Ancient Civilisations] and was taught later in Loqmanieh School although it was never published.<sup>61</sup>

After the unsuccessful attempt to establish the school, Taqizadeh opened a bookshop together with his four close friends; Mirza Seyyed Hossein Khan 'Edalat, Seyyed Mohammad Shabestari (Abol Zi'a), Mirza Yousef Khan Ashtiyani and Mirza Mohammad Khan Tarbiat. The bookshop gradually flourished and became the largest modern bookshop in Tabriz. They imported books on different topics from Egypt, Turkish books from Istanbul and French books from Paris. These books were distributed widely among modern-minded people of Tabriz and provided valuable resources for the Constitutional Movement. Taqizadeh would sit in the bookshop for hours and read voraciously.<sup>62</sup> This was a new practice because prior to that if people wanted to study, that could only be done at home, in religious school or mosques. Studying in a bookshop could be seen as a public and more secular approach to gaining knowledge.

The bookshop became a centre for the distribution of several progressive newspapers, including *Tarbiat* [Education] newspaper and they gave the bookshop the same name. The bookshop also distributed *Al-Hilal* newspaper of Jurji Zaydan (also spelled Zaidan).<sup>63</sup> The bookshop, however, did not bring much financial benefit for Taqizadeh. He writes: "unfortunately because of the weakness of the publishing market in Iran I earned little more than enough to cover expenses. That is to say because of the lack of interest in books, to encourage people to read which was my primary aim, I sold books at very little profit..."<sup>64</sup> A branch of the bookshop was also opened in Tehran but, according to an announcement published 20 November 1907 in *Sur-e Esrafil* [Seraphim's Trumpet Call], later became independent from the one in Tabriz.<sup>65</sup> In the end, the bookshop in Tabriz was burnt down

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<sup>61</sup> In a different source, Taqizadeh writes that the book was published in Tabriz; Taqizadeh to Jamalzadeh in *The Iranian National Archive*: 280000033.

<sup>62</sup> Mojtehed, 28.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid. For more about Jurji Zaydan see: Thomas Philipp, *Jurji Zaidan and the Foundations of Arab Nationalism* (New York: Syracuse University Press, 2014).

<sup>64</sup> Taqizadeh to Taqiev, without date, in Taqizadeh, *Tufani* ('Elmi), 421-26.

<sup>65</sup> Rahim Raisnia, ed., *Iran va Osmani dar Astaneh-e Qarn-e Bistom* [Iran and the Ottomans at the Turn of the Twentieth Century] (Tabriz: Sotudeh, 2006) 1: 217.

and plundered by insurgents (supporters of Mohammad Ali Shah) after the bombardment of the First Parliament, during the civil wars in Tabriz.<sup>66</sup>

From 1897 until 1904 Taqizadeh was a member of an association called Alayhuma where together with his other friends he took part in literary debates and criticised the conservative clergy. Mirza Javad Nateq, gives more details about this association and how he was influenced by Taqizadeh and his friends' activities; "These people who were the intellectuals of the time in Tabriz had organised a society for themselves and called it Alayhuma which became their secret code word. Every intelligent young man who did not believe in superstition who joined this group would come to be known as an "Alayhuma".<sup>67</sup> Selecting this secret word was the invention of Seyyed Hassan Taqizadeh...".<sup>68</sup> Mirza Javad gives more interesting information about this group that apparently he had also joined; "this group of about 20 members had decided to sell whatever property they possessed and with that capital to buy a village and move there. They planned to become self-sufficient and set up a new life based on modern agricultural methods...".<sup>69</sup> He calls this group the spear head of "tajaddod" or modernity and continues; "among its other activities the Alayhuma group paid a Dervish and taught him to recite in public the patriotic poems of Talebov".<sup>70</sup>

It was during this group's gatherings that Taqizadeh would regularly take the floor and inform his audience about what he had learnt from the foreign press published in the Caucasus, Istanbul, Egypt and Beirut; a practice which helped to develop his later skill and confidence in public speaking and which impressed many especially during his time as a member of the First Parliament.<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> *TNA*: FO 371/507, No. 42817-8.

<sup>67</sup> Taqizadeh chose to use this Arabic word following a mistake made by a conservative clergyman while giving a speech. He used this name ironically to highlight the ignorance of some conservative clergy. For the full story see: Fathi, ed., *Sokhangoyan-e Seganeh-e Azerbaijan*, 131.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, 132.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>71</sup> Mojtehed, 28-9

Around 1899 when Taqizadeh was twenty-two the Loqmaneih School was opened in Tabriz and he was invited to teach physics there. Meanwhile he continued his studies in medicine. This was his first unsalaried teaching position.<sup>72</sup> By 1900 after having learned some French, Taqizadeh became interested in learning English as well. To do this he went to the American school of Tabriz and while learning English also attended some courses in science which were held in English. With a female teacher of the school he studied a philosophical scientific book which contained practical illustrations of chemistry and physics experiments.<sup>73</sup>

As Taqizadeh's medical knowledge increased he began to provide some simple medical treatments. During this time in partnership with his close friend Mirza Mohammad Ali Khan he established a pharmacy and imported medicine from Germany. This brought some profit for Taqizadeh. A review of the newspapers of that period shows that importing modern medicines to sell in Tabriz was becoming a common practice. This was one of the most tangible and impressive manifestations of the scientific achievements of European modernisation for Iranian people. Since some of these new medicines could quickly and easily cure diseases that traditional practice had been unable to, this of course convinced Taqizadeh further about the power of science to create a change. He was able to witness that some maladies which had been previously accepted as God's Will or destiny could now be cured by mankind's scientific knowledge.

Between 1896 and 1902 Taqizadeh spent most of his time studying science, technology, languages, reading, writing and other literary activities whilst also continuing his clandestine political activities. During this period, he worked on a book called *Zad va Bum* [Homeland]. The major portion of this book published in Tabriz dealt with the natural, political and historical geography of Iran. Taqizadeh who had worked on this book together with his friend Mirza Mohammad Ali Khan did not want his name to be displayed on the book so it was published only under the name of his friend. At the same time, he also worked on a book of Arabic grammar. He was pleased with the outcome, suggesting that

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<sup>72</sup> Taqizadeh, *Tufani*, 33-4.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, 34-5.



the book was very thorough and easy to use.<sup>74</sup> Together with Vladimir Minorsky he also translated and published a story called *Esarhaddon, King of Assyria* by Tolstoy.<sup>75</sup> At that time Minorsky was working as a young secretary in the Russian consulate in Tabriz.<sup>76</sup> It was the beginning of his friendship with this Russian Orientalist whom Taqizadeh would consider to be his best foreign friend. Taqizadeh maintained contact with him almost up until the death of Minorsky in 1966.

As 1903 approached, Taqizadeh decided to try his hand at journalism. On 30 January 1903, with the co-operation of three of his friends, Mohammad Ali Tarbiat, Hossein 'Edalat and Yousef Ashtiyani, he released the first issue of a scientific magazine called *Ganjineh-e Fonun* [Treasury of Skills]. It was a fortnightly magazine and lithographically published. Rahim Raisnia, a local Azerbaijani historian, suggests that *Ganjineh-e Fonun* was possibly influenced by the style of *Servat-e Fonun*, a magazine published in Turkey from 1891 until 1944.<sup>77</sup> Every issue consisted of four separate sections, each section having four pages. One was a book about industries written by Mohammad Ali Tarbiat, another the translation of *Les Premieres Civilisations* by Gustave Le Bon that Taqizadeh had translated and another was Jules Verne's *Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea*, translated by Mirza Yousef Khan. The fourth section consisted of different pieces of scientific news, sometimes prepared by Taqizadeh and at other times by his friends. The magazine continued to be published for one year and twenty-four issues of it were published. Taqizadeh writes, "...despite the unbelievable difficulties of publishing in Tabriz, with extraordinary consistent effort, supernatural patience, great suffering and by working day and night in the publishing house, I finished and published it for one year until the last issue...".<sup>78</sup> The publication of the last issue of the magazine on 4 January 1904 coincided with the conflict between Japan and Russia in the Far East ending in the defeat of Russia by Japan which had a great impact on Iranian revolutionaries.

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<sup>74</sup> Ibid., 35-6.

<sup>75</sup> An exemplary fable written during the late period of Tolstoy's life.

<sup>76</sup> Hassan Taqizadeh, "Vladimir Minorsky," in *Maqalat-e Taqizadeh*, 2: 89-92.

<sup>77</sup> Raisnia, *Iran va Osmani*, 2: 248.

<sup>78</sup> Taqizadeh to Taqiev, without date, in Taqizadeh, *Tufani* ('Elmi), 421-26.

Due to the pandemic of cholera spreading through Iran around the same time, Taqizadeh and his friend Mirza Mohammad Ali Khan decided to leave Tabriz and travel abroad. Cholera was spreading in the south and was moving to other areas and in Tabriz people were waiting for the illness's expected arrival in fear. Before leaving Tabriz, Taqizadeh had been busy using his medical knowledge to ensure cholera did not reach his family's house. He had put fresh water in the reservoirs, blocked off the water passage and prepared the necessary drugs to fight the bacteria although he himself left before the illness arrived in Tabriz.<sup>79</sup>

### **1:5 Travels Abroad**

The first place that Taqizadeh and Mirza Mohammad Ali Khan went to on their travels was Nakhchivan. Taqizadeh had an educated friend there who worked as a contractor in road construction, since they were building roadways all over the Caucasus and Turkistan. His friend was a modern-minded man who had all the works of Mirza Malkam Khan and Taqizadeh managed to take a copy of them for himself. They stayed one night there before moving on to Yerevan. Later they took the train to Tbilisi. It was the first time in his life that Taqizadeh had seen trains. He writes:

In Tbilisi which was the gateway to Europe for us, we imagined ourselves in Europe; everything was European and Russian. We stayed there for a while, for about a month and learned a lot, because we socialised with people who were educated in the Caucasus and were modern-minded. There were many Iranians there because it was on the transit route.<sup>80</sup>

For Taqizadeh, his most useful meeting was with Mohammad Aqa Shah Takhtinski, a famous character who published the Turkish newspaper *Sharq-e Rus* [East Russia] which Taqizadeh believed, other than *Tarjoman-e Haqiqat* [Revealer of the Truth] which had been published in the past, was probably the first daily newspaper in the East (Iran and The Caucasus), outside Istanbul which was similar to European newspapers. Taqizadeh writes

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<sup>79</sup> Taqizadeh, *Tufani*, 41.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, 42.

about Takhtinski, “He had first studied in Russia, then in France and Germany and had ideas about the new age. He was exactly like a European. I hadn’t seen anyone like him in the East...”.<sup>81</sup> Taqizadeh was apparently fascinated by what he was seeing in Tbilisi. “Tbilisi was fascinating for us. At night it was laden with light and was like Europe for us. We went to the theater there. We visited museums...”.<sup>82</sup>

Another important meeting for Taqizadeh in Tbilisi was with Jalil Mammadguluzadeh who also worked for *Sharq-e Rus*. He was the founder of the famous *Mulla Nasraddin* satirical magazine. Taqizadeh explains about him, writing that Mirza Jalil had a great sense of humour and was extremely patriotic. “In literary talent nobody in the East could reach his standard and he could possibly be compared to Molière. As he requested, I sent him many humorous books such as *Kolsum Naneh* and others. We became good friends with Mirza Jalil and they were very kind to us...”.<sup>83</sup>

Taqizadeh and his friend continued their journey, travelling from Tbilisi to Batumi. From there they took the ship to Istanbul where they resided in the famous Valid-e Khani Caravanserai where most Iranian people in Istanbul used to live and do business. Taqizadeh who had great interest in books began borrowing some from the bookshops to read. Taqizadeh wrote:

There was a bookshop which kept forbidden books; I borrowed at least one hundred books from there such as the works of Namiq Kamal, novels and plays. We stayed there for about six months and met educated people. We saw an Iranian elementary school whose manager was Haji Reza Qoli Khorasani who always used to send articles to *Habl al-Matin*. Another person was Zeyn al-Abidin Maraghei, the writer of *Siyahat Nameh-e Ebrahim Beyg* which was a forbidden book in Iran. We went to his house and became familiar with the writers of *Akhtar*.<sup>84</sup>

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<sup>81</sup> Ibid., 42-43.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid., 43-4.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid., 45-6.

From Istanbul they travelled to Egypt on an Austrian ship. In Egypt Taqizadeh met Jurji Zaydan on a few occasions. It was during this trip that he wrote the treaty; *A Study of Current Affairs in Iran on Trial by History* and which he later published. It was this treaty that made him far more well-known. In the treaty he argued that the Iranian race had only contributed to the world civilisation during the three dynasties of the Achaemenians, the Sassanids and Safavids. It had been solely during these periods that Iranian participation had been considerable and in other periods, he suggested, Iran had been weak and under the influence of foreigners. He went on to outline and discuss the characteristics of the three periods and concluded that Iran was sick and the remedy for its sickness was to accept Western civilisation, otherwise Iran would be overthrown. This treaty reveals his opinions and political outlook in terms of Iran.<sup>85</sup> The young Taqizadeh's opinions expressed in this book highlight the linearity of the concept of history in his mind and the importance he placed on human agency in making history; as conscious beings they were capable of making changes and chasing a unified goal, aiding the progress of world civilisation. His tracing of the history of ancient Iran and his emphasis on its value by creating a continuous historical narrative for the country by interlinking different dynasties reveals his attempts to utilise history to serve the needs of nationalism. This treaty can be considered as one of the young Taqizadeh's very first attempts to build a social reality. In order to do this, he used the past as an open field for study and interpretation but then tried to fix and establish it as the single narrative of national history. It seems that he believed in the possibility of deriving objective knowledge from science. This knowledge and scientific objectivity could then be used to study history which in turn could be passed on through education as cultural heritage. This way of thinking could also have helped to give him a new outlook as a replacement for his previous beliefs which had been based on religious ideology.

Mehdi Mojtehed, one of Taqizadeh's biographers compares this book to *Du Contrat Social* and Taqizadeh to its author Jean Jacques Rousseau. He argues; "Not only can we consider this book as his manifesto as a Member of Parliament but also as a roadmap for

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<sup>85</sup> Mojtehed, 30.

his life. For in this book, he expresses in detail his most fundamental opinions. He argues that one should either accept Western civilisation or accept extinction...”.<sup>86</sup>

Taqizadeh had wanted to stay in Egypt and establish a newspaper there, but after six months he could no longer tolerate the hot climate and became sick and so had to leave. From there, he went to Beirut and visited several publishers and bookshops selling Arabic books. After staying forty-nine days in Beirut, he travelled to Damascus by train and stayed there for one week.

On his way back to Tabriz he stayed in Tbilisi again, visiting his friends. It was during this stay that he decided to write a letter to the beneficent merchant Taqiev, asking for a scholarship in order to be able to pursue his studies at the American university in Beirut. In the letter it is clear that he has researched about studying in Beirut while he had been there. In this letter after introducing himself, he gives a summary of his life, education and passion for learning, his cultural efforts and his desire to study abroad. He includes details about his attempts to save money and his lack of success in this, despite great efforts. He goes on to outline the expenses he requires to study in Beirut and asks Taqiev to support him by sponsoring him:

The fear of getting too old to study overcame me and the centre of my heart began to burn, for I could not achieve my goals in Iran. I have known nothing other than working and saving and since the beginning of my life asked anything from anyone, not even a glass of water. My miseries became compounded when I suddenly lost the entire small amount of money that I had saved for my travel expenses. Because of my passion (to study), in distress I left Tabriz, perplexed and helpless. It is this shame passion which is the cause of my feelings of embarrassment and humiliation. When I left Tabriz, after days and nights of thinking, you came into my mind. I thought I have been hearing about your Excellency's love for education and beneficence for ten years. I hear constantly about your good deeds

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<sup>86</sup> Ibid.

supporting education in the Islamic world which are mentioned in the newspapers. I appeal to your sense of honour and generosity. I submit this petition to your blessed presence and have the request hereunder. The plan that I have in mind for my studies is as follows; given that I know only the English and French languages I should study in London or America in English or I should continue my education in Paris in French. All three options are difficult for me since in these countries, one forgets about the East and especially one's home country and it is too costly for people like me to study there. After some years of enquiry, I learned that the Americans have a large, reputable school in Beirut, a type of American school where the languages of instruction are English and Arabic and one which is so well-recognised and of such high quality that, according to the newspapers and the school's prospectus, except for the Japanese schools, is the number one throughout all the East...".<sup>87</sup>

He ended the letter by stating the exact amount of money that he needed every year to study and awaited a reply in Tbilisi. Although on the one hand this letter's tone is obsequious and somewhat humiliating for Taqizadeh, on the other hand, it demonstrates his great passion for learning and his strong desire to pursue his studies and benefit from a western style education which he believed would help him to propagate the movement of change in Iran.

Taqiev possibly did not feel moved by Taqizadeh's emotional appeal as, rather than going to study abroad, in the October of 1905 Taqizadeh returned to Tabriz, a city that was becoming increasingly politically active.

In summary, it can be said that over these early years of learning, writing and travelling, a big shift in Taqizadeh's character takes place; his sense of self-identity has been transformed. When he returns to Tabriz, he uses all these experiences and relationships to construct a new self and put this self forward to the world. His previous self-identity, which

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<sup>87</sup> Taqizadeh to Taqiev, without date, in *Tufani* ('Elmi), 421-26.

had been strongly influenced by his father who as a clergyman had had particular ideas about how his son should follow in his footsteps, is shattered by these experiences and a new self emerges from a developing self; one with a different consciousness. He begins to think of himself as somebody who is developing, someone with a mission. He compares the changes and progress taking place in Iran to global examples. At the end of his journey and his return to Tabriz Taqizadeh no longer has only a local outlook on life, he now thinks in a global context. He is familiar with the languages which can connect him to the developing world outside Iran that he considers to be the source of progress and prosperity. He wants to change; he believes not only in his own agency but also in agency of the people, in the position of his country within the international discourse. He is interested in questions of truth and knowledge, epistemology; he is searching for reasons and remedies.

