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Seyyed Hassan Taqizadeh: a political biography

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Chapter Three

Activities to Restore the Constitution and First Exile in Europe

The previous chapters focused on the emergence of the movement of change and how the first efforts to put these ideas into practice culminated in the establishment of the First Parliament and its later challenging efforts to practise modernity. Chapter two concluded with the closure of the First Parliament (1906-1908); the Constitution seemingly abrogated in Iran, with the arrest and execution of some key figures of the movement pressing for change. This was a massive blow to the discourse of change and a huge obstacle for the plans that the constitutionalists had for the modernisation of the country.

After the closure of the First Parliament on 23 June 1908, the major goal of the constitutionalists was to re-establish the Constitution and reopen the parliament. Despite the setbacks, some devoted constitutionalists, among them Taqizadeh, were undeterred and would determinedly continue their struggle towards achieving their goal of restoring the Constitution, whether from within the country or from outside its borders.

In response to the constitutionalists' activities, the traditional conservative opponents of the Constitution had developed and employed their own strategies. It is necessary therefore to simultaneously outline the anti-Constitution movement's tactics and activities. This chapter will include details of how both parties, the constitutionalists and their opponents, mobilised their opposition as well as the constitutionalists' transnational activism and diplomacy, both inside and outside Iran.

With the uprising against the Shah of the constitutionalists in Tabriz, the city became the centre of the military and ideological conflict between the constitutionalists and their opponents. Focusing more on the events in Tabriz, this chapter will provide a clearer picture of this intellectual and military confrontation. The constitutionalists and their opponents were greatly influenced by events in neighbouring countries and further afield. It is necessary to elaborate on these influential transnational events taking place outside

Iran in order to fully understand Taqizadeh's political and diplomatic movements while residing in Europe and after his return to Iran.

The importance of this period of his life in determining Taqizadeh's future political outlook and his understanding of the international arena in particular requires special attention. It was during this time that he witnessed first-hand the practice of democracy and modernity in Europe. This helped Taqizadeh to develop his intellectual and political capabilities and rise to prominence. The situations that Taqizadeh found himself in during this period exemplify the importance of circumstances in shaping an individual's life rather than simply one's abilities or competencies. Thus, a detailed understanding is necessary of the social, intellectual and political circumstances of this period.

This chapter begins by discussing Taqizadeh's journey into exile in Europe and his immediate activities there to restore the Constitution in Iran. Whereas his previous position as a member of parliament had placed him at the centre of the political process, at this point, his predominant role now shifts to be that of an exiled political activist.

Though geographically distant from his home country, Taqizadeh's activities continued to be aimed at helping the constitutionalists back in Iran to fight the tyranny of the Shah in order to restore the Constitution. It was during this first exile period that Taqizadeh was to meet a man who would strongly influence the path he was subsequently to take. He established a strong friendship with Professor Edward Granville Browne, a lecturer of Oriental Languages at Cambridge University and a political activist in England, who was a supporter of the Constitution in Iran. This friendship, based on mutual political and cultural interests, was influential in Taqizadeh's intellectual and political development. In addition, the intellectual exchanges between these two ardent activists is discussed. An analysis of their relationship is set against a backdrop of the political landscape of Europe at that time and British policy in Asia as well as the rivalry between Russia and Britain over Iran.

3:1 An Overview of Taqizadeh's Activities after the Closure of the First Parliament

Subsequent to the bombardment of the First Parliament and its closure by Mohammad Ali Shah a new period began to unfold in the history of the Constitutional Movement in Iran. The first period of the movement which resulted in the opening of the First Parliament and the issuing of the declaration of a constitution passed rather peacefully. The events which occurred during the beginning phase of the revolution were primarily based on negotiations between the constitutionalists and the government. During this first period, the constitutionalists achieved most of their major requests by non-violent means. However, in sharp contrast, starting with the bombardment of the Parliament a forceful confrontation took place between the royalists and the constitutionalists which eventually culminated in a bloody battle. Different forces were involved in the opposition groups, which were formed in the aftermath of the bombardment of the Parliament to oppose the Shah. Each of these forces introduced different methods of resistance and used diverse strategies, whether inside the country or abroad, with the aim of restoring the Constitution.

One group, among others, which played an important role in forming a new opposition was a group of people who had to leave Iran for political reasons following the closure of the Parliament. Some of these individuals were forced into exile as a result of their lives being in danger. Others exiled themselves abroad because of dissatisfaction with the government or because they thought their political activities might be more effective outside Iran.[257] Taqizadeh was among those who were expelled from the country for political reasons. The Shah believed that sending Taqizadeh into exile would suppress the opposition, isolate him and restrict his political moves in Iran. But, as future events demonstrate, despite his exile, Taqizadeh proved that he was a die-hard politician. He

[257] According to Taqizadeh two hundred of the constitutionalists were scattered abroad in various European countries after the coup d'état of June 23, 1908. Hassan Taqizadeh, "The Persian Nationalists," in *Maqalat-e Taqizadeh* [The Essays of Taqizadeh], ed., Iraj Afshar (Tehran: Shokofan, 1977), 7: 445. As Hossein Pirnia has put it during this period the exiled Iranians could be divided into three groups: the largest group, known as the statesmen who were mostly nobles, princes and some who had previously been ministers, gathered in Paris; a second group residing in London, to which Taqizadeh belonged; and a third group that had gone to Switzerland from where they carried out their activities, consisting of people like Dehkhoda. See: *Mobarezeh ba Mohammad Ali Shah: Asnadi az Fa'liyathay-e Azadikhahan-e Iran dar Oropa va Istanbul* [Fighting against Mohammad Ali Shah: Documents about the Iranian Freedom Fighters in Europe and Istanbul], ed., Iraj Afshar (Tehran: Sazman-e Ketab, 1980), 17-8.

managed effectively to remain active and demonstrated his ingenuity in the methods he employed in order to try to achieve his political goals.

If one divides the Constitutional Movement activities into two categories of political and military resistance, Taqizadeh's major endeavours during this period fall into the former category: politics and diplomacy. Due to his sustained efforts, Taqizadeh managed to effectively launch a movement outside Iran and through his already well-established links connect this movement to opposition groups inside the country. He was one of the leading characters who introduced freelance diplomacy into the contemporary Iranian political scene, thus influencing the sequence of events. It was Taqizadeh's understanding of international politics and the domestic affairs of Iran that allowed him to successfully lead a strong opposition against the Shah, finally isolating him politically. Consequently, in his political manoeuvres he utilised existing propaganda lines and established new diplomatic channels with the opposition groups and political parties who were more sympathetic towards the Iranian Constitutionalist Movement. Taqizadeh's belief in human agency and his strong feelings of moral obligation to improve the situation of his country were the driving force behind his determined resistance to the Shah and his policies. These beliefs and understandings fuelled his drive to fight for the restoration of the Constitution as he entered the British Legation and then moved into exile and would continue to sustain his determination until the Constitution was finally restored.

3:2 From the British Legation towards Europe

After the bombardment of the Parliament Taqizadeh took refuge in the British Legation, remaining there for twenty-five days. The Shah had initially expressed his desire to send six of the refugees, among them Taqizadeh, for a period of exile varying from five to ten years.[258] Taqizadeh was sentenced to the longest period of exile, showing the great dislike the Shah had of him. However, following negotiations between the Shah and British chargé d'affaire, it was determined that he should be exiled for eighteen months.[259] Unlike others who had accepted travel expenses from the Shah, Taqizadeh, despite being already

[258] Charles Marling to Sir Edward Grey, telegram, 11 July 1908, in *Persia No. 1 (1909)*, 148.
[259] Marling to Grey, telegram, 13 July 1908, in Ibid., 149.

in debt, declined the Shah's offer and set out on his journey to Europe with little funds to support himself.[260] The main reason for Taqizadeh's refusal to take this money was that he was "an object of mortal hatred of the Shah" and a mutual grudge had long existed between him and the Shah.[261] There is no doubt that if arrested by the Shah, Taqizadeh would be executed.[262] Additionally, Taqizadeh did not have fond memories of Mohammad Ali Shah during the time he had been Crown Prince and Governor of Tabriz when he had treated people cruelly and had created an atmosphere of terror in the town.[263] Starting from this point Taqizadeh's activities were not only following his ideological goals but also directed towards a more intense personal fight with Mohammad Ali Shah.[264]

One of Taqizadeh's acts which positively affected the campaign led from abroad against the Shah was persuading his fellow refugees still in the Legation to leave there despite their desire to stay.[265] This was significant as it then allowed the refugees to carry out political activities outside the Legation. If they had insisted on staying in the Legation, their political potential would have been wasted since the British considered any political act by the refugees "highly undesirable".[266] This would not have permitted the refugees to achieve anything whilst trapped in the Legation.[267] The move to Europe of Taqizadeh and those who had been staying in the Legation was viewed from several different perspectives. Some saw it as the end of any possibility of success for the Constitution. With the departure

[260] David Fraser commented that Taqizadeh's unwillingness to accept the Shah's money made him an exception; "An honourable exception was Taki Zadeh, who declined to take a penny of the Shah's money and who loyally supported the Legation staff in the efforts to induce the refugees to depart". See: David Fraser, Persia and Turkey in Revolt (Edinburgh and London: William Blackwood and Sons, 1910), 46.

[261] Marling to Grey, 15 July 1908 in *Persia No. 1 (1909)*, 160.

[262] Ibid.

[263] Mohammad Ali Mirza's tyranny in Tabriz is well documented and even his father Mozaffar al-Din Shah displeased with his son's harsh treatment in Tabriz, on several occasions, had advised him to treat people justly in Azerbaijan. See: Iraj Afshar, ed., *Mohammad Ali Mirza Vali'ahd va Mohammad Ali Shah Makhlo': 55 Sanad-e Tazeh Yab* [Mohammad Ali Mirza the Crown Prince and the Deposed Mohammad Ali Shah: 55 Newly Discovered Documents] (Tehran: Nashr-e Abi, 2008).

[264] 'Ain al-Saltaneh writes that a long-standing grudge had existed between Mohammad Ali Shah and Taqizadeh since their path had first crossed in Tabriz. 'Ain al-Saltaneh says he preferred not to elaborate on the reason. Qahreman Mirza, 'Ain al-Saltaneh, *Ruznameh-e Khaterat-e 'Ain al-Saltaneh* [Diary of 'Ain al-Saltaneh] eds., Masoud Salvor, Iraj Afshar (Tehran: Asatir, 1998), 4: 2725.

[265] Fraser, 46.

[266] Grey to Marling, telegram, 15 July 1908, in *Persia No. 1 (1909)*, 151.

[267] Charles Marling the British minister in Tehran who was in charge of negotiations with the Shah about the refugees wrote that they showed "great unwillingness to leave the Legation…". See: Marling to Grey, 5 July 1908, in Ibid., 145.

of Taqizadeh, leaving no leader, some constitutionalists' hopes were completely dashed. But, if Taqizadeh had stayed, it was feared that he could be arrested and possibly even killed. Others believed that, compared to the prospect of his death, Taqizadeh's year's sojourn in Europe seemed a small price to pay.[268]

Taqizadeh, on his journey into exile, was accompanied by other constitutionalists. The route into exile which he was now taking, with no clear path for his future ahead of him, was the same route along which he had travelled so enthusiastically twenty months earlier when he had come to Tehran. When he had arrived in Tehran, he had been a young highly ambitious man full of ideas to create a change in his country. Friends and foes alike attested to the fact that he had tried hard in that respect and many were impressed with his deeds and his determination. This said, in the course of his attempts to actualise his ideas, he had also realised that achieving his goals was not to prove so easy in practice. He had come to Tehran at a time of great optimism when there was hope in the air that the Parliament would be able to bring about sweeping changes in a short time. These expectations were not only rife among the intellectuals and members of the Parliament, but also among the general public. A brief look at the petitions sent by ordinary people to the Parliament during this period, asking for their problems to be solved by this newly established institution, is representative of the degree and scale of these expectations. By now Taqizadeh understood that these expectations needed to be prioritised and that they should focus on the most fundamental issues such as political modernisation. Witnessing the destruction of the Parliament by the Shah may have made him realise that, rather than moving too hastily towards the attainment of his goals, safeguarding what had already been achieved was crucial.

The young Taqizadeh in Tabriz had spent the majority of his time studying and carrying out cultural activities mostly on a local level in order to inform people about the movement of change. In Tabriz he had only been able to meet with local governors and his knowledge about the structure of power in the capital city was limited. But, after twenty months of

[268] Ali Mohammed Dolatabadi, *Khaterat va Molahezat-e Seyyed Mohammad Dolatabadi*, [Memoirs of Seyyed Mohammad Dolatabadi] ed., Iraj Afshar (Tehran: Sokhan, 2009), 518.

intensive work and experience in the Parliament he was now fully aware of all the nuances of government in Iran.

Judging by his extensive correspondence during the First Parliament period, Taqizadeh had managed to establish a wide network of connections both inside and outside Iran. This network spread across different geographical locations and consisted of diverse groups of people with different political and ideological beliefs. While in exile this network helped him in pursuing his political goals and also provided him with more accurate news about the happenings in Iran, especially during periods of strict censorship when reliable sources of information were scarce.[269]

Despite these strong political and social connections, after the tragic end of the First Parliament Taqizadeh was still penniless and seemed so powerless and vulnerable that the British, who had guaranteed his life, had to send servants from their Legation in Tehran to accompany him and the other constitutionalists travelling with him, to reduce any possible threats to their safety.[270] Nevertheless, the future activities of Taqizadeh would prove to his supporters that he was still potentially powerful and an able activist capable of achieving much. His inherent passion drove him to strive to create key changes in his country so that the ideals of democracy and the re-establishment of the Constitution in Iran might be realised.

3:3 Taqizadeh's First Attempts to Restore the Constitution in Iran

Taqizadeh's political moves against the closure of the Parliament began a few days after the bombardment of the Parliament while he was still taking refuge in the British Legation. In one of his first efforts, he wrote a letter addressing the British authorities. In this lengthy

[269] The memoirs written about the period of Estebdad-e Saghir (Lesser Despotism) often have references to rumours or news that apparently had no basis: See: Seyyed Ahmad Tafreshi Hosseini, *Ruznameh-e Akhbar-e Mashrutiyat va Enqelab-e Iran* [Diary of the Constitutional News and the Revolution of Iran], ed. Iraj Afshar (Tehran: Amir Kabir, 2007).

A secret British report also reflects on the difficulty of getting accurate information in Tabriz at that time because of the widespread conflicting rumours. See: Marling to Grey, telegram, 4 August 1908, in *Persia No. 1 (1909)*, 153.

[270] In the past the British had also sent servants from their legation to protect the lives of other Iranian politicians such as Atabak when he was exiled to Qom in 1897 and Naser al-Molk in 1907. See: Marling to Grey, telegram, 16 December 1907, in Ibid., 75.

letter, after referring to the distressed and pitiful situation of Iran before the Constitutional Revolution, he mentions the positive British ideological support for the Revolution but at the same time criticises Britain's change of policy after their agreement of 1907 with Russia. The letter emphasises that, after this agreement, the British ignored Russian interference in the internal affairs of Iran. Taqizadeh also makes it clear that the coup d'état against the Parliament was carried out under the orders of and with the financial support of Russia. Then he adroitly argues against the validity of the 1907 agreement by mentioning that the interference of Russia in Iranian affairs was against the articles of this agreement. As a member of the Iranian Parliament, Taqizadeh ends the letter by requesting that the British not let their good name be slurred and that they help Iranian people reinstate their Constitution.[271] This letter not only represents Taqizadeh's political virtuosity and his awareness about international politics but also his devotion to the Constitution and his desire for the re-opening of the Parliament. It also shows that despite taking refuge in the British Legation, he did not shy away from pointedly criticising Britain's unhelpful policy towards Iran. However, it should be noted that it is possible that some people (such as W. A. Smart and Major Stokes) working in the British Legation in Tehran, who were opposed to the policies of Sir Edward Grey, the British Foreign Secretary (1905-16), had encouraged Taqizadeh to write such a letter.[272] This is despite the fact that Grey in a telegraph sent to Charles Marling, the British Minister in Tehran, had clarified that the British Legation had given refuge to people solely for their safety and protection; not to support or help them in any political activities.[273]

[271] See: *Oraq-e Tazeh Yab-e Mashrutiyat*, ed., Afshar, 105-9.

[272] See: Mansour Bonakdarian, "Iranian Constitutional Exiles and British Foreign-Policy Dissenters, 1908-9" in *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 27 (1995), 175-191.

[273] Grey to Marling, telegram, 13 July 1908, in *Persia No. 1 (1909)*, 149.

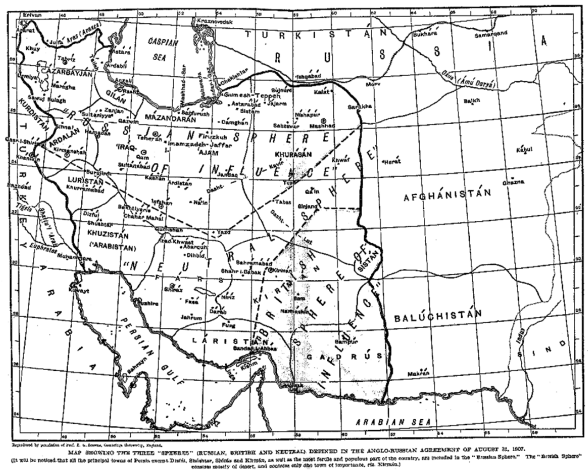

Figure 5: Map showing the three "spheres" of Iran (Russian, British and Neutral) defined in the Anglo-Russian Agreement of 1917

At this point it was Taqizadeh's political pragmatism which led him to decide to take the first steps towards co-operation with the group of politicians in Britain who were against the liberal imperialist Grey, and to later go to London to work with Browne. The reason for his decision was that he considered this opposition to be in line with Iranian national interests. Besides that, Taqizadeh considered the only way to stop the increasing Russian dominance was with the help of Britain.[274] As Mohammad Amin Rasoulzadeh, the famous social-democrat of the Caucasus and later a friend of Taqizadeh, stated, Taqizadeh, taking into account the policies of London at that time, took the decision to go to England as fighting from there for freedom, especially freedom of Islamic countries, would be more beneficial.[275]

Those who criticise Taqizadeh for co-operating with the British and portray him as a British agent often do not consider the division in and complexity of British politics. They are reticent to accept that Taqizadeh's primary aim was to take advantage of the position in London for the benefit of Iran, just as he would later do when he similarly saw the benefit

[274] Taqizadeh to Browne, 19 October 1908 in *Browne Papers*, 1-1-8, in the Cambridge University Library.

[275] Mohammad Amin Rasoulzadeh, *Taraqqi*, October 22, 1908.

to Iran of support from Germany during the Great War and thus co-operated with the Germans. This was probably the first time in the modern history of Iranian diplomacy that one witnesses a part of the civil society involving itself in organising collective actions beyond the state boundaries. It is also the first time we witness active diplomacy from an Iranian political opposition group to try and influence an opposition group or party in a European country.

In evaluating Taqizadeh's activities in the aftermath of the bombardment of the Parliament one should also consider the challenging atmosphere and situation of that time. The atmosphere after the closure of the Parliament was one of terror and disappointment. The nationalist forces who had fought so hard for a constitution and a parliament saw what they had achieved now gone. The Parliament was physically destroyed and iconic characters of the Constitutional Movement like Malek al-Motakallemin and Mirza Jahangir Khan among others were brutally killed. Some other important leaders such as Seyyed Mohammad Tabatabaei and Seyyed Abdollah Behbahani, despite their religious high status, were punished and exiled. Other influential characters like Taqizadeh were driven into exile and any prospect of revival of the Constitution seemed distant. The press which was a staunch supporter of the Constitution was shut down while the Russian commander of the Cossack Brigade who had directed the coup d'état was appointed as Governor of Tehran.[276] Tehran and other towns of the country were under martial law and all gatherings even in private houses were banned. The majority of the population were indifferent to what had happened but were eager for a government that would establish safety and security in the country.[277] However, despite the difficult circumstances Taqizadeh found himself in in the sanctuary of the Legation and the gloomy atmosphere and despair of the situation among the Constitutionalists, he was able to handle and analyse the situation well and took astute initial steps towards forming an opposition against the Shah.

[276] "Martial Law Proclamation of June 22, 1908", in *Persia No. 1 (1909)*, 158.
[277] Ibid., 142.

3:4 The Resistance of Tabriz

On the same day that Mohammad Ali Shah had started the destruction of the Parliament in Tehran, the Royalist forces also began the battle with the constitutionalists in Tabriz.[278] This divided the city into two groups; the constitutionalists and the people supporting the Shah. The Shah, who underestimated the resistance of the revolutionaries in Tabriz, hoped to easily take control of the city, not knowing that this was the start of a long bloody civil war. As Browne has put it, the province of Azerbaijan "owing to its comparative wealth and commercial activity, and the hardy and courageous character of its inhabitants became the centre and chief support of the Nationalist movement of revolt" against the tyranny of the Shah.[279] Tabriz was the sole remaining area of resistance, in stark contrast to the rest of Iran, where the Constitution had been removed and despotism had been accepted by Iranians.[280] Nevertheless, even in Tabriz there was still a strong royalist force controlling huge swathes of the city, opposing the supporters of the Constitution.[281] However, a small core of resistance remained which managed to gain strength and defend the city and the Constitution. Since Taqizadeh had a crucial role to play in this battle and its outcome, it is necessary to elaborate on the events in Tabriz during this period.

3:5 Battles in Tabriz

On the evening of the first day of the fighting in Tabriz, news of the bombardment of the Parliament and termination of the Constitution reached Tabriz. Many of the senior constitutionalists and leaders of the revolutionaries and members of the Provincial Assembly were frightened and discouraged by the news. Some, who thought it was the end of the Constitution and considered their lives to be in danger, took refuge in the French and Russian Consulates. However, Mojaheds, with the support of people like Ali Monsieur, Haj Ali Davaforoush and Haj Mehdi Kuzehkonani[282], did not give up and continued their

[278] Kasravi, *Tarikh-e Mashrutiyat-e Iran*, 2: 676.
[279] Edward Granville Browne, *The Reign of Terror at Tabriz* (London: Luzac & Co., 1912), 3.
[280] Marling to Grey, telegram, 25 June 1908, in *Persia No. 1 (1909),* 128.
Dolatabadi, 2: 346.
[281] Kasravi, *Tarikh-e Mashruteh-e Iran*, 2: 685.
[282] One of the elders of the merchants in Tabriz. He was influential among most classes in Tabriz, especially among guilds and merchants. He participated actively in the Constitutional Revolution since its beginning. He had an opinion in the Provincial Assembly of Tabriz. See: Mehdi Mojtehedi, *Rejal-e Azerbaijan dar Asr-e Mashrutiyat* [Distinguished Men of Azerbaijan during the Constitutional Period], ed., Gholamreza Tabatabaei Majd (Tehran: Zarrin, 2000), 229.

resistance against the governmental forces. Sattar Khan and Baqer Khan, two prominent chiefs of the Mojaheds, remained fierce in their determination not to surrender.[283]

On 27 June 1908, The Washington Post wrote, "The latest news from Tabriz indicates that a renewal of the fighting there is imminent. The revolutionaries are short of ammunition and the supporters of the shah are pressing their advantage". [284] On 28 June 1908, the Governor of Tabriz, Mokhber al-Saltaneh, abandoned his position, leaving the city without any governor assigned by the Parliament.[285] However, before leaving his position, Mokhber al-Saltaneh, whom Taqizadeh had initially helped to become the governor, handed all governmental forces under his control to the Provincial Assembly.[286] This crucially facilitated the defenders of the town in accessing arms and ammunition.[287] The Shah, who was trying to restore order in Azerbaijan, appointed 'Ain al-Dowleh as the governor. On 30 June the Shah also reinforced his troops by sending tribal Qaradjeh Daghi horsemen to Tabriz.

At the same time the return to the city of conservative clergy, who had been previously dismissed by the constitutionalists in Tabriz, strengthened the position of Royalist forces. The anti-constitutionalist clergy and forces gathered together in an assembly called Eslamieh in one of the districts of Tabriz and began to organise the fight against the constitutionalist forces from there. An added pressure for the constitutionalists came from the activities in Tabriz of the Russian Consul-General, Ivan Fedrovich Pokhitanoff, who was encouraging the constitutionalist fighters to end the resistance and ask for forgiveness from the Shah. He succeeded in making many freedom fighters give up their fight though a small group of Mojaheds remained determined to continue to resist the Shah's forces.

[283] Kasravi, *Tarikh-e Mashruteh-e Iran*, 2: 678.

[284] "Will Dissolve Parliament: Shah Contemplates Issuing Decree for New Elections," The Washington Post, Jun 27, 1908, http://search.proquest.com/docview/144860481/9F68AAA9BBEE444CPQ/1?accountid=12045.

[285] Hedayat, *Gozaresh-e Iran*, 210-11.

[286] Ibid., 215.

[287] Dolatabadi, 2: 350.

The skirmishes continued during the day but ceased at night. The houses between the war lines were evacuated and sometimes plundered.[288] The plundering became widespread after the clergy of the Eslamieh assembly declared the constitutionalist fighters to be heretics, calling them Babis, which, according to Islamic law, thus allowed them to be lawfully killed and their belongings captured.[289]

It was during this period that Taqizadeh's bookshop in Tabriz was plundered. Since the British Legation had given a guarantee to him, Taqizadeh wrote a letter requesting that the British Legation make a claim on his behalf against the Iranian government for damage done to his property in Tabriz. However, the British did not consider his claim valid, since his was only one of so many other properties which had suffered a similar fate.[290]

Figure 6: The Mojaheds of Laylabad district in Tabriz[291]

3:6 Accusing Constitutionalists of Being Babis

The announcement of the Eslamieh Assembly reveals how the royalist clergy used religious beliefs to galvanize people against the constitutionalists in Tabriz. According to

[288] Ibid.
[289] Ibid, 681.
[290] *TNA*: FO 371/507, 42817-8.
[291] *Browne Papers*, 1-1-8.

an eyewitness, one of the announcements declared, "O Muslims you must put all your endeavours into this task. Where is your honour? These Babis have gathered together and in the name of the Constitution want to propagate their religion. Islam will soon be wiped out. Jihad is obligatory to all of you until you rid the Earth of all these infidels." [292]

Persecution of Babis had started after the abortive attempt to assassinate Naser al-Din Shah in the summer of 1852. Naser al-Din Shah had issued a "Farman" or decree, ordering the identification and killing of all Babis and they?? had increasingly become more powerful. [293] This gave them a free hand to stigmatise whoever they disliked by calling them Babis.[294] Furthermore, as Abbas Amanat has stated, "Participation in the anti-Babi campaigns of hatred and cruelty often had the miraculous effect of reversing the mujtahids' social and even economic fortunes and restoring their fading popularity". [295] Aqa Najafi, a high-ranking clergyman in Isfahan, for instance, had proclaimed a property owner to be a Babi in order to claim the property from him, inciting the students of the religious school to cut the owner into pieces. Although people knew that Aqa Najafi's initial intention was to own the property, neither the other clergy nor anyone else protested out of fear. Haji Seyyed Abolqasem Zanjani, one of the prominent clergymen of the time in Zanjan, accused two merchants of being Babis and ordered them to be savagely killed simply because they had demanded the repayment of the debts owed to them by Haji Seyyed Abolqasem. Additionally, persecution of Babis was a means by which the governors and local rulers could increase their powers. Jala al-Dowleh, the governor of Yazd, for example, committed many crimes against his enemies by using the pretext that they were Babis.[296]

[292] Mohammad Baqer Vijevihei, *Tarikh-e Enqelab-e Azerbaijan va Balvay-e Tabriz* [The History of the Revolution of Azerbaijan and Riot of Tabriz] (Tehran: Amir Kabir, 2007), 38.

[293] For more about the birth and evolution of the Babi movement in Iran see: Abbas Amanat, *Resurrection and Renewal: The Making of the Babi Movement in Iran, 1844-1850* (London: Cornell University Press, 1989). For the documents see: Abbas Amanat and Fereydoon Vahman, *Az Tehran ta 'Aka: Babian va Baheian dar Asnad-e Doran-e Qajar* [Babis and Bahais in the Qajar Period Documents] (North Haven: Ashkaar, 2016).

[294] Homa Nategh, "Pasraft," Homa-Nategh (blog). http://www.homa-nategh.net/158516081581157516061610 1578.html.

[295] Amanat, *Resurrection and Renewal*, 415.

[296] Esma'il Ra'in, *Anjomanhay-e Seri dar Enqelab-e Mashrutiyat*, (Tehran: Javidan, 1978), 37-8.

3:7 Tabriz Clergy and Iranian Constitutionalism

The religious leadership of the Eslamieh Assembly in Tabriz had reasons for supporting Mohammad Ali Shah and dismissing the constitutionalists. One reason was that the important clergy in Tabriz were landowners and managed the agricultural properties, pursuing their own financial gains. They set the price of wheat and bread in Tabriz.[297] They stored the wheat in time of drought and poor harvest and sold it at higher prices. Religious professionals did not want another new institution like the Tabriz Assembly, a modern institution modelled on European lines and the product of the Constitution, to play that role.[298] In addition to that, the clergy were traditionally the major reference point of the masses and they conveyed the requests of people to the government and vice versa. The state also needed the clergy to communicate instructions, to educate, to encourage the people to obey the law, shape their thoughts and more importantly for its legitimacy. The Provincial Assembly was taking over many of those responsibilities. Further, the clergy ruled the judicial system based on Islamic law and this, besides giving them authority, was also a source of income for them.[299] The Tabriz Assembly was threatening the traditional authority of the clergy in that respect as well, because the Assembly was acting as a court to which people took their problems and complaints. This could seriously endanger the clergy's position in the hierarchy of the society in which they lived. A further danger of the Constitution for the religious establishment came from its other modern institutions like the new style schools and educational system which traditionally had been controlled by the clergy. Schools were a vehicle for the clergy to exert constant ideological influence on the masses. The number of new schools increased after the Constitutional Revolution in Tabriz. With the new educational system encouraged by the constitutionalists, the clergy found rivals in school teachers. Unlike the constitutionalists, the clergy were also opposed to women's education, their participation in the public arena, equal rights and their employment.

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[297] See: Nategh, "Dar Ghasb," (blog).

[298] As Vanessa Martin writes: "The Anjoman's ideal was to play its part in enabling the country to reach the standard of Europe in terms of the development of the law, education and progress." See: Vanessa Martin, "The Tabriz Anjoman January to June 1907," in *Iran between Islamic Nationalism and Secularism: The Constitutional Revolution of 1906* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2013), 125-6.

[299] See: Willem Floor, "The Economic role of the Ulama in Qajar Persia" in *Guilds, Merchants & Ulama in Nineteenth-Century Iran*, (Washington, DC: Mage, 2009), 69-98.

Ideologically, the direction of the Constitutional Movement towards secularism displeased many clergy who in the beginning had even supported the Constitution. The most disturbing issues for the clergy were the anti-religious ideas influenced by Socialism which mainly spread through the Caucasus to Tabriz. This concern is expressed in one of the letters Seqat al-Eslam Tabrizi wrote from Tabriz to Mostashar al-Dowleh, one of the Deputies of Azerbaijan in the Parliament. In the letter Seqat al-Eslam speaks about a manifesto written by Taqizadeh which had been published in Baku. The announcement defended "the liberty of conscience and religion". According to Seqat al-Eslam, this had disturbed people in Tabriz. Seqat al-Eslam believed that expressing these ideas was wrong and that not only did these ideas not suit the needs of the people but they also scared them.[300] Apparently, this way of thinking worried the clergy; they were clearly concerned about the future that the constitutionalists foresaw for Iran. Particularly in the summer of 1908, these ideas were more overtly expressed when, with the increasing Stolypin[301] repressions in Russia, a flow of refugees from the Caucasus began to arrive in Tabriz.[302] These ideas were expressed more overtly among the exiled opposition groups in Istanbul which were closely connected to the constitutionalists inside Iran. For instance, in a meeting in Istanbul it was said that "we want a constitution for peasants and farmers, not the kind of constitution that the landlords and other rulers or chiefs want. We are the socialist party…." [303] It seems that the clergy had recognised that, rather than calling these people "Socialists" or "Agnostics" which were rather unknown concepts for the ordinary people at the time, calling them Babis was the easiest way to galvanise the masses against them. Although many ordinary people knew little about the beliefs and laws of the Babi religion, since it was a local movement and cast doubt on some fundamental laws of Islam, it was enough for them to detest the religion and its followers. On the other hand, it seems

[300] Seqat al-Eslam to Mostashar al-Dowleh, Tabriz, 25 May 1907, in *Nameh-hay-e Tabriz* [Tabriz Letters], ed., Iraj Afshar (Tehran: Farzan, 1999), 118-129.

[301] Pyotr Stolypin (1862-1911) Russian Prime Minister (1906-1911). For more information see: Abraham Ascher, *P. A. Stolypin: The Search for Stability in Late Imperial Russia* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001).

[302] Tadeusz Swietochowski, "The Himmat Party; Socialism and the National Question in Russian Azerbaijan, 1904-1920," in *Cahiers de Monde Russe et Sovietique* 19, no. 1-2 (1978): 119-142. Accessed 25 January 2018. http://www.persee.fr/web/revues/home/prescript/article/cmr_0008-0160_1978_num_19_1_1309.

[303] Javad Taqizadeh to Hassan Taqizadeh, 17 November 1908, in *Nameh-hay-e Mashrutiyat va Mohajerat*, ed., Afshar, 110.

that any new concept which was unfamiliar was associated by some people with the Babi religion. For instance, one of the pro-constitutionalist newspapers of the time *Mosavat* commenting on the notion of "Vatan" (homeland) wrote that when talking about the word "Vatan", Iranian people thought it was the name of the leader of the Babis.[304]

After the bombardment of the Parliament, stigmatising the constitutionalists as infidels became more common and landowners in particular referred to the concepts of national government and law as heresy and the supporters of the Constitution as infidels who had to be killed.[305] This was worse in the small towns and many Constitutionalists were killed or their belongings looted.[306] One of the rare female narratives written by Malakeh Iran, Zahir al-Dowleh's wife, about the events surrounding the bombardment of the Parliament is significant. This further highlights not only how the constitutionalists were labelled as Babis and subsequently killed but also the cruelty shown by the governmental forces to the female members of the constitutionalists' households.[307]

Kasravi writes that during the wars in Tabriz the sound of Azan (call to prayer) reverberated so loudly throughout the town one evening that there was barely any house in which it could not be heard. The Royalists stigmatised the constitutionalists as being Babis and, in this way, encouraged their fighters to attack and loot the properties of people in the town. That is why the inhabitants of the town thought that by reciting the call to prayer they would prove that they were in fact Muslims and not Babis.[308] By accusing the constitutionalists of being Babis, the Royalists mobilised different groups to fight against the Tabriz resistance movement. "Thousands of Sunni Kurds from Maku, legions of untamed Shahsoran [Shahsavan] and Bakhtiari tribesmen were concentrating to obliterate

[304] "Kashf-e Khalaf," *Mosavat*, November 4, 1907.

[305] In a letter to his brother explaining the situation following the bombardment of the Parliament, Javad Taqizadeh writes that the guilds, in particular those made up of constitutionalists, were the most affected and suffered greatly. Their belongings were looted and anyone caught was immediately killed. See: Javad Taqizadeh to Hassan Taqizadeh, 1908, in *Nameh-hay-e Mashrutiyat va Mohajerat*, ed., Afshar, 126.

[306] Dolatabadi, 2: 347. Also see: Kasravi, *Tarikh-e Mashruteh-e Iran*, 2:672.

[307] Malakeh Iran, letter to Rasht, June 1908, in *Asnad-e Tarikhi-e Vaqya Mashruteh-e Iran* [Historical Documents of the Iranian Constitutional Revolution], ed., Jahangir Qa'emmaqami (Tehran: Tahuri, 1969), 57.

[308] Kasravi, *Tarikh-e Mashruteh-e Iran*, 2:718. Also: Esma'il Amirkhizi, *Qiyam Azerbaijan va Sattar Khan* [The Uprising of Azerbaijan and Sattar Khan] (Tehran: Tehran Bookshop, 1977), 160.

Tabriz on the charge of being the home of secret Babism".[309] The propaganda against the constitutionalists was so forceful that in one instance when the Mojaheds arrested some Royalist soldiers during the wars in Tabriz, they begged for mercy, stating that they would convert to become Babis.

The accusation that the constitutionalists were Babis was a threat even for those who had fled Iran and were resident among Iranian communities abroad. Taqizadeh's younger brother, Javad, for example, who was staying in Istanbul during the period after the closure of the Parliament, expressed his fears that being called a Babi would stigmatise him even in Istanbul.[310]

Additionally, in the night letters (nocturnal letters) of the supporters of the Shah, besides calling the constitutionalists in Tabriz infidels, they also used other social stigmatisation such as referring to the constitutionalists as pimps, gays, cuckolds, bastards or wine drinkers.[311] One of the people particularly targeted in these night letters was the close friend and relative of Taqizadeh, Mohammad Ali Tarbiat. Of course, Taqizadeh, as one of the prominent leaders of the constitutionalists, was similarly criticised by the conservative clergy but as he was regarded as a Seyyed, a descendent of the prophet, he was more protected from being thus labelled, though he could still be referred to as a Babi.

In a like manner, in the past, supporters of the Shah had used similar methods to discredit popular opinion; they had paid prostitutes in Tehran to appear unveiled in public during the holy month of Ramadan, thus encouraging the idea that the emancipation of women was one of the anti-Islamic consequences of the Constitution. In another document in regards to women, Mohammad Ali Shah talking against the constitutionalists and their acts

[309] "The Civil War in Tabriz," *London Times*, October 19, 1908.

[310] Javad Taqizadeh to Hassan Taqizadeh, 1908, in *Nameh-hay-e Mashrutiyat va Mohajerat*, ed., Afshar, 126.

[311] "Etela'" in *Tarikhcheh-e Ruznameh-hay-e Tabriz dar Sadr Mashrutiyat* [A Concise History of the Newspapers of Tabriz at the Beginning of the Constitution], ed. Abdol Hossein Nahidi Azar (Tabriz: Talash), 70.

in opposition to Islamic law mentions that they wanted to encourage women to open assemblies and talk about freedom.[312]

Reflecting on the accusations that the constitutionalists were Babis, it is interesting here to note the fact that even Mohammad Ali Shah made the same accusation. In a telegraph addressing the Ulama in Najaf in which he tried to justify his hostility towards the Parliament and Constitution, right before attacking the Parliament the Shah himself accused the constitutionalists of being Babis. He stated that in the Supplementary Law the constitutionalists had particularly put emphasis on the freedom of practising one's own religion in order that they might be able to openly do so. This of course would have been an accusation indirectly aimed at Taqizadeh in particular, who was one of the deputies who had prepared the Supplementary Law and had strongly defended it against the conservative clergy.[313] In another instance, about one month before the coup d'état, the police in Tehran arrested some people who were posting an announcement on walls. The announcement, written as if it were by Babis read, "We created this Constitution and just as we created this, we will also create a Republic and now you must give us freedom…". This was clearly yet another attempt by the Royalists to promote the idea that the constitutionalists were all Babis since upon further investigation it became evident that the Shah was behind this and had paid for such a plan.[314]

Besides written materials like newspapers and night letters, public speeches in the mosques or other gatherings were a common way to convey these ideas and galvanise the masses. The orators especially took advantage of the religious occasions to target and influence a large audience.

Likewise, propaganda was equally important for the constitutionalists in order to attract the support of the people and justify the Constitution. The constitutionalists used written

[312] Mohammad Ali Shah, telegram to Rasht, 18 June 1908, in *Asnad-e Tarikhi-e Vaqya Mashruteh-e Iran*, ed., Qa'emmaqami, 37-9.
[313] Ibid., 616.
[314] Taqizadeh, "Nameh be Ruznameh-e Times" [Letter to *The Times* Newspaper] in O*raq-e Tazeh Yab-e Mashrutiyat*, ed., Afshar, 119.

media such as newspapers and also benefited from the support of well-known preachers and orators. After the bombardment of the Parliament the publication of the free press stopped in Tabriz. However, soon after, with the increase of resistance against the Shah in the city, the constitutionalists began to publish their own newspapers. *Naleh-e Mellat* [Cry of the Nation] was one of the newspapers which was founded by the Provincial Assembly of Tabriz to reflect the news of the battle with the Shah and the constitutionalists' points of view. *Ettehad* [Unity] published by Mohammad Ali Tarbiat was another newspaper which supported the constitutionalists during the fighting in Tabriz. The Tabriz Assembly also began publishing its own newspaper, *Anjoman*. Interestingly, although the conservative clergy were against any modern means of communication, they realised that utilising this aspect of modernisation was to their benefit in fighting back against the constitutionalists. Hence, the Eslamieh Assembly also started to publish its own newspaper, *Molla 'Amu,* which was published in Azerbaijani Turkish and galvanised public opinion against the constitutionalists.

There were other dimensions of the Tabriz resistance which also gave the conservatives in Azerbaijan cause for concern. For instance, the Russian revolutionaries had grown sympathetic to the Tabriz movement. The importance of the Tabriz resistance for the Communist leaders such as Lenin was expressed in their writings. The main clandestine publications of the Russian Socialists like "Iskara" were sent through Tabriz to Russia with the help of Iranian Social Democrats. The Social Democrat Party in the Caucasus strongly supported the Tabriz fighters and sent to Tabriz a group of fighters who formed the "Mojahedin-e Qafqazi" group there. The Social Democrat Party also greatly assisted the Tabriz resistance by sending guns and ammunition. Similarly, the Russian Social Democrat Party, a powerful political party which was fighting against the Tsar in Russia, showed its support for Tabriz; in an announcement the party's Committee requested any workers who could fight to go to Tabriz. As a result, more than a hundred fighters were sent from Tbilisi alone. The Baku Committee also sent twenty-two fighters to Gilan. It is clear that, alongside teaching combat skills and ammunition techniques and strengthening the military power of the constitutionalists in Tabriz, these people also propagated their parties' ideologies. These activities were, of course, observed by the

clergy and conservative people who viewed the new ideologies as a threat to their positions. Significantly, they associated all these changes with the Constitution.

All this put the conservative clergy into conflict with the constitutionalists and Tabriz became the bloody battlefield of these two groups with their opposing ideologies.

Figure 7: A page of the *Ayeneh-e Gheyb Nama* newspaper, No. 33, 4 May 1908, depicting the interrogation of Seyyed Ali and Mohammad Yazdi who were behind the posting of announcements which introduced Constitutionalists as Babis.

3:8 The Discourse of Modernity and the Importance of the Tabriz Resistance

Like the conservatives and royalists, the constitutional camp also used propaganda lines to propagate their ideas. The ideological conflict reflected in the press or in the speeches of both sides and a new more tangible discourse had increasingly been at the forefront of the minds of ordinary people due to the continuing fighting on the streets of the city. With the escalation of war in Tabriz and intense polarisation of the town into two main opposing groups, the ordinary people also became involved in an unprecedented propaganda war.

The intellectual movement, advocating modernity with strong demands for the necessity of change, had come into existence long before this period and by the mid nineteenth century onward had increasingly come to the surface. The idea of change and modernity

was opposed by some groups and they had also developed their arguments to defend their case and reject the ideological force of the new movement. As documented in the social historical sources of the Constitutional Revolution period, in the beginning of the movement, the people, although participating in the movement, were not always fully aware of the idea of having a Constitution. What they were more concerned with was the necessity of change in their situation. The strong wave of new discourse advocating modernity had remained predominantly among the elite. By the mid nineteenth century, with the development of mass media, this discourse gradually found a wider audience. The foundation of the Constitutional Revolution was based on this discourse and was predominantly the outcome of the feeling of an urgent need for change which the majority of society agreed upon at that period. It was after the opening of the Parliament and beginning of the process of the legislation that a split between the cleric community and secular intellectuals emerged and influenced larger groups of society. With the coming of Mohammad Ali Shah to power and his hostility towards the Constitution, the gap between the two forces widened. The conservative clergy and royalists put the constitutionalists under attack by arguing that the direction of the movement was against religious law. The constitutionalists represented their own arguments and this discourse, reflected in the newspapers and public speeches attracted a wider audience.

One of the articles Taqizadeh wrote in the liberal newspaper; *Sur-e Esrafil* is a good example of this discourse.[315] Besides representing Taqizadeh's ideas, the article can be seen as an example of an intellectual trying to convince a wider audience of the legitimacy of a new way of looking at the world and religion and its authority in that period. The article was written after the vehement attack and criticism of the newspaper by the clergy which had resulted in its closure and the accusation that the newspaper's editorial staff were heretics.

Taqizadeh, a clergyman himself, had realised that the clergy's authority on different aspects of traditional Iranian society was the main obstacle to any new interpretation of religion which might lead to reforms. In his article entitled "Defa'" (Defence), addressing

[315] "Defa'," *Sur-e Esrafil*, August 1, 1907.

the clergy, he introduces the idea of them being responsible for the decline of Islam after its glorious past. To support his argument, he suggests various reasons for the negative influence of the contemporary clergy on Islamic societies. Being clearly an advocate for a new scientific interpretation of religion, Taqizadeh mentions that in the early days of Islam the rational sciences had found their way into Islamic countries through the translated sources of Greek and had been adapted to fit in with Islamic rules. This influence had been gradually weakened until even those old books had come to be considered as obscene by later clergy. With such a suggestion, Taqizadeh wanted to emphasise the fact that Islam in its early time had been tolerant and open to adopting ideas from science. This is while the conservative clergy were advocating a return to "real" Islam and considered anything modern to be associated with the West rather than with Islam. By questioning the legitimacy of the contemporary clergy's interpretation of religion, Taqizadeh wanted to cast doubt on this way of thinking and clear a path for the discourse of modernity and secularisation.

In advocating a world view, Taqizadeh blamed the clergy for isolating Islamic countries from the rest of the world. In fact, besides questioning the authority of the clergy in this article, Taqizadeh was expressing his ideology; a redefinition of Islam and Iranian society in relation to the world and history. He also criticised the clergy for using Arabic which many did not know and language far too complicated for the ordinary people to understand. By bringing this to light, Taqizadeh wanted to defend the right of people to read and interpret the religious texts. This was one of the fundamental bases of modernity; giving an individual freedom and allowing that individual the right to make independent decisions.

By mentioning in the article the backwardness of Iranian society in some social, economic and military aspects, Taqizadeh argued that uneven modernisation was not possible. If other aspects of life were now a victim of those domains he wrote about, then religion too would not be impermeable to those same degrading forces and would inevitably be prevented from developing and indeed would begin to regress.[316]

[316] Later in his life, defending the necessity of changing the alphabet, Taqizadeh also mentioned that it was not possible just to modernize one aspect of society but rather it had to happen across all aspects of

This article is a clear representation of the ideological gap between the conservative clergy and the secular intellectuals. After the establishment of the Parliament and its passing of laws giving equal rights to people regardless of their religion, for example, it became clearer that the clergy wanted the law of Islam to be practised in contrast to the secular constitutionalists who defended applying civil laws inspired by European models. Taqizadeh advocated the application of reason and science not only in religion but also in every domain of life. The gist of Taqizadeh's positivist approach might be summed up in August Comte's sentence that "the intellect shall be free to exercise its full share of influence in every department of human life". [317] Taqizadeh managed to voice his opinion more openly during the Second Parliament in one of the articles of the Democrat Party's manifestos which clarified the complete separation of religion and politics.[318]

This difference of opinion between the traditional clergy and the secularists culminated in the constitutionalists in Tabriz being called infidels and an attempt to eradicate them. At this point the rhetoric of both sides took on a more aggressive tone. The wars in Tabriz and extreme polarisation of the town into two camps allowed ordinary people to become more familiar with both sides of the polemic. As Touraj Atabaki has written, "The civil war served to accelerate the rise of political awareness and the consciousness of class identity".[319] After the constitutionalists conquered Tehran the voice of the clergy was gradually silenced.

When the secularists gained more power in the Iranian political scene during the Reza Shah period, the clergy was forced into almost complete silence and this challenging discourse was marginalised. The new politicians saw no need to reinterpret religion or even challenge the clergy's point of view. This polemic discourse between the modern ideas and

life. See: Hassan Taqizadeh, *Moqaddameh-e Talim-e Omomi ya yeki az Sar Faslhayeh-e Tamaddon* [Introduction to Public Education or one of the Topics of Civilisation] (Tehran: Ketabkhaneh-e Tehran, 1928), 29.

[317] Auguste Comte, *A General View of Positivism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 20. doi: http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511692888.

[318] "Qavaed va Nezamnameh-e Ferqey-e Siyasi-e Democrat-e Iran [Rules and Regulations of the Democrat Political Group]," in *Tarikhcheh-e Ahzab va Hezb-e Democrat-e Iran* [A Brief History of the Political Parties in Iran], ed., Safar Zamani (Tehran: Vajehara, 2000), 179-210.

[319] Touraj Atabaki, *Azerbaijan: Ethnicity and the Struggle for Power in Iran*, (London: I.B. Tauris, 2000), 35.

the more traditional ones remained in its rudimentary state until it emerged during the 1979 Revolution. Although the modernity that early constitutionalist intellectuals were advocating was later challenged by communist ideas, it could be considered as a conflict inside the discourse of modernity itself rather than challenging the past and traditional local ideas of religion. However, the resistance of Tabriz at least provided a period in which this discourse could develop slightly and both sides could attempt to challenge each other both militarily and intellectually.

3:9 Fully-fledged War in Tabriz and Taqizadeh's Activities in the Caucasus

If, like Browne, one considers there to be three periods of fighting in Tabriz, the first period was a short period of street fighting when the constitutionalists under Sattar Khan and Baqir Khan controlled only one or two of the thirty quarters into which Tabriz was divided.[320] People were heartened by the rejection of the Russian Counsel's peace proposal by Sattar Khan, as commander of the freedom fighters, and so joined him in defending the city. Thus, began a new chapter in the struggle for Tabriz.

When it became clear that the efforts to establish order in the city of the Russian Consul-General were fruitless and looting of shops and houses became widespread, the Shah sent more troops to restore order and to persuade people to open the bazaars. On 13 July, the Shah ordered Sardar Rahim Khan to enter the town with his 1000 horsemen. Despite only numbering as little as 100 men, the revolutionaries fought back strongly.

Meanwhile, however, Taqizadeh had set out from Tehran, starting his journey into exile in Europe by crossing the Caspian Sea and the Caucasus, still unaware of the increasingly strong ongoing resistance movement of Tabriz. When passing Qazvin, he and his fellow travellers received public support from the people. Taqizadeh's arrival into Rasht was big news and a large number of people came out to see him. The fact that the Governor of Rasht had to report to Tehran that Taqizadeh was stirring up unrest in the town represents Taqizadeh's potential power in galvanising the masses. Hardly surprising then that the Shah wanted to distance him from Iran as long as possible, hoping that this would lead to

[320] Browne, *The Persian Revolution of 1905-1909*, 249.

Taqizadeh's political retirement. During his time in Rasht, he was hosted in the British Consulate and managed to meet up secretly with constitutionalists such as Yapram Khan. Yapram Khan was one of the Armenian constitutionalists who later played an important role in conquering Tehran. This was the first time that Taqizadeh had met Yapram. He explained to Taqizadeh that he had a plan for an uprising in Gilan which would restore the Constitution.[321] From Rasht, Taqizadeh went to Anzali and took the boat for Baku.[322] His autobiography gives a good account of his situation there:

> When we reached Baku, we went to a Hotel called 'Europe'. We stayed in that Hotel. We had no money. I mean, "I" did not have any money. We were always concerned and we did not know what would happen next. We added to the cost whenever we ate anything. In Baku, Iranians had an assembly. It was a charity assembly…. Many [Iranian] people were living there, among them businessmen and others who were very rich and in financially secure positions. They came to see me and talked about members of the charity assembly. They told me there was an idea among the members to send some people to Europe to try and publicise their cause in the European press in order to restore the Constitution in Iran. They had together gathered some money with which to send people they found to Europe. [323]

Taqizadeh continued in his autobiography that after they had spoken with him, realizing that he was in dire financial straits, the decision was made to use the funds of 1000 Roubles to facilitate Taqizadeh's journey to Europe and to enable him to achieve the aim of promoting their cause in Europe. Taqizadeh's writing suggests that the Baku merchants, who had been searching for someone to send to Europe in order that they could publicise their cause and promote in Europe the restoration of the Constitution, saw Taqizadeh as the perfect candidate and thus willingly financed his trip. However, it is possible that

[321] Hassan Taqizadeh, "Yafram Khan," in *Maqalat-e Taqizadeh*, 2: 97-9.

[322] The boats were sent by Taqiev who had sympathy with the constitutionalists in Iran. They were treated respectfully in the boats. Esma'il Ra'in, *Heydar Khan Amoghlu* (Tehran: Tahqiq-e Ra'in, 1973), 104.

[323] Taqizadeh, *Tufani,* 87.

Taqizadeh himself made the initial suggestion, outlining his plans to go to Europe, after advice from Browne's associates in the British Legation in Tehran. Later in his life as he wrote his autobiography, Taqizadeh could have cleverly pointed towards the fact that it was the Baku merchants who initiated his trip to Europe, rather than himself as this would have been a way to dispel some of the suggestions made by certain political rivals that he had, in fact, been a British agent. Circulation of the conspiracy theory that he was a puppet of the British government was rampant and Taqizadeh was at pains to refute that idea.

Although Taqizadeh had begun a campaign for the re-establishment of the Constitution, initially he probably did not have a clear idea of his future activities when he later found himself in London, for example. His activities in London were more ad hoc and depended a lot on his co-operation with Browne and the Persia Committee rather than a decision previously made by the merchants in Baku.

While in Baku, Taqizadeh carried out activities supporting the freedom fighters in Tabriz. He commented on this, "After the destruction of the Parliament and after the arrival in Baku of people who had been exiled, including me, I made great efforts to collect arms and money for Tabriz from the rich people in Baku but had only limited success".[324] The reason that Taqizadeh and others had limited success in persuading the affluent people in Baku to help the fighters in Tabriz was due to the strict policy of the Russian government which did not want businessmen to become involved in politics, especially against the Shah in Iran, since it supported the Shah. Only Mokhtarof, one of the wealthy people living in Baku, promised to send arms to Tabriz.[325] Taqizadeh and his friends were closely shadowed by the Russian police in Baku and this also limited their activities.[326]

Continuing his trip, Taqizadeh went to Tbilisi where the Russian police force also followed his activities. There he met Dehkhoda and M'oazed al-Saltaneh who left for Paris

[324] Ibid., 92.
[325] Ra'in, *Heydar Khan,* 111.
[326] Ibid., 104.

before Taqizadeh.[327] In order to help Sattar Khan and his fighters in Tabriz, Taqizadeh continued his activities in Tbilisi. Mohammad Taqi Sadeqof's diaries outline some of these activities. Mohammad Taqi Sadeqof writes that the Social Democrats of Tbilisi had promised to send help to Tabriz but because of the lack of funds they had realised that in order to gather sufficient support they needed to secure help from the Georgians and Armenians. Sadeqof continues that in order to convince Armenians to help, Taqizadeh gave a lengthy talk in the Armenian Dashnaksion Committee about being Iranian and the role of ethnicities saying, "We are all one nation, sharing the same land which is now in trouble. The independence of Iran is in danger. You should help in every other way." [328] According to Sadeqof, Armenians stated that they already had a committee active in Tabriz and so did not help. But eventually with the help of Heydar Khan they managed to get some support from the Georgians who offered whatever help they could provide. Besides sending money and ammunition to Tabriz, 38 Georgians and 42 Muslim fighters were sent to Tabriz.[329] In a further attempt to help the fighters in Tabriz, Taqizadeh sent a letter to Istanbul and encouraged the Iranians living there to collect money and send it to Sadeqof in Tbilisi. [330]

Another remaining letter from Taqizadeh to Sattar Khan in Tabriz, which reveals Taqizadeh's plans for the opposition at this point and the importance of Tabriz resistance for him, sheds more light on his decision to go to Europe. The letter was written August 20, 1908 while Taqizadeh was in Tbilisi. According to this letter, Taqizadeh's initial plan had been to go back to Tabriz but having changed his mind he decided to travel to Europe. The reason for this could be that initially he did not have enough money to travel to Europe but after receiving some money for the trip, he changed his mind. Nevertheless, as he wrote in the letter, the main reason he postponed his trip to Tabriz and instead went to Europe, was to prevent the Shah from receiving a fresh loan from European countries; "If the Shah and Iranian government receive a cash loan, our case is finished and we will be completely

[327] For more information about Dehkhoda and his political activities see: Nahid Nosrat Mozaffari, "Crafting Constitutionalism: Ali Akbar Dehkhoda and the Iranian Constitutional Revolution" (PhD diss., Harvard University, 2001), https://search-proquest-com.ezproxy.leidenuniv.nl/dissertations-theses/crafting-constitutionalism-ali-akbar-dehkhoda/docview/275854702/se-2?accountid=12045.

[328] Ra'in, *Heydar Khan*, 113-4.

[329] Ibid.,

[330] It seems that at this point Taqizadeh and his friends had decided to make the Tbilisi a centre from which to send help to Tabriz.

defeated. If they cannot get the loan they will be defeated for certain. This is so clear that it needs no further explanation.... There were not enough people within my group of friends and associates who were up to this task so the decision was taken that I postpone my trip to Tabriz. It was necessary for me to go immediately to Europe in order to prevent the loan. I will return to Tabriz in a month".[331] He also asked Sattar Khan to prepare a letter to be sent to the French Parliament on behalf of "Sattar Khan and all the Azerbaijani Nation" to protest against any foreign loans.[332] In the letter, Taqizadeh also encouraged Sattar Khan and his fighters to resist any governmental forces, to announce an official government in Tabriz and to establish a temporary national parliament in Tabriz. Since the Turkish army had entered into Iranian territory, Taqizadeh also wanted to solve the territorial border disputes between the Ottomans and Iran by attracting the sympathy of the "Young Turks" who were the constitutionalists in Turkey and had come to power after the July 1908 revolution. He advised Sattar Khan to write to the "Young Turks" in Istanbul and request that, as both countries now wanted freedom and to fight against dictatorship, they put aside the old disputes and unite.

The tone of the letter reveals that Taqizadeh considered himself one of the political leaders of the Tabriz movement which he clearly believed thus entitled him to set a road map for the future and outline what the opposition should demand. Taqizadeh had noticed the importance of the legitimacy of a government and wanted to show the international community that Mohammad Ali Shah no longer had legitimacy as the Shah of Iran. At this point, as expressed in the letter, his goal was to depose Mohammad Ali Shah and give the throne to the Shah's son, Crown Prince Ahmad Mirza.

3:10 Leaving the Caucasus

While in Tbilisi, Taqizadeh's brother-in-law and close friend, Mirza Mohammad Ali Tarbiat, who had fled from Tabriz, joined him. Together with Tarbiat and Hossein

[331] Taqizadeh, "Nameh be Ruznameh-e Times," in O*raq-e Tazeh Yab-e Mashrutiyat*, ed., Afshar 132-6.
[332] Consequently, a telegram was sent about the loan by the Azerbaijan Assembly to the French Senate and National Parliament. See: Amirkhizi, 191.

Parviz[333], Taqizadeh set off on the journey to Europe, taking with him the money which the businessmen of Baku had provided and some that Tarbiat had brought from Tabriz. Taqizadeh and Tarbiat together bought a bill of exchange from a bank which could be cashed anywhere in the world and took the five or six-day train journey from Tbilisi to Vienna. Owing to bad fortune, on the second day of the journey, the suitcase in which Taqizadeh kept his important documents as well as the bill of exchange was stolen. Abandoning the train near Vladikavkaz to search for the suitcase, they stayed with a friend Taqizadeh knew from Tabriz. Their search for the lost suitcase was unfortunately in vain. Having no money to continue their trip, they had decided to go back to Tbilisi. But, Taqizadeh's friend lent them 300 Rubles, which enabled them to continue their journey to Vienna and on to Paris, where many Iranians, including Dehkhoda and Mo'azed al-Saltaneh, had fled and had gathered, in the hope of forming an opposition group against the Shah. From Paris, Taqizadeh travelled on to London, from where he would continue his political activities, aiming to re-establish the Constitution in Iran.

The following episode is one that sheds light on the relationship between Taqizadeh and one of his closest friends, Mohammad Ali Tarbiat and the story of the stolen bag. Although questions may be raised as to the reliability and objectivity of the following account by Kasmaei, his account of the missing bag allows us to view the event through the eyes of someone other than Taqizadeh. Kasmaei narrates that one night, travelling to Istanbul with Mohammad Ali Tarbiat, Tarbiat had told Kasmaei that Taqizadeh had little kindness, manliness, humanity, feelings or spirituality; that he was fake and dishonest. He thinks only about his own benefit even though he deprives everyone else of any. According to Kasmaei, referring to their trip from Iran, Tarbiat recounted:

[333] Aqa Hossein Tehrani (Parviz) was the son of Aqa Mirza Mohammad Ali. He went to exile after the closure of the first Parliament to fight with other constitutionalists against Mohammad Ali Shah. He helped Dehkhoda and Mo'azed al-Saltaneh in Switzerland (Yverdon) to publish *Sur-e Esrafil*. After the constitutionalists won Tehran, he returned to Iran and became an influential member of the Democrat Party. He was particularly active in publishing the party's newspaper *Iran-e Now*. Later he withdrew from politics and together with Taqizadeh established the "Tehran" publishing company. He ran the company until his death. See: O*raq-e Tazeh Yab-e Mashrutiyat*, ed., Afshar, 323.

> When we departed from Iran together, Taqizadeh had a large amount of money and bills of exchange in his bag which I knew about and which Taqizadeh was aware I knew of. He was wondering how to avoid having to share any of it with me, despite our friendship and close relationship. But my own self-respect and honour would never have allowed me to have had any expectations of him nor think about taking advantage of him. I was a true constitutionalist and I was committed to working towards Iran's progress through education. That was the reason I had accepted that dangerous mission. You know, as do my other friends, that I have no other intention than this. Unlike Taqizadeh, I want nothing for myself and I do not deceive others. In short, we departed from Baku and took the train. We had to be on board for two days and nights until we reached Batumi. As soon as we arrived in Batumi, Taqizadeh, in a panic and agitated, came and told me, "Do you know that they have stolen my bag. Whatever I had; they have taken. I do not know what to do. All we can afford with the last money I have in my pocket is a ship ticket to Istanbul." I reassured him that it was not a disaster as, once in Istanbul, the Iranians would compensate us. He hoped for this. In Istanbul I realised that he himself had taken the money and the credit notes out of the bag, put them in his pocket and thrown the empty bag out of the train. He wanted to make it clear to me that I should expect nothing from him.[334]

To fully appreciate the importance of all of Taqizadeh's activities beginning with the letter he wrote to the British whilst still sheltering in the British Legation and continuing with his efforts in Europe, it is necessary to understand the political landscape of Europe during that period.

[334] Abolqasem Kasmaei, *Khaterat Abolqasem Kasmaei* [The Diaries of Abolqasem Kasmaei], ed., Iraj Afshar (Tehran: Qatreh, 2007), 320-1.

3:11 Europe at the turn of the Nineteenth Century

The nineteenth century was an age of dramatic changes in Europe. Industrialisation, modernisation, revolutions in communications, technology, and science, the rise of the strong state, mass politicization, and the growth of liberalism, nationalism, socialism, and democracy were among the fundamental changes that occurred in Europe during this century.[335]

Demographically the population doubled during the nineteenth century in Europe from 205 million in 1800s to 414 million in 1900.[336] In 1900, 24.9 percent of the world population was living in Europe,[337] not taking into account the 38 million who migrated outside Europe in the course of the century.[338] This demographic change had a positive impact on economic growth, ensuring that there were no labour shortages in the increasingly industrial Europe.[339] Industrialisation and the development of factories using modern machinery created many job opportunities across the continent. A shift to powered, special-purpose machinery sped up the production of goods.

Industrialisation led to urbanisation and cities began to expand and become more populated and this facilitated the formation of new social classes. People could now travel more easily and visit more distant lands by using trains and better roads. Communication had also improved during the nineteenth century with the invention of the electric telegraph in 1837. The invention of new means of transportation, such as steamboats and railroads, facilitated the fast and easy transport of goods produced in the factories to near and more distant locations outside Europe. These developments expanded European influence across the globe.

The nineteenth century was known as the age of European colonisation. European countries began to trade on a large scale with countries outside the continent and directed their expansion towards Africa and Asian countries. Following on from other European

[335] Paul W. Schroeder, "International Politics, Peace, and War, 1815-1914" in *A Companion to Nineteenth-Century Europe: 1789-1914* ed., Stefan Berger, (Oxford: Blackwell, 2006), 159.
[336] T.C.W. Blanning, *The Nineteenth Century: 1789-1914* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 1.
[337] Robert Lee, "Demography, Urbanization, and Migration," in Berger, 56.
[338] Blanning, 1.
[339] Lee, 68.

nations, Germany, too, expanded its influence abroad in the 1880s. After its unification under Prussia's rule, it also emerged as an industrial power. This extended international trade and rivalry between European nations as they targeted new countries and regions. But since that new trade was largely pointed to Europe, it strengthened European domination. In the early nineteenth century Europe was not so dependent on raw materials coming from outside Europe. European industrialisation led to an increase in demand for agricultural and industrial raw materials as well as for other goods. Parts of Asia were gradually drawn into this process of European industrialisation. India, for instance, as part of the British Empire, became a chief source of raw materials. This period of industrialisation and the rise of the middle class in Europe would not have been possible without these supplies and the intensification of exchange with Asia.[340]

Between the congress of Vienna and the start of the First World War there were five great powers in Europe; Austria (Austria-Hungary, after 1867), Great Britain, France, Prussia (Germany, after 1871) and Russia. Besides these great powers there were other countries in Europe which were considered "secondary states" such as Italy or Ottoman Turkey. The dominance of the five or six powers over such a long period had created instability in international relationships during this time.[341] This period saw the weakening of the authority of the Ottoman Empire especially in its Central Asian and North African provinces. Afghanistan and Persia, too, were witnessing political instability. These were the only non-European issues which concerned the European powers and greatly affected their relations with one another. [342]

By the mid nineteenth century Russia which was expanding its empire and had already advanced into Central Asia was gradually threatening the interests of Britain in the Indian subcontinent. As Edward Grey stated, "Russian advances towards the Indian frontier were

[340] Rolf Walter, "Economic Relations between Europe and the World: Dependence and Interdependence" in http://ieg-ego.eu/.

[341] Roy Bridge, Roger Bulle, *The Great Powers and the European States System 1814-1914*, (New York: Routledge, 2013), 1.

[342] Ibid, 6.

the most dangerous, the longest standing, or the most likely to recur".[343] This was after the short-lived threat at the end of eighteenth century of the French led by Napoleon who had plotted to conquer India by passing through Iran. The Russians had already expanded their territory in the Caucasus at the beginning of the century. They had conquered Georgia in 1801 and through a series of wars had annexed a large portion of north-western Iran, including Baku and other important towns such as Darband and Ganjeh, leading to two humiliating treaties for the Iranian side. By the Treaty of Golestan, Iran also gave up her right to maintain a navy in the Caspian Sea. Until the 1830s the British government had not considered Russia as a serious threat to India.[344] According to Denis Wright, "…by the early 1830s London and Calcutta had become increasingly concerned with the threat to India from Russia's expansionist policies: henceforth this danger became almost an obsession in British imperial thinking." [345] The Russian threat and its growing power were reflected in the European press and were a great concern for Europeans. By the last quarter of the nineteenth century the assumption in Europe was that a war between Britain and Russia was inevitable. Russia's plan to rule in Central Asia and expand its power and Britain's policy of blocking this is famously referred to as "The Great Game". In the midst of the Anglo-Russia struggle, "The Persian Government, conscious of its own weakness, considered that its best hope lay in playing off one Government as far as it could against the other, and maintaining as far as it could equipoise of bad relations between Britain and Russia." [346] After the 1907 agreement the policy of keeping two imperialist powers against each other would become ineffective. As will be discussed in the following parts of this chapter, Taqizadeh, as someone who had fully grasped the implication of all of these global events, had realised that he must endeavour to maintain the rivalry between Britain and Russia and take advantage of it for the sake of the independence of Iran.

[343] Viscount Grey of Fallodon, *Twenty-five years, 1892-1916* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1925), 1: 152.

[344] Paul W. Schroeder, "The 19th Century International System: Changes in the Structure", *World Politics,* 39, no. 1 (1986), 15.

[345] Wright, *The English Amongst the Persians*, 3.

[346] Grey of Fallodon, 1: 154.

3:12 British Foreign Policy during the Nineteenth Century

The question of how to handle foreign affairs was a subject of dispute in Britain in the nineteenth century. Radicals and Liberal governments had differing opinions about how Britain should act with regards to foreign policy. Radicals believed that the British government's policy in keeping the balance of power in Europe created much tension and increased the threat of war. To decrease the inevitability of war, Radicals advocated a policy of supporting the weak and oppressed nations in the world. They believed that independence of the weak nations was important in order to prevent any dangerous confrontation between the dominant powers over these countries. These ideas were expressed throughout the nineteenth century but it was just after 1905 that the radicals began to protest against the policy of the balance of power in Europe which the foreign secretary Sir Edward Grey was implementing.[347] Grey's policy sacrificed the independence of the weaker countries. The Radicals were against the 1907 agreement with Russia over Iran, Afghanistan and Tibet. They criticised Grey "for committing Britain to the support of the most reactionary regime in Europe".[348] Following the Constitutional Revolution of 1906 in Iran and Mohammad Ali Shah's hostility towards the Constitutionalists, the Shah ordered the destruction of the Parliament with the help of the Russians. Consequently, the British Radicals showed more sympathy towards the Constitutionalists. Since Russia was increasingly helping the Shah to suppress the Constitutionalists especially during the Tabriz resistance, the Radicals insisted that it was Britain's duty to support a constitutional government in Iran and not the tyrant Shah. Grey was under attack from his political opponents who were now preparing themselves for more organised activities against his policy towards Iran and Russia. One such opponent was Henry Finnis Blosse Lynch, who despite being a Liberal-imperialist, criticised the 1907 agreement and joined the leftist opposition to Grey. The left also approached Browne, in the hope that he would form a campaign against Grey, since he had in-depth knowledge about Iran and had many associates among the Iranian community and was concerned about the fate of weaker

[347] D. McLean, "English Radicals, Russia, and the Fate of Persia 1907-1913" in *The English Historical Review* 93, no. 367 (1978): 338. Accessed May 3, 2018. http://www.jstor.org/stable/567065.

[348] Ibid., 339.

nations.[349] Taqizadeh's presence in Europe as one of the most distinguished Iranian exiles would be beneficial for Browne and his friends in forming a strong opposition.

3:13 Edward Browne and Taqizadeh's Journey to London

I heard about your attributes and fell in love with you,
Having not seen your auspicious face,
Thinking of you I became impatient,
What will happen if I see your face!

These were the opening lines, written in Persian poetry, of the very first letter Browne wrote to Taqizadeh, 5 August 1908, showing interest in hosting him in England. Besides expressing his eagerness to meet Taqizadeh, Browne also offered his help to Taqizadeh and his friends whilst resident in England. Taqizadeh in his autobiography, referring to this letter, writes that Browne had written, "If you come here, we could work together". Taqizadeh specifies that Browne meant "working for the sake of the Constitution" but in the original copy of the letter Browne just mentions, "according to what they have written" to him from Tehran. Taqizadeh and his friends may have planned to visit England and he expresses his eagerness to meet and help them.[350] One can infer from this that some friends of Browne, probably in the British Legation in Tehran, had advised Taqizadeh to travel to Britain and they had also informed Browne about the plan. Clearly, Taqizadeh in his autobiography wants to emphasise that it was Browne who had invited him to Britain and he had not intended to go there initially. Considering the time period in which he was writing his autobiography, this could be due to Taqizadeh's fear that if he had mentioned this in his narrative it would intensify the conspiracy theory prevalent in Iranian circles that he was a British agent. Since on the date that Taqizadeh was to arrive Browne would not

[349] Mansour Bonakdarian, "The Persia Committee and the Constitutional Revolution in Iran," in *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 18, no.2 (1991), http://www.jstor.org/stable/196039 (accessed December 20, 2018), 189.

[350] Browne had friends with diplomatic positions working in Iran who had once been his students at Cambridge.

be in Britain, Browne ordered his Iranian assistant, Sheikh Hassan Tabrizi,[351] to host them.[352] However, Taqizadeh purchased a cheap return ticket to London and travelled there together with Haji Mirza Aqa Farshi, another Azerbaijani member of the First Parliament, leaving Mohammad Ali Tarbiat in Paris. In London they stayed in a boarding-house that Sheikh Hassan had provided for Taqizadeh and Mo'azed al-Saltaneh. The expenses were covered by Browne.

Browne had some interests in hosting Taqizadeh and other exiled constitutionalists. He had realised the benefit of working with Iranian political refugees, in particular the Members of Parliament residing in Europe. Co-operation with them would help him to form a more effective opposition against Grey's foreign policy in the Middle East, especially in Iran. Grey's foreign policy was more favourable towards Russian interests and thus not favoured by Taqizadeh and other constitutionalists. In the face of criticism, Grey ignored Russian responsibility in aiding the Royalist attack on the Parliament. For those who were against the British foreign policy, the presence of Iranian exiles in the country could be used to help to discredit official news of Russian intervention in events in Iran. "The exiles' presence also demonstrated the abominable nature and outcome of Grey's accord with St. Petersburg."[353] At the same time Grey was pleased with the 1907 Anglo-Russian agreement because this agreement allayed his fears about "further Russian advances in the direction of the Indian frontier"[354]. In fact, Grey was in favour of the opening of a new Parliament by the Shah. Some other Liberal Members of the British Parliament, however, like Lynch, who had investments in Iran, were more worried about

[351] Sheikh Hassan Tabrizi known also as Sheikh Hassan of Cambridge had been exiled from Istanbul. Sheikh Hassan taught Persian in Cambridge between1906-7 and prior to that published a newspaper called *Khelafat* in London together with a refugee from Egypt called Najib Hendieh. Sheikh Hassan returned to Iran in early 1910 and for about a year published a newspaper in Tehran called *Asr* He also wrote some letters about the situation of Iran to Browne. Hassan Javadi, introduction to *Nameh-ha'i az Tabriz* [Letters from Tabriz] by Edward G. Browne (Tehran: Kharazmi, 2008), 19.

[352] Browne to Taqizadeh, Cambridge, 5 August 1908, in *Nameh-hay-e Edward Browne be Seyyed Hassan Taqizadeh* [Letters of Edward Browne to Seyyed Hassan Taqizadeh], eds., Abbas Zaryab Khoei and Iraj Afshar (Tehran: Ketabhay-e Jibi, 1992), 1-2.

[353] Bonakdarian, "Iranian Constitutional Exiles and British Foreign-Policy Dissenters, 1908-9," in *International Journal of Middle East* Studies 27, no. 2 (1995), 180.

[354] Grey of Fallodon, 1: 159.

the negative effects that this agreement could cause for the business interests of Britain in Iran and Ottoman Iraq and were supporting Browne. [355]

Likewise, Taqizadeh was also pursuing his own interests; publicising the tyranny of the Shah, stopping the increasing influence of Russia over Iran and restoring the Constitution. Browne's invitation was a good opportunity to pursue his aim. Besides these reasons, one should not forget Taqizadeh's adverse financial and psychological state at this point of his life and the effects this may have had on his decisions. Denis Wright describes Taqizadeh's situation during that period as "impecunious".[356] Hesam al-Dowleh Mo'ezi who had seen Taqizadeh in London and had been asked by Mo'azed al-Saltaneh to show him around in London, described Taqizadeh at that time. His comments imply Taqizadeh's difficult financial state. This is one of the first times that Taqizadeh is described as not wearing his usual clergy attire:

> …a young thin man with dark complexion and sunken cheeks came to visit me. Mr. Taqizadeh was wearing a very short coat, tight trousers, baggy at the knees and a red flowery handkerchief round his neck. He talked with a Turkish accent. He showed me Mo'azed al-Saltaneh's visiting card. We chatted a bit; I liked that he was knowledgeable about current affairs and politics. For a few days I spent some Shillings on him. We visited museums and historical gardens. He was very happy and satisfied, whereas I was not, since first of all his clothes caused some people to laugh at him and secondly, he had the idea of an independent Azerbaijan.[357]

This is one of the rare occasions that we witness Taqizadeh talking about an independent Azerbaijan. He was always an advocate for an independent Iran by focusing on Persian language and culture as a crucial unifying element. The reason he talked about an

[355] Bonakdarian, "Iranian Constitutional Exiles and British Foreign-Policy Dissenters, 1908-9", 180.
[356] Denis Wright, *The Persians amongst the English: episodes in Anglo-Persian history* (London: I.B. Tauris, 1985), 203.
[357] Hesam al-Dowleh Mo'ezzi, *Khaterat-e Hesam al-Dowleh Mo'ezzi* [Memoirs of Hesam al-Dowleh Mo'ezzi], ed., Iraj Afshar (Tehran: Soraya, 2000), 53.

independent Azerbaijan could be because of the unfortunate and hapless situation of Iran at that time. Azerbaijan was the only strong centre of resistance for the constitutionalists. Most probably Taqizadeh felt hopeless about re-establishing the Constitution throughout the whole of Iran and saw the independence of Azerbaijan as a practical inevitable solution to prevent the movement from dying out. He also wanted to introduce the Tabriz Assembly as the legitimate government in Iran.[358]

Browne who had the intention of recording the history of the Constitutional Revolution in Iran encouraged Taqizadeh to stay in Britain and offered him a small job in Cambridge, listing Persian and Arabic books in the library. Browne wrote, "I was fortunate enough to be able to obtain for him some little employment in the Cambridge University Library during the autumn of that year, and thus for several weeks enjoyed daily conversations with him and his friend and partner Mirza Muhammad Ali Khan. All that I saw of him only served to confirm and deepen the favourable impression already produced by the reports of common friends. He struck me as a man equally".[359] With Browne's help, Taqizadeh initiated his activities in London by preparing a manifesto together with Mo'azed al-Saltaneh and sending it to *The Times* newspaper. Part of this statement was published on 15 October 1908. *The Times* wrote, "The manifesto which we have received for publication, is signed by Taghi-zada [Taqizadeh] and the Moazid-es Saltana [Mo'azed al-Saltaneh] and represents their views and those of their fellow-exiles on the Persian crisis".[360] The gist of the statement was that foreign countries, in particular Russia, should not interfere in the internal affairs of Iran; "We are confident that if Persia is left alone, and

[358] On 13 August 1908 *Hekmat* newspaper quoting a Russian paper writes that; "a strong party in Tabriz, Azerbaijan province, has been formed by wealthy powerful people who are actively trying to separate the province and establish an independent country. The streets and alleys of the city are full of their announcements; attempting to galvanize people against Russia, others trying to encourage an army of young people of the province to achieve their goal of independence …". *Hekmat*, Year 16, No 916, page 9, 13 August 1908. The Manchester Guardian (December 14,1908) also cites comments made during interviews with two Russian newspapers by the Russian Minister at Tehran, M. Hardwig; "He says that there is in the northern province of Azerbaijan, of which Tabriz is the centre, a popular movement for 'the separation and organisation of an autonomous province. Only, that separation will not be allowed by the interested powers-Russia and Great Britain". Another document stating that Russia was against an independent establishment in Azerbaijan: Nicolson to Grey, telegram, 9 January 1909, in *Persia No. 2 Further Correspondence Respecting the Affairs of Persia: In Continuation of Persia No. 1 (1909)*, (London: Harrison and Sons, 1909), 20.

[359] Browne, *The Persian Revolution of 1905-1909*, 332.

[360] "The Persian Nationalists," *London Times*, October 15, 1908.

if the Great Powers of Europe will refrain from giving the shah moral or material support, our case is certain to triumph".[361] Furthermore, the manifesto emphasised that the Parliament had avoided any strong resistance since the constitutionalists were threatened with Russian intervention in the event of them acting against the Shah. The statement also highlighted the horrifying situation in Tabriz. The manifesto asked that foreign countries to no longer give loans to the Iranian government in the absence of a legitimate Parliament. In describing the achievements of the First Parliament, the manifesto explained how people were given equal rights irrespective of race or religion. Part of this statement which was bitter about the Shah and his personality was not published. This was due to the fact that the policy of the Liberal politicians was to avoid any extremist actions and dispel extremist ideas. It was also the case when some of the ulama in Najaf who supported the Constitutionalists sent a declaration to all European governments. They condemned Mohammad Ali Shah as a tyrant and declared his government's decisions and any loan agreements with foreign banks invalid. Lynch strongly refused to publish such extreme words against the Shah in a British paper. He was concerned about the consequences of such an act which could cause more unrest and encourage foreign intervention in Iran.[362] Browne also expressed his concern about such extreme behaviour, when the first issue of *Sur-e Esrafil* was published in Yverdon after an article in which Dehkhoda had bitterly attacked the Shah. Browne wrote to Mo'azed al-Saltaneh, "In my opinion, writing bitterly like that about the shah has no benefit in this situation. Whatever is said [about the Shah] is true but it is not always necessary to state the obvious".[363] It is clear that at this point Browne was hoping that the constitutionalists would make peace with the Shah. That could be one reason that Taqizadeh's condemnation of the Shah also gradually lessened before he returned to Tabriz to try to negotiate with the Shah, despite the fact that the revolutionaries and Sattar Khan opposed his plan. It seems that in the beginning Taqizadeh had had a hard time compromising his ideals.

[361] Ibid.

[362] Mangol Bayat, *Iran's First Revolution: Shiism and the Constitutional Revolution of 1905-1909*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 245.

[363] Browne to Mo'azd al-Saltaneh, 10 February 1909, in *Mobarezeh ba Mohammad Ali Shah*, ed., Iraj Afshar, 201.

One of the letters that Taqizadeh wrote to Browne when he was in London, dated 19 October 1908, is clearly representative of the confused and difficult situation in which he found himself in Europe and at the same time reflects on his relationship with Browne:

> ... I am now an unfortunate Iranian in Europe. I do not know what I should do. I do not speak the language well enough to be able to carry out any useful activities here. I do not have enough financial credit to prevent me from sitting and worrying. I can do nothing for my country other than sit here and, like a person disappointed with the world, cry over the miserable state of my country which is imprisoned by the European countries who do not give us a moment's peace.
>
> Now I make a plea to you, honourable friend, that as a friend of Iran, a humanist and a defender of the oppressed, you give me some advice about where I should go and what I should do. What should I do to save my country? My hope and that of all Iranian patriots was Tabriz and our sole happiness in the world was linked to that. Now that the Shah has managed to achieve nothing, the Russians are coming to help him.[364] I came to Europe in order to be able to do something to help my nation and to prevent any Russian interference. I had hoped that as soon as I had reached London, I would have been able to meet some of the Members of Parliament and visit the Foreign Minister. I thought that I could give conferences and express my views in detail and that the newspapers would run copious stories covering that news. I thought that in one week I could carry out this important service for my country. But now I see that I have been sitting in a room with my friends (who had come here precisely for the same purpose) for nearly forty days and achieved very little apart from two short articles that the owner of the newspaper edited according to his own whims, which did little to express our aims. Now I do not know what I can do and where I should go to achieve something. Does your Excellency give permission for us to stay here

[364] It is a reference to the news that "two companies of Russian infantry and 100 Russian Cossacks" were on their way to Tabriz from Jolfa. Nicholson to Sir Edward Grey, telegram, 17 October 1908, in *Persia No. 1 (1909)*, 192.

> for a short while and busy ourselves with trying to achieve what we set out to do?[365]

Although the tone of Taqizadeh in this letter is humble, it seems that he indirectly complains to Browne and his associates who had advised them to go to Britain that what they had promised him and his friends had not come true and that they had not been able to achieve as much as they had hoped.

Browne's reply was short but sympathetic and suggests that he was willing to do whatever he could to assist Taqizadeh and clearly wanted to placate Taqizadeh:

> God knows that I want to do whatever I can to help. I have already tried but unfortunately so far in vain. However, I will continue to do my best in whatever way I can. But what can a person without any influence do when faced with Sultans, ministers and dictators. These ministers are thinking only of their own interests and do not care about others. I managed to reach Sir Edward Grey with great difficulty and I talked at length. Later I wrote a long petition. I subsequently tried to take your Excellency to him but was unable. For the time being there is no other choice. Here it is not like Iran where one can force oneself upon the King or one of the ministers.[366]

But soon, with the help of Grey's leftist critics, Browne was able to satisfy Taqizadeh by launching a more organised campaign against the Liberal government's foreign policy towards Iran by forming the Persia Committee. A meeting was arranged for Taqizadeh and Mo'azed al-Saltaneh to meet Lynch who introduced them to other opposition members.[367] They agreed that Taqizadeh would prepare an article to read for a group of 25 Members of Parliament.[368] Taqizadeh asked Browne to translate the article into English. On 29 October

[365] Taqizadeh to Browne, 19 October 1908, in *Browne Papers*, 1-1-8.
[366] Browne to Taqizadeh, 20 October 1908, in *Nameh-hay-e Edward Browne be Seyyed Hassan Taqizadeh*, eds., Zaryab and Afshar, 9-10.
[367] Taqizadeh to Browne, 20 October 1908, in *Browne Papers*, 1-1-8.
[368] Taqizadeh to Browne, 28 October 1908, in Ibid., 1-1-7

1908, Taqizadeh together with Mo'azed al-Saltaneh delivered the speech under the title of "A Summary of Recent Developments in Iran".

As Bayat has referred to, it seems that "the committee's task was to induce the constitutionalists to follow a course of moderate, loyalist opposition, selecting from among them those figures most likely to succeed as leaders of a restored constitutional monarch regime".[369] Educating young Iranian politicians is clearly what Lynch wanted when he wrote to Browne about Taqizadeh, "I hope that your Taghi Zada [Taqizadeh] is attending courses or learning English as quickly as possible to enable him to do so. Our committee shall have as one of its objects the looking after young Persians coming over here to study and the equipping them for functions of Government." [370]

When there was some discussion of Taqizadeh's return to Iran, Lynch wrote to Browne, "Taghi Zada [Taqizadeh] ought surely to remain here and study. Who knows how long it may be before things are ready for him out there?" [371]

3:14 The Persia Committee

The creation of the Persia Committee was mainly due to the organised efforts of Browne and his old friend from his schooldays, Lynch. Lynch knew the region very well and had travelled there extensively since he owned shipping services and roads in and around the Persian Gulf.[372] The primary aim of the Persia Committee was to set out a campaign in order to create a change in British foreign policy such as would force the Russians to respect the independence and integrity of Iran. The members of the committee were prominent members of both houses of parliament and some journalists and writers. Lynch

[369] Bayat, 245.

[370] Quoted in Shiva Balaghi, "Nationalism and Cultural Production in Iran, 1848-1906," (PhD diss., The University of Michigan, 2008), 71. Accessed December 16, 2016. https://search-proquest-com.ezproxy.leidenuniv.nl/dissertations-theses/nationalism-cultural-production-iran-1848-1906/docview/304573861/se-2?accountid=12045.

[371] Ibid.

[372] Christopher N. B. Ross, "Persia Committee (act. 1908–1914)," in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (2010). Accessed 17 December, 2016. https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-100991.

became the Chairman and Browne the Vice Chairman of the committee with R.H. Gretton of the Manchester Guardian as the Secretary.[373]

The objectives of the Persia Committee which were drafted in December 1908 were first "to stimulate public interest in the Persian people and in their efforts to regenerate Persia; and to enlist it on the side of the declared policy of Great Britain and Russia –namely, non-intervention in Persia".[374] The second objective was to influence British public opinion in order to support restoring of the Constitution in Iran.[375] These political aims supported those of Taqizadeh, who was determined to reveal the situation of Iran to an international audience and make the world aware of the tyranny of Russia in Iran. Thus, the Committee's aims greatly pleased Taqizadeh and his fellow constitutionalists.

As the news about Tabriz and its revolution against the Shah came predominantly through Russian sources, the Persia Committee in London decided to send an English correspondent to Tabriz in order to provide an alternative source of reporting the situation.

3:15 Browne and Iran

The importance of Edward Browne's friendship with Taqizadeh and the influence they had on each other's political and scholarly activities necessitates a brief summary of Browne's life, his ideas and intellectual heritage.

Edward Granville Browne, son of a wealthy shipbuilder, was born on 7 February, 1862 in Uley, Gloucestershire.[376] His father, Sir Benjamin Granville, sent him to preparatory school at Glenalmond, to Eton College and Cambridge University.[377] His political and professional work merged soon after he finished his elementary education. His uncle had voluntarily participated in the Russo-Turkish War (1877–78) fighting for the Ottomans.

[373] Bonakdarian, *Iranian Constitutional Exiles*, 175-191.
[374] Ibid.
[375] Ibid.
[376] Hassan Taqizadeh, "Khatabeh dar Majles-e Sugvari-e Browne [Eulogy at Browne's Memorial Service]," in *Maqalat-e Taqizadeh*, 1: 254-268.
[377] G. Michael Wickens, Juan Cole, Kamran Ekbal, "Browne, Edward Granville," *Encyclopædia Iranica*, IV/5, pp. 483-488, available online: http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/browne-edward-granville (accessed 30 December, 2012).

Browne developed the same anti-Russian feelings and sympathy for Ottoman Turkey as his uncle. As he wrote himself, he "watched the progress of this struggle with eager attention."[378] Browne's original intention was to attend a military school and then join the Turkish army as an officer. However, his father was against this decision and persuaded Browne to study medicine. Browne went to medical school with the hope that he could still join the Ottoman army as a military doctor.

His enthusiasm for Ottoman Turkey led him to start learning the Turkish language. Since he found out that in order to successfully master Ottoman Turkish, he must know Persian and Arabic, he began to learn Persian in the summer of 1880.[379] He consequently mastered all three languages. This subsequently allowed him a deeper insight into and engagement with the politics of the East. This engagement would intensify after his first visit to Istanbul in June 1882.[380] Reading the works of Gobineau, who had served as the chargé d'affaires in Iran, in particular his famous book about the philosophy and religions in Asia, he became interested in knowing more about the different religions and especially the Babi movement in Iran.[381]

Abandoning the idea of joining the Turkish army, Browne had hoped that his proficiency in Oriental languages would facilitate his employment in the British Consular Service in the Middle East. He was, however, disappointed to find out that they preferred the knowledge of European languages. Just as he was giving up hope he achieved a fellowship of his Cambridge College, allowing him the opportunity to spend a year in Iran. He travelled through Iran, visiting different towns and met and talked with the followers of various religions and beliefs. Later, in order to investigate more about Babism, he travelled to Cyphers and Akko and talked to the two rival brothers of the Babi movement,

[378] Edward Granville Browne, *A Year Amongst the Persians* (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1893), 6.

[379] Ibid, 11.

[380] Ibid, 12.

[381] Edward Granville Browne, *Nuqtat al-Kaf* (Leiden: Brill, 1910).

Gobineau was in possession of the only original manuscript of *Nuqtat al-Kaf*, the early history of the Babí movement in Iran, written by Haji Mirza Jan Kashani, who was executed by the Iranian authorities in 1852. Browne who was searching for the manuscript managed to locate it in the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris and published it.

Mirza Yahya Noori, known as Sobh-e Azal and Mirza Hossein Ali Noori, known as Bah al-Allah and collected much information about Babism.[382] When he returned to England he published his book about traveling in Iran, *A Year Amongst the Persians*, which brought him fame.[383] Besides working as a lecturer and then professor of Oriental languages at Pembroke College, Cambridge, Browne published extensively about the history of Iran and Persian literature. He published a series of old Persian manuscripts. Being one of the people in charge of the Gibb family foundation, he dedicated money to publish Arabic, Turkish and Persian books and since he was more interested in Persian he published and edited mostly Persian books.[384] One of Browne's most notable works was an extensive book in four volumes; *Literary History of Persia*.

When Mozaffar al-Din Shah travelled to Europe he agreed to meet Browne and was complimentary about his interest in Iran.[385] Browne had many Iranians friends in Iran and other places. He had constant correspondence with them and updated his knowledge about the politics and literary affairs of Iran. He even had correspondence with the important Ulama of Najaf. He provided personal help and financial assistance for many Iranians who were in exile.[386] Benefiting from such an extensive network of friends who were constantly in touch with him Browne wrote his other important book, *The Persian Revolution of 1905-1909* which described the happening of the Constitutional Revolution in Iran. The book was mostly based on Taqizadeh's narratives and the reports Browne's student Smart sent to him from Tehran. In writing the book, Browne had benefited from the help of Mohammad Qazvini and Sheikh Hassan Tabriz.

According to Taqizadeh, Browne was so saturated in Islamic culture and sciences that he himself considered his religious belief a mixture of Islam and Christianity.[387] Taqizadeh believed that Browne, represented the positive side of the Iranians to Europe and helped

[382] Browne, *Nuqtat al-Kaf*.
[383] Taqizadeh, "Khatabeh dar Majles-e Sugvari-e Browne," 44.
[384] Ibid.
[385] Ibid.
[386] G. Michael Wickens, Juan Cole, Kamran Ekbal, "Browne, Edward Granville," *Encyclopædia Iranica*, IV/5, pp. 483-488, available online: http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/browne-edward-granville (accessed 30 December, 2012).
[387] Taqizadeh, "Khatabeh dar Majles-e Sugvari-e Browne," 42.

the formation of a good image of Iran in general. As Taqizadeh has put it, the essence of Browne's opinion was that a group of politicians in Europe stirred unrest and constant miseries for the other nations and was responsible for the unhappiness of mankind.[388]

3:16 Taqizadeh and Browne

Working with Browne familiarised Taqizadeh more with European political ideas and furnished him with more ideas which helped him to develop his own view of practising modernity in Iran as well as using history and Iran's past to help build up a nation-state. Later in his life, Taqizadeh developed these ideas during the interwar period through his periodical *Kaveh.* His aim was to construct an "authentic" national identity for Iranians. It was through Orientalism that Taqizadeh would gain a new understanding of Iranian history.[389] Taqizadeh, previously writing *Zad va Bum* in Tabriz, had expressed such tendencies by dividing inhabitants of Iran into four categories: 1. Iranians 2. Turks 3. Kurds and Bakhtiyaris. 4. Semites. He referred to Persian speaking people as "the Iranian element" and "one of the most well-favoured and shapely and intelligent in the world".[390] Throughout his life Taqizadeh tried to build an Iranian identity based on the Persian language. At the same time Orientalism added a scientific aspect to the process of connecting Iran's past to its present.

Browne played a key role in connecting Iran and Britain since Browne's works and activities could be considered the starting point of the modern history of Iran in Britain. Iran was an exotic place for Browne and many of his contemporaries.[391] He saw the essence of Iran in Persian culture, language and literature. For instance, he considered the Persian speaking people as "much brighter, more intelligent, and more amiable than the natives of Azerbaijan". He described the Turkish speaking people as having "scowling faces and furtive grey eyes".[392] He immediately found a connection between the language and appearance of the people while leaving Azerbaijan and entering the Persian speaking part

[388] Ibid, 51

[389] Afshin Marashi, *Nationalizing Iran: Culture, Power, and the State, 1870-1940* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2008), 81.

[390] Hassan Taqizadeh and Mohammad Ali Tarbiat, *Zad va Bum* [Homeland], (Tabriz: Tarbiat, 1901), 48.

[391] C. A. Bayly, "The Orient: British Historical Writing about Asia since 1890" in *History and Historians in the Twentieth Century,* ed., Peter Burke (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 93.

[392] Browne, *A Year Amongst the Persians*, 77.

of Iran; "The change in the appearance of the people is accompanied by a change in language, for this was the first place we came to at which the Persian tongue appeared to preponderate over the Turkish". Browne highlighted the influence of the pre-Islamic history of Iran. He assumed the most important characteristic of Persians as a nation was their passion for mystical speculations. He believed that "Aryan freedom" had been overcome by "Arab steel" in the early years of the Islamic expansion.

Unlike many other Orientalists who believed the Persians had lost any creative element in thought and culture, Browne believed the creativity of Iranians was ongoing and had not decreased but was indeed developing. If ancient Persia's religious creativity was expressed in Zoroastrianism and Mithraism, the Babi movement showed the capacity of contemporary Iranians to produce new interpretations based on Islam. Browne assumed that there was a continuity of Iranian identity throughout history.[393] He regarded the Persian language and its literature as the core of this identity. In the political realm, Browne saw the Constitutional Revolution as the revival of Iran as an independent nation. One can trace this line of thought, too, in Taqizadeh's ideas. Meeting Browne seems to have influenced Taqizadeh to consider Persian literature as an integral part of Iranian identity.

3:17 Persia's Appeal to England

Taqizadeh was clearly dissatisfied and frustrated with the fact that all his views and concerns about the interference of Russia in the affairs of Iran were not being fully publicised and only partly published in the British press. Together with Mo'azed al-Saltaneh he prepared another privately published text, titled "Persia's Appeal to England", addressed to members of the British Parliament and other politicians. His hope was that they were cognisant of the gravity of the Russian interference and aware of Russia's "steady growth in Iran"[394] The text signed by Taqizadeh and Mo'azed al-Saltaneh on 27 October 1908 details the increase in Russia's influence in different aspects of politics, trade and in the Iranian court. Frustrated by the growing interference of Russia in the affairs of Iran, they wanted to show that the Iranian constitutionalists and public opinion in general

[393] C. A. Bayly, 93.
[394] Taqizadeh and Mo'azed al-Saltaneh, "Persia's Appeal to England," in *Maqallat-e Taqizadeh*, 7: 452.

viewed Britain favourably and considered the British as supporters of the establishment of an Iranian constitution and parliament. Support for the Iranian nationalists had weakened following the Anglo-Russian Agreement of 1907, which, according to the text, not only endangered the independence of Iran but was also unfavourable for the interests of Britain in Iran. In the rest of the text the authors outline the increasing interference of Russia in the affairs of Iran in support of the Shah and against the interests of the Iranian people and Russia's role in the destruction of the Iranian parliament. Taqizadeh's fear that the Russians would send troops to break the resistance of constitutionalists in Tabriz is also expressed in this letter. Taqizadeh was at pains to reassure the British politicians that "the interests of Persian People and England are identical." Taqizadeh and other constitutionalists in exile hoped these facts would raise sympathy and convince the Liberal Party in Britain to act against the Russians who, according to the writers, were determined to eradicate the constitution in Iran. Taqizadeh had penned this text from abroad but he soon came to feel that more active opposition within Iran was preferable to propaganda from abroad. He decided to return to Iran and join the resisting revolutionary forces there.

3:18 Travelling to Tabriz

The struggle between the constitutionalists and the governmental forces in Tabriz was still on going after four months of intense fighting. The constitutionalists had managed to gain control over most parts of the town. They had succeeded in defeating the Royalists in the Davahchi district and had managed to dissolve the Eslamieh Assembly and push back the governmental forces to Basmenj on the outskirts of Tabriz. The Tabriz Assembly, which was controlling the town in the absence of a parliament, had officially declared itself the National Assembly. However, the Shah, angry about the situation in Tabriz, was plotting a complete siege of Tabriz and blocking the trade routes. This was the situation of the town until, in December 1909, Taqizadeh received a telegram from Jolfa, stating that the situation in Tabriz was not good and that he should go to Tabriz immediately. After discussing the case with Browne, Taqizadeh decided to travel to Tabriz. In a letter to Browne, Taqizadeh stated that Sattar Khan had asked him to go to Tabriz while he was doing what Taqizadeh had advised him to do.[395] Browne was not happy about Taqizadeh's

[395] Taqizadeh to Browne in *Browne Papers*, 1-1-45.

return because Taqizadeh played a key role in the campaign that they had organised against Grey's policies. Browne wrote, "It is a pity that you cannot stay longer".[396] But, Taqizadeh was determined about his decision to go and had already begun to plan his journey with great secrecy since there was a high risk of him being arrested while passing through the Russian territory or in Iran before reaching Tabriz. Although some historians like Kasravi consider Taqizadeh's motives in going to Tabriz opportunistic and with the aim of holding power, this trip was not without risk for Taqizadeh.[397] By returning to Tabriz from Europe, the British guarantee with regard to Taqizadeh's life and property would be officially cancelled.[398] That is why Browne had advised him not to go to Iran through Russia. If his true identity was discovered by the Russians, he could be arrested and, in all likelihood, handed over to the Shah in Iran. Nevertheless, as the evidence implies, Taqizadeh had been under pressure from his friends and family to return to Tabriz. Mohammad Ali Tarbiat writes to Taqizadeh, emphasising that in Tabriz they needed him and his presence there would be highly beneficial.[399] Additionally, Javad the younger brother of Taqizadeh, criticised Taqizadeh's continuing residence in Europe, arguing that it could not be helpful since foreigners had their own interests at heart; "If England were sincere in their efforts about this matter, the Iranian Parliament would have reopened by now. Thus, I do not understand why you do not depart for Tabriz. If we gain nothing else, at least our blood will be mixed with that of other martyrs of freedom in Azerbaijan".[400] Further evidence is Browne's letter to Dehkhoda in which he writes about Taqizadeh's return to Tabriz; "as there was so much insistence from the other side, he [Taqizadeh] felt obliged to go…".[401]

Taqizadeh first went to Paris and from there travelled to Istanbul on December 19, 1908.[402] Despite the danger, Taqizadeh travelled with a counterfeit passport to Odessa, trying to hide his identity, by wearing a beard. The 60-hour train journey took him from

[396] Browne to Taqizadeh, 4 December 1909, in Javadi, 20.
[397] Kasravi, *Tarikh-e Mashruteh-e Iran*, 2: 808.
[398] Sir G. Barclay to Sir Edward Grey, 9 January 1909, in *TNA*: FO 371/803.
[399] Mohammad Ali Tarbiat to Taqizadeh, October 31, 1908, in *Nameh-hay-e Mashrutiyat va Mohajerat*, ed., Afshar, 96-7.
[400] Javad Taqizadeh to Hassan Taqizadeh, November 1908, in Ibid., 100-7.
[401] Browne to Dehkhoda, January 23, 1909, in *Mobarezeh ba Mohammad Ali Shah*, ed., Afshar, 199.
[402] Taqizadeh to Browne, Istanbul, December 20, 1909, in *Browne Papers*, 1-1-61.

Odessa to Vladikavkaz.[403] He continued to Baku and from there to Tbilisi, where he contacted Heydar Khan's father who helped him stay in Tbilisi for some days before he managed to reach Tabriz, his identity still hidden.[404] Back on home soil he first went to his friend, Mirza Hossein Khan 'Edalat's house, had his hair cut there, put on his clerical robes and went to the Tabriz Assembly to begin a new phase in his life. After his arrival in Tabriz the last road connecting Tabriz to the outside world was blocked and the siege of Tabriz was complete. Thus, began another chapter in the Tabriz battles and the history of the Iranian Constitutional Revolution.

[403] Taqizadeh to Browne, Vladikavkaz, 29 December 1909, in Ibid.
[404] Taqizadeh, *Tufani*, 101-2.