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Seyyed Hassan Taqizadeh: a political biography

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Chapter Four

Restoration of the Constitution and Return from Exile

As well as presenting the socio-political situation of Iran during the aftermath of the destruction of the First Parliament, the previous chapter scrutinised Taqizadeh's political and intellectual life, reflecting on the influence of external forces in developing his character. At the chapter's core was the idea that both events and Taqizadeh's reactions to those events simultaneously shaped his character. Although Taqizadeh's time in exile was aggravated by financial hardship, his trip to Europe broadened his political horizons and acquainted him greatly with the European political system and parliamentarism. His time in Europe also allowed him to witness democracy in practice. Moreover, the activities of Taqizadeh during this exile familiarised him with the importance of newspapers and journalism in politics.⁴⁰⁵ The main intellectual influence of this exile on Taqizadeh was in terms of his political outlook. It convinced him of the necessity of immediately pursuing party-building in Iran; an idea that he put into practice as soon as he gained enough leverage following the restoration of the Constitution and reopening of the Parliament.⁴⁰⁶ It was during his first exile that Taqizadeh put aside his traditional clerical attire and began to wear European civil clothes for the first time. Whilst this change could be considered rather trivial, it was in fact a decisive psychological step towards him becoming "inwardly and outwardly European" and symbolic of his new way of thinking.

A further outcome of this exile for Taqizadeh was the formation of strong ties with some European politicians. This deepened his sense of belonging to an international community and encouraged his views that history was moving in the direction of progress, and that people of all nations should work in unity in order to further this progress. That may explain

⁴⁰⁵ In the first Issue of *Iran-e Now*, the publication of the Democrat party, published by Taqizadeh and his friends on 24 August 1909 a whole article deals with the importance of the press in the modern world, arguing that newspapers were highly influential and were "the big government" in the West. "The strength of Newspapers is stronger than the heavy artillery. The press is the voice of a nation. A nation which does not have a newspaper does not have a voice...".

⁴⁰⁶ Vram Pilosian to Taqizadeh, 19 August 1909, in *Oraq-e Tazeh Yab-e Mashrutiyat*, ed., Afshar, 238-42.

the fact that during his exiled period in Europe, Taqizadeh joined a masonic lodge⁴⁰⁷. The main goal of masonic lodges was to “bring men together by a common impulse and inspiration in mutual respect and brotherly regard”.⁴⁰⁸ Taqizadeh was not alone in this way of thinking. There were others who had previously worked for similar goals; Malkam Khan, for instance, who had established a lodge and by whom Taqizadeh had been greatly influenced. Seyyed Jamal al-Din Asadabadi (Afghani) also known as Asadabadi (1838-1896) had similarly propagated the concept of Islamic unity; an example of how European and Islamic ideas could merge and influence each other.⁴⁰⁹ Seyyed Jamal preferred to seek modern values “within the Islamic tradition instead of openly borrowing them from the hostile West”.⁴¹⁰ This is especially important since many have considered freemasonry as a solely European notion. However, one observes the development and promotion of similar ideas by certain brotherhoods in the Islamic world, such as the Ikhwan al-Safa

⁴⁰⁷ In a letter to Taqizadeh, Esma‘il Momtaz al-Dowleh refers to “the Lodge” which according to Iraj Afshar implies that Taqizadeh had joined a Lodge at that time. See: Esma‘il Momtaz al-Dowleh to Taqizadeh, 25 November 1908, in *Nameh-hay-e Mashrutiyat va Mohajerat*, ed., Afshar, 118-9.

According to Esma‘il Ra‘in Taqizadeh first joined a freemason lodge, Iran Awakening Lodge, in 1907. See: Esma‘il Ra‘in, *Faramushkhaneh va Framasonery dar Iran* [Masonic Lodges and Freemasonry in Iran] (Great Britain: Tahqiq-e Ra‘in, 1978), 531.

⁴⁰⁸ John Fort Newton, *The Builder: A Journal for the Masonic Student* 4, no.7 (1918). Accessed 15 May, 2018.
<http://www.lakeharrietlodge.org/1h1277/MainMenu/Home/MasonicLibrary/TheBuilderMagazine/TheBuilderMagazineVolume4Number7/tabid/210/Default.aspx>.

⁴⁰⁹ Taqizadeh, “Seyyed Jamal al-Din Maruf be Afghani,” in *Maqalat-e Taqizadeh*, 2: 75-84. For more about Seyyed Jamal see:

Nikki R. Keddie, *Seyyed Jamaal al-Din al-Afghani: a Political Biography* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1972).

For more about Malkam Khan see: Hamid Algar, *Mirza Malkam Khan: A Study in the History of Iranian Modernism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973).

Fereshteh Mangench- Nourai, “The Life and Thought of Mirza Malkam Khan, 1833/4-1908: A Contribution to the History of Iranian Liberal Ideas” (PhD diss., University of Colorado, 1970) ProQuest (302398151).

Esma‘il Ra‘in, *Mirza Malkam Khan: Zendeghi va Kosheshhay-e Siyasi Ou* [Mirza Malkam Khan: His Life and Political Activities] (Tehran: Safi Ali Shah, 1974).

⁴¹⁰ Keddie, 1.

Seyyed Jamal enjoyed some success in decreasing hostilities between different branches of Islam. As Browne has noted: “thanks to the teachings of Sayyid Jamalud-Din and his successors (amongst whom the Prince Hajji Sheikhu'r-Ra'is, author of the Itihddu l-Islm, or " Union of Islam," and other similar works, deserves special mention), the two principle independent States of Islam [Iran and Ottoman Turkey] were beginning to realize how much they had in common, both of fears and hopes”. Browne, *Persian Revolution*, 250.

group (Brethren of Purity) much earlier than Europe.⁴¹¹ As Hamid Algar has put it, “Such similarities may have played some role in the preparation of prominent Iranians for entry to masonic or pseudo-masonic groupings”.⁴¹²

One could deduce that the reason that intellectuals in Islamic countries now revisited Islamic tradition and teachings, searching for concepts similar to those from freemasonry, was the sweeping influence of the French Revolution. This history-changing revolution, characterised by its slogans promoting the notion of humanity being a unified entity and extolling the sense of brotherhood, had been a major ideological catalyst. Leading on from this, *anjomans* [assemblies], which played a crucial role in supporting and spreading the idea of the Constitution often particularly chose names which implied the concept of unified brotherhood, such as *Okhovat* [brotherhood], *Ettehad* [unity] or *Baradaran* [brethren]. Some of these assemblies established secret organisations similar to the freemasons, highlighting the popularity of the idea at that time. One example of this developing way of thinking is a letter written by the Tabriz Assembly to the British and Russian legations. Its opening line “according to nature’s law all human beings have relationships with and should be loved by each other...” similarly represents this idea.⁴¹³ Another example is the manifesto that constitutionalists of Azerbaijan addressed to “les Parisiens de la liberté et de la justice” under the title of “Appeal by the People of Azerbaijan, Persia, to the Civilized World”. The first sentences of the manifesto emphasise the notion of the unity of human beings, “To all lovers of humanity. To all who seek justice in five continents. Though we Persians, in religion and nationality, differ from you, the manner of government in every country works for the common good of its people. But in humanity and justice and the seeking of righteousness we are all alike. We are drinking of

⁴¹¹ A group of Muslim scholars who founded a secret society in the second half of the 10th century in Basra and Baghdad. The goal of the society was to promote the study of philosophy among the Muslim world in order to fight against superstitions. The majority of members of this group were Iranian. According to them “individual human souls emanate from the universal soul and rejoin it after death; the universal soul in its turn will be united with God on the day of the Last Judgment...”. See: *Encyclopaedia Britannica Online*, s.v. “Ikhwan-as-Safa,” available online: <http://www.britannica.com/topic/Ikhwan-as-Safa> (accessed 19 July, 2015).

⁴¹² Hamid Algar, “An Introduction to the History of Freemasonry in Iran,” in *Middle Eastern Studies* 6, no.3 (1970): 276-96. Accessed May 15, 2015. doi: 10.1080/00263207008700153.

⁴¹³ Barclay to Grey, 30 December 1908, in *Persia No. 2*, 33.

the same spring...”.⁴¹⁴ The idea of brotherhood and unity was highlighted in freemasonry and was particularly attractive to the Iranian intellectuals who had been able to find similar concepts in Islam. Interestingly, one piece from the *Hekmat* newspaper on 21 February 1909 elaborates on the concept of freemasonry, attempting to emphasise the Eastern origins of it. *Hekmat* writes that freemason[ry] or Faramosh Khaneh (house of oblivion) is an institution which was established in Hamedan before King Soleyman’s time and it was only during the Crusades that it took on some Christian and Jewish reformist ideas.

Within this context, in analysing the reasons for Taqizadeh joining a freemasonry lodge, one could surmise that Taqizadeh wanted to build a bridge between the home-grown ideas and the so-called European ones and considered the concept of unity and brotherhood in line with his ideological goals. It is likely that he was also hoping to reap the benefits of belonging to a masonic lodge as it would allow him the opportunity to raise the profile of his goals internationally and thus further his own political ambitions concerning Iran. It is against this background that Taqizadeh's thoughts and acts must be analysed.

The present chapter continues to chronologically cover events during the Constitutional Revolution up to the overthrow in Tehran of Mohammad Ali Shah by the constitutionalists. Taqizadeh was clearly a key player in these events. A rather detailed narration of this period is necessary in order to also fully appreciate Taqizadeh’s, at times, more subtle role in these happenings. It additionally allows one to observe the influence of situational factors on Taqizadeh’s intellectual development in particular and on Iranian intellectual history in general.

4:1 Events in Tehran and the Council of Notables

November 1908 was an eventful month for both the Royalist and Constitutionalist camps. During this month, in response to the organised demonstration of the conservative clergy against the Constitution in Tehran, Mohammad Ali Shah, addressing the reactionary clergy, officially abolished the Constitution; “Considering that you denounced the

⁴¹⁴ “The Civil War in Tabriz,” in *The Times*, October 19, 1908. Judging by the style, this manifesto was most likely written by Taqizadeh.

Constitution as against the Islamic laws, we, always desirous of the welfare of our subjects, entirely abolish the Constitution, and will henceforward rule in strict accordance with Koranic principles and dispense universal justice".⁴¹⁵ The initiation of this act was organised by Sheikh Faz al-Allah Nouri, a leading anti-constitutionalist clergyman in Tehran and some courtiers who had represented the Shah in a petition which supported the idea that the Constitution was contrary to Islam.⁴¹⁶ The decision of the Shah to abolish the Constitution was despite all his previous oaths and promises to restore the Constitution and displeased the Russian and British representatives who were expecting the Shah to restore it. The British and Russians made their resentments clear by sending a joint memorandum "reminding His Majesty of his promises." They were "convinced that the only hope of terminating the present deplorable situation lies in the convocation of an elective Assembly and an amnesty for Tabreez [Tabriz]".⁴¹⁷ The British and Russians forced the Shah to open the Parliament, concerned that the riots would become widespread and that the country would fall into a state of anarchy. This would result in the disintegration of Iran and was against the interests of Britain and Russia.⁴¹⁸ But the Shah was still hostile to Tabriz and believed that, "It was a mistake to suppose that the people of that city wanted a Constitution or would be pacified if it were granted."⁴¹⁹ He was adamant that, "the people of Tabriz were revolutionaries, and included a number of Caucasians".⁴²⁰ However, under increasing pressure, on 28 November 1908 the Shah revealed to the British and Russian legations that, "It was his unalterable intention to grant a Constitution to the country, but stated that the opposition of the clergy put obstacles in his way. He declared that he would the next day summon a special permanent consultative body, which he would invest with powers".⁴²¹ The Shah also wanted a new carefully drafted electoral law allowing only deputies who "would not fall under the influence of evil-disposed agitators nor repeat the former mistakes."⁴²² The regulations for this Council were printed and published on 11

⁴¹⁵ "The Constitution Abolished," *The Times*, November 23, 1908.

To know more about the demonstration of 7 November, 1908, see: Barclay to Sir Edward Grey, telegram, November 8, 1908, in *Persia No. 1 (1909)*, 204.

⁴¹⁶ Sir G. Barclay to Sir Edward Grey, 25 November 1908, in *Persia No. 2 (1909)*, 7.

⁴¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 6.

⁴¹⁸ Barclay to Grey, telegram, 8 January 1909, in *Ibid.*, 20.

⁴¹⁹ "The Situation in Persia: Views of the Shah," *The Times*, December 4, 1908.

⁴²⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴²¹ "The Situation in Persia: Fresh Promises by the Shah," *The Times*, November 30, 1908.

⁴²² *Ibid.*, 1908.

December.⁴²³ It was declared that the Council would consist of fifty members who would include clergy, merchants, “men skilled in state affairs, and others who will be elected by the people”.⁴²⁴ But, as later was revealed, the Shah’s intention was to appoint the members himself and the nature of the assembly was non-elective.⁴²⁵ A British diplomatic record states that the members of the Council were ignorant and reactionary apart from one or two who were unwilling to attend.⁴²⁶ The Council which was held in the Shir va Khorshid [Lion and Sun] building was attended by some members only two days a week and often just 35 out of 50 members showed up.⁴²⁷

One of the reasons the Shah ordered the formation of such a council was to hoodwink the British and Russian legations who were pushing him to reopen the Parliament. However, it seems this act was not convincing. They believed that “unless the Shah can be induced to summon to it men of more liberal views, it will be vain to look to it for any assistance towards revival of the Constitutional regime.”⁴²⁸ Hence, their representatives showed their dissatisfaction on 28 November in private meetings with the Shah. At the same time the constitutionalists and in particular Taqizadeh disagreed with the formation of such an assembly. They saw the establishment of such a council as ineffective in improving the situation of the country, since the Shah would “take good care that it shall possess only nominal powers, and be entirely subservient to his will”.⁴²⁹ It could be considered that there were other motives for organising such an assembly. As stated in *Habl al-Matin* at the time, by establishing this Council of Notables, the Shah could manipulate the people, arguing that the Council was the same as the National Parliament and secondly, whenever anything went wrong, he would be able to use the Council as a scapegoat, thus avoiding any personal responsibility. Most importantly, the Shah could utilise certification by the Council to secure the foreign loan he hoped to receive.

⁴²³ Barclay to Sir Edward Grey, 31 December 1908, in *Persia No. 2 (1909)*, 28.

⁴²⁴ Barclay to Sir Edward Grey, telegram, 10 December 1908, in *Ibid.*, 5.

⁴²⁵ There are several references to this Council in the diaries of ‘Ain al-Saltaneh. ‘Ain al-Saltaneh, 3: 5.

⁴²⁶ Barclay to Sir Edward Grey, telegram, 1 December 1908, in *Persia No. 2*, 2.

⁴²⁷ Mansoureh Ettehadiéh, *Majles va Entekhabat: Az Mashruteh ta Payan-e Qajar* [Majles and the Elections: Since the Constitution until the End of Qajar] (Tehran: Nashr-e Tarikh-e Iran, 1996), 118. Kasravi, *Tarikh-e Mashruteh-e Iran*, 2: 828.

⁴²⁸ Barclay to Sir Edward Grey, 4 December 1908), in *Persia No. 2 (1909)*, 12.

⁴²⁹ “The Persian Nationalists,” *The Times*, October 15, 1908.

Despite all these events in Tehran, the constitutionalists took control of more towns in Azerbaijan. On 16 November Maragheh was occupied by the constitutionalists, although some days later on the 30 November they were forced out and returned to Tabriz. On the 13 November they occupied Salmas and on 23 November Bonab.⁴³⁰ They were also marching towards Marand and Khoi.⁴³¹

Meanwhile, supporters of the Constitution in Tehran were carrying out clandestine activities. Despite the severe restrictions in Tehran, secret assemblies were active and people such as Hossein Qoli Khan Navab and S‘ani‘ al-Dowleh together with some clergy were actively supporting the Constitution and organising plots such as the unsuccessful assassination attempt of Sheikh Faz al-Allah.⁴³²

All these, in particular the victory of the constitutionalists of Tabriz over the royalists forcing them to abandon the town, was great encouragement to the supporters of the Constitution in other parts of Iran and set the wheels in motion for future uprisings.

4:2 Taqizadeh’s Activities in Tabriz

Taqizadeh’s return to Tabriz at the beginning of January 1909 coincided with an intense phase of the battles in the town between the constitutionalists and the Shah’s Forces. The Shah, who was now desperate to conquer the town, had appointed to Basmenj on the outskirts of Tabriz, his aunt’s husband Arshad al-Dowleh as the new commander of infantry. Samad Khan Shoja‘ al-Dowleh was at the same time approaching Tabriz from the west. Rahim Khan, another warlord of the Shah, blocked the Jolfa road to Tabriz. According to Kasravi, the number of the royal forces on the outskirts of Tabriz had reached up to forty thousand.⁴³³ It seemed that the intention of the Shah was to starve the inhabitants of Tabriz by forming a blockade.⁴³⁴ On 14 January 1909, just one week after Taqizadeh’s

⁴³⁰ Barclay to Sir Edward Grey, “Monthly Summary of Events”, 3 December 1908, in *Persia No. 2 (1909)*, 11.

⁴³¹ “The Constitution Abolished,” *The Times*, November 23, 1908.

⁴³² Taqizadeh, “Tarikh-e Avayel-e Enqelab va Mashrutiyat-e Iran” in *Maqalat-e Taqizadeh* 1: 297. Kasravi, *Tarikh-e Mashruteh-e Iran*, 2: 828-30.

⁴³³ Kasravi, *Tarikh-e Mashruteh-e Iran*, 2: 824. Also; Malekzadeh, 4-5: 944.

⁴³⁴ Barclay to Sir Edward Grey, telegram, 13 January 1909, in *Persia No. 2 (1909)*, 22.

arrival, *The Times* correspondence reported that, “The serious news comes from Tabriz and Maku that the Kurds have blocked the Jolfa Road and thus interrupted the trade. Prices are therefore running high.”⁴³⁵ Although for a short period prices returned to normal and life was easier, soon after the blockade events turned for the worse in Tabriz.⁴³⁶ Added to the blockade and armed conflicts, diseases were also killing people in Tabriz. One source reveals that in the middle of this seemingly impossible position in which the revolutionaries in Tabriz now found themselves, Taqizadeh’s return to the town spurred them on. They considered him well-versed in the politics of the region and someone who had a strong connection with the foreign powers involved in the Iranian political scene. Taqizadeh’s arrival was reflected in the newspapers in Tabriz; *Anjoman* newspaper wrote, “Now with ultimate joy, Azerbaijan embraces its distinguished offspring.”⁴³⁷ *Naleh-e Mellat* considered Taqizadeh’s arrival in Tabriz as “joyous news”.⁴³⁸ Taqizadeh could be key to strengthening the resistance movement and it was likely that he could resolve the situation through diplomacy, especially at a time when ‘Ain al-Dowleh had been restored to Commander of the Forces, “with instruction to avoid a conflict and to enter into negotiations”.⁴³⁹

4:3 Taqizadeh and his Negotiations with ‘Ain al-Dowleh

‘Ain al-Dowleh, unlike the other senior commanders of the Shah who still believed they could defeat the constitutionalists in Tabriz by military force, knew that an easy victory would not be achievable soon. As Esma‘il Amirkhizi has put it, “The difference between ‘Ain al-Dowleh and other commanders such as Rahim Khan and Shoj‘a Nezam was that ‘Ain al-Dowleh’s intention was for the constitutionalists to surrender and stop demanding a constitution. Others, however, wanted to kill them and plunder all their belongings”.⁴⁴⁰

⁴³⁵ “Persia: Disturbances by Kurds,” *The Times*, January 15, 1909.

According to Browne the complete blockade of the Jolfa road occurred around February 3rd of that year. Browne, *Persian Revolution*, 249. Keeping the Jolfa road open was crucial for the constitutionalist fighters; trade between Russia and Tabriz had to pass through Jolfa. Most importantly, the closure of the Jolfa road would prevent the arrival of arms and ammunitions to Tabriz.

⁴³⁶ Mosavat Newspaper gives an account of the relatively good situation of Tabriz after the royalists were forced outside the town and provides a list for the prices of different goods in Tabriz.

⁴³⁷ *Anjoman*, January 11, 1909.

⁴³⁸ *Naleh-e Mellat*, January 18, 1909.

⁴³⁹ “The Situation at Tabriz,” *The Times*, October 24, 1908. Also see; Barclay to Grey, telegram, 11 February, 1909, in *Persia No. 2 (1909)*, 44.

⁴⁴⁰ Amirkhizi, 218-9.

‘Ain al-Dowleh had previously taken part in unfruitful negotiations with the town leaders but there is little doubt that the arrival in Tabriz of Taqizadeh, one of the most prominent leaders of the resistance movement, would have serious repercussions for the royalist camp. In view of Taqizadeh’s political position it was deemed necessary to instigate a line of communication with him.⁴⁴¹ As reflected in letters that remain, exchanged between Taqizadeh and ‘Ain al-Dowleh, ‘Ain al-Dowleh had initiated approaching Taqizadeh through his deputy, Hossein Qoli Khan. The correspondence which had begun shortly after Taqizadeh’s arrival in Tabriz sheds more light on the nature of his role in negotiations with ‘Ain al-Dowleh and reflects Taqizadeh’s way of thinking during this period. It seems that Taqizadeh had been unwilling to reply to Hossein Qoli Khan’s first letters, of which no copies can be located, or possibly these letters did not reach him.

However, there is a letter (24 January 1909), from Hossein Qoli to Taqizadeh, the tone of which shows great respect towards Taqizadeh. In the letter Hossein Qoli Khan emphasises that meeting Taqizadeh was crucial. He explains about the good intentions of ‘Ain al-Dowleh and expresses his delight at the news of Taqizadeh’s arrival in Tabriz.⁴⁴² He goes on to state that since Taqizadeh’s arrival, ‘Ain al-Dowleh had been eager to meet him. Taqizadeh’s reply to this letter is brief. He writes that he was similarly keen to meet and so facilitated Hossein Qoli’s entrance into the town for negotiations at the headquarters of the *Mosavat* newspaper. In a further letter, clearly written after his talks with Hossein Qoli, Taqizadeh mentions that he had consulted with members of the Local Assembly and senior clergy of the town such as Seqat al-Eslam. He adds that it had been agreed that ‘Ain al-Dowleh would send some of his trusted confidants for further talks to Tabriz in order to make clear ‘Ain al-Dowleh’s intentions. Taqizadeh also proposes that a representative of neutral countries, France or the United States, for example, should be present at the meeting. He goes on to suggest that in order to avoid unproductive meetings similar to

⁴⁴¹ It seems that besides Taqizadeh, ‘Ain al-Dowleh had contacted other people in Tabriz as well. A British diplomatic document reported from Tabriz that; “several persons there have received letters from Ain-ed-Dowleh [‘Ain al-Dowleh], in which he expresses a wish to see them and negotiate for peace.” Barclay to Grey, telegram, 6 February, 1909, in *Persia No. 2 (1909)*, 44.

⁴⁴² Hossein Qoli Khan to Taqizadeh, 5 February 1909, in *Oraq-e Tazeh Yab-e Mashrutiyat*, ed., Afshar, 144-6.

previous ones, negotiations should be minuted in “a protocol”.⁴⁴³ From these comments, Taqizadeh’s strong suspicion and mistrust towards ‘Ain al-Dowleh which would clearly increase following further negotiations, is already evident. Noticeably, according to one Russian diplomatic record, Sattar Khan was opposed to negotiations with ‘Ain al-Dowleh.⁴⁴⁴ It is highly probable that this is the reason that Taqizadeh avoids mentioning Sattar Khan in the letter.

In a third lengthy letter to Hossein Qoli dated 9 February 1909, Taqizadeh is more cynical of the honesty of the royalist camp and states that he hoped that they would act with more integrity. He bitterly complains about the rhetoric which was prevalent among politicians in Iran at that time. He continues that a gang of “elderly infants” are playing with the destiny of Iran; “I am very ashamed that ignorance and arrogance is so widespread among the distinguished senior statesmen and the grey bearded sages...that a young man like me without much experience, simply because he has broadened his horizons beyond this ruined [country].... should advise the authorities; wise men, statesmen and senior ministers...”.⁴⁴⁵ He then writes that the Shah’s intention has been to spill his blood and that of others like him, adding that he believed that if the Shah succeeded, he would lay on a feast in his residence and put on a firework display.⁴⁴⁶ From the letter, it is clear that Taqizadeh’s proposal to ‘Ain al-Dowleh, asking him to send a delegation to the town had not been accepted and that had caused disappointment and distrust among the local inhabitants.

Besides showing Taqizadeh’s mistrust towards ‘Ain al-Dowleh, the letter hints at more subtle features of Taqizadeh’s character and reveals his mind-set at that time. The eagerness of Taqizadeh to utilise new methods even in negotiations is quite evident; he criticises the

⁴⁴³ Taqizadeh to Hossein Qoli Khan, in *Oraq-e Tazeh Yab-e Mashrutiyat*, ed., Afshar, 146-8.

⁴⁴⁴ Sabline, telegram, 6 February 1909, in *Ketab-e Narenji: Ghozareshay-e Siyasi-e Vezarat-e Kharejeh-e Rousieh Darbareh Enqelab-e Mashrutayieh-e Iran* [The Orange Book: Diplomatic Reports of the Russian Foreign Ministry about the Iranian Constitutional Revolution], ed., Ahmad Bashiri (Tehran: Nour, 1984), 2: 101.

⁴⁴⁵ Taqizadeh to Hossein Qoli Khan, in *Oraq-e Tazeh Yab-e Mashrutiyat*, ed., Afshar, 148-51.

⁴⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

old methods of negotiations and is clearly inspired by western methods. He talks about “protocols” and adding transparency and openness to the old traditions.

‘Ain al-Dowleh later began corresponding directly with Taqizadeh. In his first letter he states that Taqizadeh’s arrival in Tabriz had pleased him and hopes that Taqizadeh can find a solution to end the conflict. He wants to meet with Taqizadeh in order to talk about a possible peace agreement.⁴⁴⁷ Clearly Taqizadeh’s mistrust of ‘Ain al-Dowleh made him reluctant to leave the safety of Tabriz which was under the jurisdiction of the constitutionalists. He instead encourages ‘Ain al-Dowleh to send one of his confidants to the town for negotiations. In reply, ‘Ain-al Dowleh accepts the offer and agrees to send someone.⁴⁴⁸ In another letter Taqizadeh, presumably after meeting ‘Ain-al Dowleh’s messenger, comments that if they were to agree upon a peaceful solution, it would be no less an achievement than the victories of such famous conquerors as Alexander and Napoleon. Taqizadeh repeatedly emphasises the importance of frankness in the negotiations and avoidance of obsequiousness.⁴⁴⁹ Disappointingly, as reported in a British diplomatic document, these negotiations were seemingly unsuccessful and most probably Taqizadeh had then given up hope of resolving the conflict with ‘Ain-al Dowleh. In a letter to Browne, Taqizadeh clearly emphasises that he was reluctant to carry on the negotiations because of lack of honesty from ‘Ain-al Dowleh’s side.⁴⁵⁰

The letters exchanged between these two characters demonstrate the personal confrontation between Taqizadeh and ‘Ain al-Dowleh and not solely the negotiations between the two political figures. The correspondence is representative, at the same time, of a confrontation between a traditional system and a newer outlook on the world which questions and raises doubts about the functionality of the old system. If Taqizadeh had previously wanted to somehow come to terms with the old system, he was now more determined to substitute it with a new one. Equally it is clear that Taqizadeh, as the spearhead of the movement of change, sees the elderly ‘Ain al-Dowleh as the embodiment

⁴⁴⁷ ‘Ain al-Dowleh to Taqizadeh, in *Oraq-e Tazeh Yab-e Mashrutiyat*, ed., Afshar, 152-2.

⁴⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 154.

⁴⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 155- 7.

⁴⁵⁰ Taqizadeh to Edward Browne, 21 March 1909 in *Browne Papers*, 9-4-4.

of a corrupted, traditional government and society, and one which is dysfunctional. In Taqizadeh's opinion, 'Ain al-Dowleh lacked one essential feature of being modern; having a broader international view. Unlike Taqizadeh, 'Ain al-Dowleh had not "broadened his horizons". This was something which Taqizadeh considered gave him the upper hand over 'Ain al-Dowleh. But 'Ain al-Dowleh was not the only person with whom Taqizadeh had differing opinions. There was even clear conflict between Taqizadeh and such key characters of the constitutionalist camp in Tabriz as Sattar Khan.



Figure 8: A page from *Zanbur* newspaper, depicting Taqizadeh and Mohammed Ali Shah. The caption in Azerbaijani Turkish reads: “My hand is bloody; is that why you do not shake hands with me? Look, now I have washed my hands. I can even wear gloves, if necessary”.

4:4 Taqizadeh and Sattar Khan

As the situation in Tabriz became increasingly difficult for both the locals and the foreigners there, the Russians, who had been looking for an opportunity to increase their dominance in the region, expressed their dissatisfaction with the situation in Azerbaijan, claiming that it was prejudicial for their interests in that region. They argued that Russian subjects were under threat. The Russian authorities believed that “Sattar Khan was in a sense the master of the situation, but he was really governed by the Caucasian revolutionaries, who were ready for any mischief”.⁴⁵¹

The situation in Azerbaijan was clearly causing great consternation in the Russian government, particularly due to the independent acts of Sattar Khan and the sympathy being shown towards him and his cause by the revolutionaries throughout the Caucasus. The Russians, by exaggerating about the influence and number of the Caucasian fighters (up to 5000 men) among Sattar Khan’s troops, justified that their subjects were under threat in the town.⁴⁵² An added thorn in the side of the Russians was the group of trans-Caucasian Tartars.⁴⁵³ This insurgent group already regarded Sattar Khan as a hero and they were now carefully monitoring events in Tabriz.⁴⁵⁴

Taqizadeh, who whilst in England had previously heard of the oppressive behaviour of some of the Mojaheds, believed that Sattar Khan was too lax in his control of his constitutionalist fighters, the Mojaheds, and suggested that they should be more carefully monitored and kept under stricter control. On his return to Tabriz, Taqizadeh delivered a fiery speech at the Provincial Assembly and in the presence of Sattar Khan and Baqer Khan

⁴⁵¹ Nicolson to Grey, 18 November 1908, in *Persia. No 1 (1909)*, 213.

⁴⁵² Malekzadeh, 4-5: 1003.

⁴⁵³ Taqizadeh emphasised what he considered to be an exaggeration of the influence and number of Armenian and Georgian fighters on the Iranian revolution. He commented that most fighters were originally Iranians and all foreign fighters together hardly even made up 3% of the total fighting force. He further states that the Iranian revolutionary workers from the Caucasus did not change their Caucasian clothes when they returned to Iran to participate in the movement and were thus known as “Mojahedin-e Qafqazi”. According to him, in the siege of Tabriz 50 foreigners participated and 40 of them lost their lives. Ref: Hassan Taqizadeh, “Oza‘-e Siyasi-e Iran”, in *Maqalat-e Taqizadeh*, 4: 152-199.

⁴⁵⁴ Nicolson to Grey, 18 November 1908, in *Persia. No 1 (1909)*, 213.

reprimanded the Mojaheds who had acted beyond their remit.⁴⁵⁵ Taqizadeh stated that in the eyes of civilised people in the world, the most abhorrent events were the killing of women and children and the plundering of others' belongings.⁴⁵⁶ Taqizadeh's concern for the security of women and children, for the plundering of innocent people's property and the fact that he views this from the perspective of a "civilised person" demonstrates his strong belief in human rights inspired by European ideas; the same beliefs which had been at the core of the French Revolution. Taqizadeh also pushed for religious equality, a further example of the ideology he wished to promote.

The disagreements had intensified to such a degree that Mo'azed al-Saltaneh refers to a grudge between Taqizadeh and both Sattar Khan and his ally Baqer Khan. According to him, because of this growing dispute, Taqizadeh had been ready to leave Tabriz and return to Europe.⁴⁵⁷ It appears that the absence of Taqizadeh from London had substantially decreased the influence of the political activities of the exiles. Dehkhoda in a letter to Mo'azed al-Saltaneh, complains, "Why at this time should London be empty...all of us for thousands of reasons talked against this Seyyed [Taqizadeh]. I swear to God if these pretenders had one tenth of his enthusiasm and perseverance now everything would be in order. What is so bad about being ambitious and hard-working." ⁴⁵⁸ In another letter Dehkhoda writes, "...when his Excellency Mr Taqizadeh, may my soul be sacrificed for him, was in Europe due to the gravity of the situation he spent more than two months of his time with his Excellency Mo'azed al-Saltaneh in London. There he tried to persuade British opinion to the [Iranian] nation's goals by revealing the political ruses of Russia in Iran and to push the necessity of not interfering in Iranian affairs. In a short time, he managed to divert all the British political and press strength, which had until that point been completely ineffectual, towards Iran and on such a scale that the Russian role in Iran

⁴⁵⁵ Rezazadeh Shafaq, "Be Monasebat-e Vafat-e Seyyed Hassan Taqizadeh [On the Occasion of Taqizadeh's Death]," in *Yadnameh*, ed., Yaghmaei, 14.

Hassan Taqizadeh, "Tarikh-e Avayel-e Enqelab va Mashrutiyat-e Iran [The History of the Beginning of the Revolution and Iranian Constitution]," in *Maqalat-e Taqizadeh*, 1: 320.

⁴⁵⁶ Amirkhizi, 297.

⁴⁵⁷ Mo'azed al-Saltaneh to the members 11 March 1909, in *Mobarezeh ba Mohammad Ali Shah*, ed., Afshar, 32-6.

Dehkhoda to The Sa'adat Assembly, 18 March 1909, in *Ibid.*, 50.

⁴⁵⁸ Dehkhoda to Mo'azed al-Saltaneh, Yverdon, 29 January 1909, in *Nameh-hay-e Siyasi-e Dehkhoda* [The Political Letters of Dehkhoda], ed., Iraj Afshar (Tehran: Ruzbehan, 1980), 38.

was being discussed on every page of the newspapers and in every corner of society. But when the same sacred being [Taqizadeh] left London, out of a necessity to be in Azerbaijan due to the civil war in Tabriz, everybody lamented. The most pressing issue was to keep the British informed and maintain positive British public opinion towards Iran. To achieve this goal, it was necessary to have in London four or five men of influence whom the British considered important. Unfortunately, the elders of the movement did not realise the importance of this at the time and not one single individual went there. In the end, the Russian agents were able to propagate their own ideas over those of the Iranians who sought freedom, and with mendacious and fake publications, the Russians ruined the efforts of that sacred being [Taqizadeh] and Mo‘ez al Saltaneh. Additionally, a letter from Seqat al-Eslam explains that, after his arrival in Tabriz, Taqizadeh had sided with Baqer Khan. The editor of Seqat al Eslam’s biography, Nasrollah Fathi, believes Taqizadeh wanted to create a schism between Sattar Khan and Baqer Khan since they were each aligned with opposing religious groups within the city; Baqer Khan was Motashr‘ while Sattar Khan was Sheikhi.⁴⁵⁹

Taqizadeh strongly opposed any radical acts being carried out by the Mojaheds fighting for the Constitution. He had learned from his time in Europe that there was a tendency in some political circles in Europe to call the constitutionalists in Tabriz anarchists and extremists. He was determined that nothing should add fuel to this negative image of the pro-constitutionalists. A further reason for Taqizadeh’s reluctance to support any kind of extreme act was his fear that any such act could trigger the intervention of a foreign power such as Russia, in particular. His concern was not without grounds. *The Times* correspondent, Captain Lionel James, for instance, who wanted to leave Tabriz on October 1908. writes that “Sata [Sattar] Khan had given it out that he would not permit the Europeans to leave the town” and thought they planned to take the Europeans as hostages if things went too far.⁴⁶⁰ Mokhber al-Saltaneh similarly mentions the resentment of some inhabitants of Azerbaijan towards Sattar Khan. According to him, Sattar Khan and Baqer Khan organised for their own people to collect taxes by force from the rich and this had

⁴⁵⁹ *Zendegi Nameh-e Shahid-e Niknam Seqat al-Eslam-e Tabriz* [The Life Story of Well-respected Martyr Seqat al-Eslam-e Tabrizi], ed., Nasrollah Fathi (Tehran: Noriyani, 1973), 410.

⁴⁶⁰ “The Civil War in Persia,” *The Times*, November 2, 1908.

displeased the affluent members of society.⁴⁶¹ The majority of those who were forced by Sattar Khan to pay these taxes were businessmen. It is thus not surprising that Taqizadeh, as a representative of businessmen in the First Parliament, would be expected to afford these businessmen some protection. The businessmen in Baku who had close ties with Tabriz had previously helped Taqizadeh financially and now assumed that he would use his influence to prevent their exploitation. According to Mojtehedī, the businessmen of Tabriz celebrated Taqizadeh's arrival in Tabriz and complained to him about the disorder.⁴⁶² A British diplomatic record also adds evidence to this enforced contribution by the rich; money had "to be found somehow for the payment of the troops, who in the case of natives, receive from 2 to 6 krans a day each, while volunteers from the Caucasus get as much as 10 krans".⁴⁶³ It is clear from this that Sattar Khan was responsible for the payment of his troops but there is no explicit evidence here of Taqizadeh's criticism of this nor of his suggesting an alternative solution for paying the troops. No documentation has been found stating what Taqizadeh's own source of income was during those days.

Another document which reflects on the disagreement in the constitutional camp is a Russian diplomatic record. The document reports Taqizadeh's conciliatory role. According to the report, a rumour was circulating in Tehran about a dispute between two groups of constitutionalists in Azerbaijan. These two groups had agreed to end the conflict because of the adverse effects it had on peoples' daily life. Taqizadeh had been "at the head of this peaceable attempt".⁴⁶⁴

Kasravi, as well as criticising Taqizadeh for seeking refuge in the British legation, comments about his disagreement with Sattar Khan, "At that time, in Tabriz, people were still unaware of his dishonourable act during the bombardment. They considered him one of the bravest leaders of the Constitution, respected him and expected him to achieve much. But he had distanced himself, staying at home, clandestinely causing problems. One of his

⁴⁶¹ Mehdi Qoli Hedayat, *Khaterat va Khatarat*, (Tehran: Zavvar, 2009), 191.

⁴⁶² Mojtehedī, 133.

⁴⁶³ Wratislaw to Grey, 18 November 1908, in *Persia No. 2 (1909)*, 32.

⁴⁶⁴ Sabline's Report, 6 January 1909, in *Ketab-e Narenji*, ed., Bashiri, 99-100.

justifications was that Mojaheds were looting houses".⁴⁶⁵ Kasravi continues that Taqizadeh, together with Heydar Khan and Mohammad Ali Tarbiat, was against Sattar Khan, primarily out of selfishness but that they were also acting in accordance with the orders of British politicians.⁴⁶⁶ Kasravi's claim that Taqizadeh was not very politically active during this time could be true since, as mentioned in Taqizadeh's own writing, he had spent some time during this period teaching modern science to students at his rented house in the Armenian quarter of the town. This house was behind the American school and in case of any threat to Taqizadeh, he would have been able to seek shelter and protection there. Seyyed Mohammad Reza Shirazi (Mosavat) who was now residing in Tabriz was among the students of Taqizadeh.⁴⁶⁷ Mosavat, who was close to Taqizadeh, had begun to publish his newspaper in Tabriz. The similarity in their political views on the ideas of practising modernity meant that the editorial stance reflected in the newspaper mirrored Taqizadeh's own ideas during this period. The first issue of the newspaper in Tabriz was published on 23 January 1909. In this issue a section was dedicated to the current situation of Tabriz and to the fact that the constitutionalists were busy organising modern institutions. The key idea, as published by Mosavat, was to ensure the immediate practice of the separations of powers. Mosavat interestingly later comments that those in power including Sattar Khan and Baqer Khan understood that they could not manage without the separation of the legislative, executive and judicial powers. He commented that the province of Azerbaijan should be managed according to the law of civilised nations and that institutions should be established with specific duties, separate from others. Mosavat refers to the Tabriz Assembly as a 'small parliament' which sat six days a week and to the fact that six trusted people chosen by the Assembly were appointed to carry out judicial duties. He commented on the well-regimented police force and the well-organised municipality, among others. These articles, as well as being a way of helping to create order in the town, represent the eagerness of a group of constitutionalists, which included

⁴⁶⁵ Kasravi, *Tarikh-e Mashruteh-e Iran*, 2: 808.

⁴⁶⁶ Kasravi accuses Tarbiat of writing a letter to Browne to vilify Sattar Khan, calling him a looter. Kasravi, *Tarikh-e Mashruteh-e Iran*, 2: 809. Taqizadeh, later in his life, praised Sattar Khan as a national hero and on several occasions had denied that Tarbiat had written such a letter.

⁴⁶⁷ Taqizadeh, *Tufani*, 110.

Mosavat and Taqizadeh, to put their ideological beliefs into practice at the earliest opportunity, in order to modernise the country.

Despite these strong ideological ambitions, the reality of the situation was quite different and in fact highly contentious. Taqizadeh found himself at loggerheads with other key players in the Tabriz resistance; he was in direct conflict with others who were less ideologically focused and in particular with Sattar Khan over practical issues. One of the disagreements between Sattar Khan and Taqizadeh, for example, was over Sardar Faraj Aqa Zonuzi, whom Sattar Khan had sent to Marand after the town had fallen into the hands of the constitutionalists. According to Kasravi, Taqizadeh had criticised Faraj Aqa to Sattar Khan, complaining that he was a wine drinker. Sattar Khan had replied that he had not sent Faraj Aqa there as an imam.⁴⁶⁸ Taqizadeh, who had met Faraj Aqa on his way to Tabriz, describes him as a vulgar show-off who acted as if he were a king.⁴⁶⁹ Before the arrival of Taqizadeh to Tabriz the misbehaviour of some of the Mojaheds had been criticised by people such as Hassan Sharifzadeh who had even been killed because of his remarks.

Similarly, in a letter to Taqizadeh, Mohammad Ali Tarbiat complained about the behaviour of some of the Mojaheds, commenting on the fact that they could do whatever they wanted to without any interference from Sattar Khan. This was one of the reasons that Tarbiat wanted Taqizadeh to return to Tabriz from Europe.⁴⁷⁰ It seems that the increasing authority of Sattar Khan had forced the Assembly and other constitutionalists into a corner. As a British diplomatic document reports in November 1908, “Since the retirement of the Shah’s forces the town has been entirely in the hands of Sattar Khan and Bagher [Baquer] Khan, and military party. A rump Anjuman [Assembly] still exists, but it has little or no say in affairs, though meetings are constantly held which anyone who pleases to attend.”⁴⁷¹ It was hoped that with Taqizadeh's return to Tabriz would come an increase in the power of the Assembly. However, it seems that Taqizadeh achieved less than had been expected

⁴⁶⁸ Kasravi, *Tarikh-e Mashruteh-e Iran*, 2: 808.

⁴⁶⁹ Taqizadeh, *Tufani*, 106.

⁴⁷⁰ Mohammad Ali Tarbiat to Taqizadeh, 31 October, 1908, in *Nameh-hay-e Mashrutiyat va Mohajerat*, ed., Afshar, 96-7.

⁴⁷¹ Wratisslaw to Grey, 18 November 1908, in *Persia No. 2 (1909)*, 32.

of him in terms of limiting the power of Sattar Khan. 'Ain al-Saltaneh writes that little attention was paid to Taqizadeh in Tabriz at that time.⁴⁷² But despite this, Taqizadeh's influence should not be underestimated. As an example, Heydar Khan Amoghlu, who played an important role in the armed resistance against the Shah, informed Taqizadeh directly about the significant activities he had taken part in such as sending a parcel bomb to kill Shoja Nezam.⁴⁷³ Additionally, Ali Mohammad Tarbiat, who commanded a group of Azerbaijani Mojaheds in Rasht, was under Taqizadeh's direct orders.

A further example of the existing conflict between Taqizadeh and Sattar Khan is a letter that Browne included in his book about the history of the Constitution. It was said that this letter was sent to Browne by Mohammad Ali Tarbiat and Taqizadeh had ordered Tarbiat to write such a letter.⁴⁷⁴

From information supplied to me from several trustworthy sources since my account of the siege of Tabriz was in print, I fear there is no doubt that Sattar Khan deteriorated sadly during the latter part of the siege and afterwards. The following is from a correspondent in whose judgement I have great confidence, and who was well placed for forming an opinion. I quote it with great regret, but since the aim of the historian should be the truth only, I feel that I have no right to suppress it.⁴⁷⁵

In this lengthy letter the writer first gives an account of Sattar Khan's background as a working class man who had greatly helped the constitutionalists during the Tabriz resistance but who had been subsequently spoiled by success; "He began to rob inoffensive citizens; his house was full of spoils; eleven stolen pianos decorated his drawing-room; he took to heavy drinking; he took unto himself many wives; he was no longer seen in the firing rank, but rested on his laurels in slothful ease". The writer then goes on, "I think that

⁴⁷² 'Ain al-Saltaneh, 3: 2374.

⁴⁷³ Taqizadeh writes that Heydar Khan sent the receipt of the post office directly to him when he was in London

⁴⁷⁴ Taqizadeh, "Tarikh-e Avayel-e Enqelab va Mashrutiyat-e Iran," in *Maqalat-e Taqizadeh*, 1: 319-20.

⁴⁷⁵ Edward G. Browne, *Persian Revolution of 1905-1909* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1910), 441.

the above is a fair description of Sattar, and I know that Taqi-zada [Taqizadeh], for instance, agrees with it...”⁴⁷⁶

In this case, however, one should not forget the fact that although Sattar Khan was an illiterate man who came from a working-class background, his role was crucial in the resistance against the Shah and one could not expect him to be faultless. Later in his life Taqizadeh refers to the fact that he always had a positive opinion about Sattar Khan and after he returned to Tabriz had met him several times and had always found Sattar Khan to be polite and gallant. Taqizadeh disagreed about the content of the letter and stated that it was not fair to make such accusations about Sattar Khan. He declared that without doubt the writer of the letter was an Englishman and it was regrettable that Kasravi accused Mohammad Ali Tarbiat of writing the letter.⁴⁷⁷

4:5 Revolts against the Shah in other parts of Iran

The resistance of the constitutionalists in Tabriz and their relative victory over the royal forces raised the hope of the restoration of the Constitution in other provinces of the country. The deployment of the resistance movement to other parts of Iran was crucial for the constitutionalists in order to prevent the Shah from concentrating all his forces against Tabriz. One significant event happened in the north, with Mohammad Vali Khan-e Tonekaboni (also known as Sepahdar, meaning “greatest of the marshals”) as the key player. Sepahdar was initially appointed by Mohammad Ali Shah to command the royal forces which were fighting under the supervision of ‘Ain-al Dowleh against the constitutionalists in Tabriz.⁴⁷⁸ Later, due to an argument with ‘Ain-al Dowleh, he had walked out in protest, returning to his property in Tonekabon, and had turned his back on the Shah.⁴⁷⁹ Sepahdar, meanwhile, showed sympathy for the constitutionalists and made

⁴⁷⁶ Browne, *Persian Revolution*, 442.

⁴⁷⁷ Taqizadeh, “Tarikh-e Avayel-e Enqelab va Mashrutiyat-e Iran,” in *Maqalat-e Taqizadeh*, 1: 319-20.

⁴⁷⁸ Barclay to Sir Edward Grey, 28 January, 1909 in *Persia No. 2 (1909)*, 49-50.

⁴⁷⁹ Taqizadeh, *Tufani*, 112. Amirkhizi writes that: “During the first days of Sepahdar’s arrival in Tabriz, unlike ‘Ain al-Dowleh who wanted to solve the conflict peacefully, Sepahdar was very harsh to the extent that when the representative of people went to visit ‘Ain al-Dowleh and began talking about the Constitution he became very angry, stood up and put his hands in his pockets and went out of the room, saying that he wouldn’t sit in a place where there was talk about the Constitution”. Amirkhizi, 214.

some agreements with Sattar Khan.⁴⁸⁰ He finally completely revolted from his own region against the Shah on 8 December 1908, writing a letter to Sattar Khan stating that he had Tonekabon and Mazandaran under his control.

After the revolt of Sepahdar, events took place in Isfahan and Bakhtiyari that benefitted the constitutionalists. People of Isfahan were dissatisfied with the governor, Eqbal al-Dowleh, who had been sent there by the Shah after the bombardment of the Parliament and who had been given full powers to severely punish the opposition.⁴⁸¹ At the same time, two prominent clergymen in Isfahan, Aqa Najafi (Haj Sheikh Mohammad Taqi) and his brother Haj Nour al-Allah, who were not on good terms with the governor, sided with the constitutionalists and ordered people not to pay taxes.⁴⁸² This provided the grounds for a future riot in Isfahan in which Bakhtiyaris also played a role. Later, in other parts of Iran, such as Hamedan, Shiraz, Mashad and Bushehr, riots also took place. These movements had differing levels of success. As will be mentioned, some, such as the riots in Rasht and Isfahan, were more purposeful and planned while others, in Shiraz and Bushehr, were more of a mixture of smaller disturbances and political dissatisfactions.⁴⁸³

4:6 Isfahan and the Bakhtiyaris

Bakhtiyaris, as a large tribe, had several chiefs and were divided in particular over their position regarding the Shah. A large number of them had joined the royalist camp near Tabriz and were fighting against the constitutionalists whilst other groups were in Tehran supporting the Shah.⁴⁸⁴ While Samsam al-Saltaneh, who had the post of Ilkhani (the head chieftain), was staying in Chahar Mahal among the Bakhtiyaris, his relationship with Mohammad Ali Shah was strained and he was concerned about his position. Samsam al-Saltaneh's younger brother, Sardar As'ad who was in Paris at that time had also come to sympathise with the constitutionalists. The constitutionalists had realised that to actualise

⁴⁸⁰ Kasravi, *Tarikh-e Mashruteh-e Iran*, 2: 778.

⁴⁸¹ "The Persian Disorders, Fighting in Isfahan," *The Times*, January 5, 1909

⁴⁸² Ahmad Kasravi, *Tarikh-e Hejdah Saleh-e Azerbaijan* [The 18 Years History of Azerbaijan] (Tehran: Amir Kabir, 2008), 2.

⁴⁸³ Browne, *Persian Revolution*, 250.

⁴⁸⁴ Kasravi, *Tarikh-e Hejdah Saleh*, 3.

their plans in Iran they needed the help of the head of a tribe as large as the Bakhtiari.⁴⁸⁵ Taqizadeh, who had met and talked to Sardar As‘ad in Paris before his return to Tabriz, mentions that after some negotiations Sardar As‘ad had eventually agreed to help the constitutionalists. This is while Mokhber al-Saltaneh Hedayat writes that when Taqizadeh went to Paris, a special room was rented for him in Café de Lappe. Sardar As‘ad covered the expenses. They attended two or three sessions of negotiations but had little to discuss. They had also invited Naser al-Molk to join them but he had not come.⁴⁸⁶ It is obvious that Mokhber al-Saltaneh, Taqizadeh and other constitutionalists in exile had encouraged Sardar As‘ad to support a fight against the Shah in Iran. Other constitutionalists, such as Dehkhoda, were clearly dubious about the intentions of Sardar As‘ad and thought he was not ideologically driven and more interested in his own personal ambitions.⁴⁸⁷ Similarly, Shokrollah Mo‘tamed Khaqan (Qavam al-Dowleh) warned Taqizadeh about the possible ill intentions of Sardar As‘ad and the Bakhtiari.⁴⁸⁸ The correspondence of Taqizadeh from that period indicates that Taqizadeh and his friends had been talking about encouraging Bakhtiari to support their case at least since November, in contrast to

⁴⁸⁵ Ivan Alekseevich Zinoviev, *Enqelab-e Mashrutiyat-e Iran* [The Iranian Constitutional Revolution], trans. Abolqasem E‘tesami (Tehran: Eqbal, 1983), 127.

⁴⁸⁶ Hedayat, *Khaterat va Khatarat*, 181.

Mirza Abolqasem Khan Naser al-Molk Qaragozlou born on 17 July 1856 was the son of Ahmad Khan Sartip and the grandchild of Mirza Mahmoud Khan Naser al-Molk Hamedani. He completed his preliminary education in Tehran and in 1878 went abroad to continue studying. He finished his studies in political science at Oxford University before returning to Iran. In 1884 he was appointed to a position in the foreign ministry and given the title of Moshir. His grandfather was Foreign Minister at that time. He later became head of the Khorasan forces and in 1887 became the adjutant of Naser al-Din Shah and was given the title of Naser al-Molk (helper of the country). During the third trip of Naser al-Din Shah to Europe (April – September 1889) he was among the entourage of the Shah and translated the European press for him. Upon Mozaffar al-Din Shah’s ascendancy to the throne, as special envoy, Naser al-Din visited Britain and Ottoman Turkey to announce the Shah’s reign. During the Shah’s first and third visits to Europe he accompanied the Shah. Naser al-Molk became the Minister of Finance in November 1896 and held this position in two further cabinets. He was also the governor of Kurdistan for a short period. At the beginning of Mohammad Ali Shah’s reign, he briefly became the Prime Minister (October 1907). After the liberation of Tehran and deposition of Mohammad Ali Shah, Naser al-Molk held the position of Foreign Minister in the first and second cabinets of Sepahdar-e Tonkaboni. On 23 September 1910 he was chosen as the regent by the parliament. Besides politics he was also involved in literary activities; he had translated Shakespeare’s *Othello* and *The Merchant of Venice* into Persian. He died on 26 December 1927 in Tehran. Ref: Saif al-Allah Vahidnia, “Naser al-molk va Yaddasht-hayash” in *Khaterat va Asnad* (Tehran: Vahid, 1990), 3: 59-62.

⁴⁸⁷ Dehkhoda to Mo‘azed al-Saltaneh, 7 January 1909 [?], in *Mobarezeh ba Mohammad Ali Shah* ed., Afshar, 74-5. To know more about the role of Bakhtiari in the Constitutional Revolution, see: Arash Khazeni, “The Bakhtiari Tribes in the Iranian Constitutional Revolution” in *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* 25, no.2 (2005), 337-398.

⁴⁸⁸ Mo‘tamed Khaqan to Taqizadeh, 1908, in *Nameh-hay-e Mashrutiyat va Mohajerat*, ed., Afshar, 133-5.

Mokhber al-Saltaneh who had wanted to imply that this had been his plan alone.⁴⁸⁹ It is important to note that after the return of Taqizadeh to Tabriz, Bakhtiyaris maintained their connections with Paris. Mo‘azed al-Saltaneh communicated news of the events in Isfahan from Paris to Tabriz by telegraph.⁴⁹⁰ Sardar As‘ad had sent his nephew, Samsam al-Saltaneh’s son, Morteza Qoli Khan, to Isfahan, taking with him special instructions for Isfahan and the Bakhtiyaris.⁴⁹¹ The instructions included encouraging Samsam al-Saltaneh and the clergy in Isfahan to support the Constitution and fight the Shah. Meanwhile the Shah had discharged Samsam al-Saltaneh from his position, replacing him with his brother Sardar Zafar, who was instrumental in arranging detachments of Bakhtiyaris to go to Tabriz to fight against the constitutionalists.⁴⁹² Samsam al-Saltaneh, however, did not accept the Shah’s order and was ready to revolt. It was at this time that the riot had taken place in Isfahan. Aqa Najafi and Haj Aqa Nour al-Allah, two influential clergymen of the town, displeased with the Governor, organised people to be sent from the villages to join the riots and simultaneously sent a message to Samsam al-Saltaneh inviting him to Isfahan.⁴⁹³ Following three days of rioting in the town, Zargham al-Saltaneh with two hundred horsemen arrived near the town and a battle took place. After two days of skirmishes and the Bakhtiyaris gained control, entering the town and establishing an assembly.⁴⁹⁴ When Samsam al-Saltaneh was informed about the victory, he departed for Isfahan, arriving there 6 January. Before long everything returned to normal in the town and people once again went about their business.⁴⁹⁵ Samsam al-Saltaneh consequently wrote a letter to Sattar Khan, reporting his victory.⁴⁹⁶ Two months later Sardar As‘ad travelled to Bakhtiyari through southern Iran and with some others Khans arrived in Isfahan.⁴⁹⁷

⁴⁸⁹ Esma‘il Momtaz al-Dowleh to Taqizadeh, 25 November 1908, in *Ibid.*, 118.

⁴⁹⁰ From Paris to Iyvordn, 7 January 1909 in *Mobarezeh ba Mohammad Ali Shah*, ed., Iraj Afshar, 16.

⁴⁹¹ Taqizadeh, *Tufani*, 112.

⁴⁹² Barclay to Grey, 31 December 1908) in *Persia No. 2 (1909)*, 30.

⁴⁹³ Heydar Khan Amoghlu also traveled to Isfahan to attend a meeting to organise the riot. See: Nour al-Allah Daneshvar ‘Alavi, *Tarikh-e Mashruteh Iran va Jonbesh Vatan Parastan-e Esfahan va Bakhtiyari* [The History of the Iranian Constitution and the Movement of the Patriots of Isfahan and Bakhtiyari] (Tehran: Danesh, 1976), 37.

⁴⁹⁴ Kasravi, *Tarikh-e Hejdah Saleh*, 5.

⁴⁹⁵ Daneshvar ‘Alavi, 47.

⁴⁹⁶ To see a summary of this letter, see: Amirkhizi, 324-5.

⁴⁹⁷ Daneshvar ‘Alavi, 47.

The events of Isfahan greatly affected the people of Tehran. The general situation of Tehran was getting worse; at nights gun shots were heard and passers-by were attacked and robbed. Tehran was less peaceful and secure than previously.⁴⁹⁸ The Shah's treasury was empty, although the military and administrative staff did receive their regular salary. In other parts of the country the situation was deteriorating for the Shah. In Mashad people refused to pay taxes.⁴⁹⁹ At the same time another major change was unfolding; constitutionalists were busy in Gilan trying to organise an army against the Shah.

4:7 Gilan

Rasht, the capital of Gilan province, was the second town after Tabriz which strongly supported the Constitution. However, unlike Tabriz, after the bombardment of the Parliament, following some days of resistance, succumbed to the Shah's forces. The Shah had sent one of his loyal supporters Aqa Bala Khan-e Sardar Afkham to govern Gilan. He had begun to treat people harshly and under his strict governorship, persecution of the constitutionalists was rife there. Nevertheless, despite this pressure, some constitutionalists, encouraged by the resistance of Tabriz, remained active and established a connection with the Local Assembly in Tabriz. A number of Mojaheds had moved to Rasht from Tabriz and the Caucasus and were clandestinely planning a revolt there.⁵⁰⁰

In the events in Gilan Taqizadeh played a more decisive role than in Isfahan. He corresponded with and was well acquainted with Gilan's influential constitutionalist characters, such as Mo'ez al-Soltan and his younger brother Mirza Karim Khan. Mirza Karim Khan was influential in establishing a connection with the Social Democrat Party in Tbilisi and persuading them to support the constitutionalists of Gilan. It is said that Stalin personally supervised the sending of fighters and arms to Gilan. The fighters came from Tbilisi to Baku and from there went to Anzali by commercial ship owned by Taqiev, the famous pro-constitutionalist businessman of the Caucasus.⁵⁰¹ Ali Mohammad Khan

⁴⁹⁸ Sablin's Report, 9 January 1909 in *Ketab-e Narenji*, ed., Bashiri, 84-5.

⁴⁹⁹ "An Unforgettable Note to Great Britain's Ambassador," 16 January 1909, in *Ibid.*, 78.

⁵⁰⁰ According to Amirkhizi these fighters, numbering between 20 and 30, who had come from the Caucasus to Rasht were connected to the Social Democrat Committee party of Baku. Amirkhizi, 325.

⁵⁰¹ Malekzadeh, 4-5: 1042-4

Tarbiat, whom Taqizadeh considered as his spiritual protégé, was also among the constitutionalists in Gilan and commanded his own group there. Ali Mohammad Khan received orders directly from Taqizadeh. The letters remaining from him to Taqizadeh exemplify the degree of his dutifulness towards Taqizadeh.⁵⁰² Considering his importance in the events of Gilan and later in the conquering of Tehran, it will be useful to give a brief account of Ali Mohammad Khan's life and his association with Taqizadeh.

Ali Mohammad was born in 1883 in Tabriz and was the younger brother of Mohammad Ali Tarbiat. Since his father had died when he was very young, he had been raised by his older brother Mohammad Ali. Ali Mohammed was fond of Taqizadeh and Taqizadeh loved him like his own child. He was greatly influenced by both his older brother and Taqizadeh and thus had developed nationalistic ideas and had become an ardent defender of constitutionalism. Educated in the American school of Tabriz, when Taqizadeh left Tabriz for Tehran, Ali Mohammed accompanied him.⁵⁰³ After the destruction of the First Parliament when Taqizadeh's life was in imminent danger Ali Mohammad Khan was instrumental in helping him to seek shelter in the British Legation.⁵⁰⁴ He also accompanied Taqizadeh to the Caucasus during Taqizadeh's first exile.⁵⁰⁵

In Rasht, a group of Mojaheds, having secretly gathered weapons in their houses, finally came out of hiding and began their fight against government forces on 7 February, 1909. Ali Mohammad Khan was the leader of 300 Tabrizi Mojaheds who participated in the raid.⁵⁰⁶ They killed the governor, Aqa Bala Khan, and took control of the town, immediately forming an assembly which they named the Sattar Assembly after Sattar Khan. On the same day Mo'ez al-Soltan and Ali Mohamad Tarbiat in a joint telegraph informed Tabriz of their victory; "Tabriz, with the grace of God, on 7 February thanks to the brave efforts of the Mojaheds, the repression came to an end in Gilan. The Governor together with thirty-five supporters of the government was killed, the government building

⁵⁰² Ali Mohammad Tarbiat to Taqizadeh, Tbilisi, 7 September 1908, in *Nameh-hay-e Mashrutiyat va Mohajerat*, ed., Afshar, 96-7.

⁵⁰³ *Iran-e Now*, October 24, 1910.

⁵⁰⁴ Taqizadeh, *Tufani*, 75-6.

⁵⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 89.

⁵⁰⁶ *Naleh-e Mellat*, February 16, 1909.

was burnt and two Mojaheds died for the cause. The goals of the nationalists achieved and the provincial assembly established, the national forces are now ready for your orders.”⁵⁰⁷

A few days later an envoy was sent to invite Sephadar to Gilan. Sephadar accepted the invitation and arrived in Rasht to great fanfare. “The news from Resht [Rasht] created a great stir in Teheran [Tehran] and there were apprehensions of disturbance, but the Shah gave a taste of his quality by flooding the town with troops.”⁵⁰⁸ What happened in Rasht encouraged people of Tehran to fight with the Shah.⁵⁰⁹ After this victory some of the constitutionalists who were scattered throughout the Caucasus or in Istanbul began to move to Gilan.⁵¹⁰ On 20 February, Sepahdar informed Tabriz that he had Rasht under his control. Meanwhile the Sa‘dat Assembly in Istanbul and the Bakhtiyaris in Isfahan were asking Sepahdar about his plan to move towards Tehran.⁵¹¹ Unfortunately, the situation in Tabriz was not as positive.

⁵⁰⁷ *Naleh-e Mellat*, February 24, 1909.

⁵⁰⁸ “The Persian Disorders,” *The Times*, February 15, 1909.

⁵⁰⁹ “Description of the Events,” 5-12 February 1909 in *Ketab-e Narenji*, ed., Bashiri, 2: 105.

⁵¹⁰ Dolatabadi, 3:68-9.

⁵¹¹ Amirkhizi, 328.



Figure 9: Ali Mohammad Khan Tarbiat (From the family album of Manoocher Mohandess)

4:8 The Siege of Tabriz

On 11 February, 1909 *The Times* wrote that “trustworthy information from Tabriz states that the town is completely surrounded by royalist troops. All the roads are closed, and neither posts nor caravans can proceed”. Tabriz was completely cut off from supplies and nearly on its knees.⁵¹² The efforts of Sattar Khan and his Mojaheds to end the siege proved unsuccessful. Most people in Tabriz were in a desperate situation due to the lack of provisions. “There was very great suffering among the poorer classes of the town”.⁵¹³ Some were starving to death.⁵¹⁴ Women were among the groups who were most agitated. They were demanding that the conflict stop or at least continue out of town. They had demonstrated a few times but with little result.⁵¹⁵ A passage by Arthur Moore, the British correspondent who was in Tabriz at that time, sheds more light on the reaction of ordinary people and especially women to the pressures of the blockade in Tabriz; “The women who had nothing to fear, and in Musulman [Muslim] countries have more than once shown themselves in such crises a terrible and irresistible power, which should be remembered when we talk of the complete subjugation of women in the East, were openly rioting in the streets, and spat when they uttered the names of Satar [Sattar] Khan, Bakir [Baquer] Khan, the Anjuman [Anjoman] and the *Meshruteh* [Constitution]”.⁵¹⁶ Edouard Valmont, a French diplomat, portrayed a tragic scene in Tabriz, due to the lack of food and the violent reaction of a group of women against the situation. It is a striking example of the desperate situation of the town and is worth quoting at length:

In the streets the scenes are heartrending: thousands of women and children are crying for bread, with threats or entreaties. These women of Tabriz have already, on more than one occasion, been driven to deeds of violence in their despair. Hajji Kasam Agha [Haji Qasem Aqa], the former deputy of Ardebil, was their first victim. He was president of a committee for ensuring bread to the people, and one morning, on his way to the Anjuman, he was

⁵¹² Barclay to Grey, telegram, 11 February 1909, in *Persia No. 2 (1909)*, 44-5.

⁵¹³ Barclay to Grey, telegram, 25 March, 1909, in *Ibid.*, 68.

⁵¹⁴ Barclay to Grey, telegram, 30 March, 1909, in *Ibid.*, 71.

⁵¹⁵ ‘Ain-al Saltaneh, 2299.

⁵¹⁶ “The Siege of Tabriz,” *The Times*, July 3, 1909.

challenged by a body of women and accused of being a corn-forestaller. He replied with an oath, and they fell upon him furiously, when his servant coming up with a revolver, enabled him to get away and take refuge in the telegraph office, where he concealed himself in a cupboard. The women pursued him thither, and having at last found him, they attacked him savagely with the iron heels of their shoes, tearing out his beard and gouging out his eyes. Some men having come to their assistance in this tragic work, he was finished off with their daggers, after which, having denuded him of his clothing, they hung him up by his feet from a building in the Artillery Square.⁵¹⁷

As well as losing the breadwinners of the families in the battles, women were also the victims of plundering and abuse. A passage of *Naleh-e Mellat* reflects on how the royalist forces in one of the penultimate battles in Tabriz (5 March 1909) indiscriminately stripped women of their belongings and jewellery. This happened in one the poorest districts in Tabriz whose inhabitants were not even pro-constitutionalist.⁵¹⁸ According to Malekzadeh, women were so desperate for food that they rushed over fields of alfalfa near the royal forces heedless of the danger of being shot.⁵¹⁹ As mentioned before, Taqizadeh's first public speech after his return to Tabriz implies that some of the constitutionalist forces at times also mistreated women.

The atmosphere in Tabriz was clearly tense. This tense situation in Tabriz worried both Britain and Russia. The Local Assembly also wanted their help in solving the problem. In order to try to ameliorate the situation, representatives from the British and Russian Legations visited the Shah. They expressed their concern for the current situation in Tabriz, suggesting that an armistice would solve the conflict there. After first resisting this idea, claiming it would negate the gains of the previous nine months, the Shah agreed to a six-

⁵¹⁷ *The Moon of The Fourteenth Night: Being The Private Life of an Unmarried Diplomat in Persia During the Revolution*, ed., Eustache de Lorey and Douglas Sladen (London: Hurst and Blackett, 1910), 317.

⁵¹⁸ *Naleh-Mellat*, March 10, 1909.

⁵¹⁹ Malekzadeh, 1126.

day armistice during which time bread would be delivered to help feed the inhabitants for that period.⁵²⁰ On 19 April 1909, in the middle of a fierce battle with the governmental forces, Sattar Khan was informed that the Shah had agreed to open the roads on condition that the constitutionalists stop attacking the governmental forces. Hearing that, Sattar Khan immediately ordered the cessation of firing.⁵²¹ Nonetheless, despite the Shah's promises, the blockade was not removed.⁵²² There was hope that during this period a peaceful solution could be achieved by negotiations. Although food did not reach the town, the Russian and British Consuls continued their efforts, but without results.

The Russians had previously wanted to bring troops to Tabriz in order to end the siege and had tried to open routes linking the provinces to the town. They had halted, awaiting the result of the negotiations with the Shah, with their troops ready on the other side of the border.⁵²³ On 23 April the Russian and British Consul Generals sent a letter to the provisional Assembly stating that "since the Iranian government has not opened the roads to the provinces, the Russian and British governments have agreed to open the roads themselves."⁵²⁴

4:9 Taqizadeh and his Telegraph to the Shah

Hearing the news of the coming of Russian troops to Tabriz, the Local Assembly members were overwhelmed by a sense of grief and shock. They invited Taqizadeh for consultation. Taqizadeh suggested that the only solution was to immediately send a telegraph to the Shah, begging him to order 'Ain al-Dowleh to open the roads for supplies. In return for the opening of the roads, the constitutionalists would end the fighting and be obedient to the Shah. Taqizadeh argued that the priority must be to maintain the independence of the country and prevent foreign troops from setting foot on Iranian soil. For, once they had entered the country, expelling them would be extremely difficult; a fact that future events would prove to be true. Taqizadeh's advice was taken and it was agreed

⁵²⁰ *The Times*, April 21, 1909

⁵²¹ Barclay to Grey, telegram, April 21, 1909, in *Persia No. 2 (1909)*, 103.

⁵²² Barclay to Grey, Tehran, April 25, 1909, telegram [15488], in *Ibid.*, 109.

⁵²³ Barclay to Grey, telegram, April 21, 1909, in *Ibid.*, 102.

⁵²⁴ Amirkhizi, 407.

to send the telegraph that he had drafted without delay. Meanwhile Taqizadeh was asked to go to the Ottoman Consulate. When he returned, however, he noticed that in his absence they had decided not to send the telegraph. Some members of the Assembly and particularly Baqer Khan had opposed sending it. Baqer Khan believed that the news of the coming of Russian troops was a political ruse and not true. The result that day was that the telegraph was not sent.⁵²⁵ Taqizadeh has narrated in his autobiography what happened soon after:

The telegraph was not sent. I became rather annoyed and apprehensive. I returned home and did not go to the Assembly the next day. The following afternoon they came for me several times. I refused to go. They insisted and so I eventually went. I saw they were so upset. Some, who were businessmen, had encountered a number of Europeans (Austrian and German) while on their way to work. They had commented, "Thanks to God the siege has been lifted. The Russian troops will arrive tomorrow". They became very agitated and I realised they had become very uncomfortable. I was saddened. I said there is no other way. So, they did not listen to Salar [Baqer Khan] and the telegraph was sent. To prevent the coming of the Russian troops, they sent a few people to the British Consulate to say that we were ourselves busy negotiating. The British, who were completely opposed to the arrival of the Russian troops, told us to send the telegraph right away. The correspondent of *The Times* newspaper sent it.⁵²⁶

As a British diplomatic report states, the majority of the Local Assembly members approved the idea of the coming of Russian troops but Taqizadeh and Baqer Khan were among those who were against it.⁵²⁷ It seems that the blockade had made ordinary people more desperate. Their priority was for life to return to normal. But Taqizadeh could foresee the adverse consequences of Russian interference.

⁵²⁵Taqizadeh, *Tufani*, 115.

⁵²⁶ *Ibid.*, 115-6.

⁵²⁷*TNA*: FO 371/807.

The telegraph was, however, read by the Shah on 25 April 1909. It is said that when the Shah read it, he was so moved that his eyes filled with tears. He asked the Local Assembly members to come to the telegraph office to negotiate face to face. The Shah then agreed to lift the siege and on 26 April an amnesty was granted in Tabriz.⁵²⁸ When Taqizadeh and others attempted to continue the negotiations the next morning, in the middle of the talks they were informed by phone that the Russian troops had already passed the borders. This greatly upset Taqizadeh and the others and Taqizadeh nervously drafted a telegraph stating that what they were trying to prevent had now happened and they were no longer disposed to negotiate.⁵²⁹ On 1 May Russian troops arrived in Tabriz.⁵³⁰ The Shah had ordered the opening of the roads and provisions began gradually to reach the town. The royalist troops, who were surrounding Tabriz, had begun to disperse and Liakhoff with his Cossack brigade was recalled to Tehran. This was because the Shah needed his forces to prevent the imminent attack of the Bakhtiyaris on Tehran.⁵³¹ The Shah wanted 'Ain al-Dowleh to stay in Azerbaijan as the governor but this would not have been a popular appointment at that time.⁵³² He left Tabriz for Tehran on 12 May. The nationalist Deputy Governor in Tabriz at that time was Ijlal al-Molk.⁵³³

4:10 The Joint Statement of Russia and Britain

On 22 April the Russian and British representatives in Tehran visited the Shah, making him a joint proposal. They believed that if the Shah did not follow their recommended reforms which were offered in six articles, the restoration of order in the country would be difficult and a state of anarchy would prevail. In brief, the statement contained: 1. The removal from any position of power of certain reactionary characters such as the Minister of War; 2. The re-establishment of the Constitution; 3. The appointment of a council to elaborate and promulgate a new electoral law; 4. The proclamation of a general amnesty; 5. The fixing of a date for the elections of a new parliament. The sixth article of the

⁵²⁸ Nicolson to Grey, telegram, May 23, 1909, in *Persia No. 1 (1910) Further Correspondence Respecting the Affairs of Persia: In continuation of Persia No 2 (1909)*, (London: Harrison and Sons, 1910), 6-7.

⁵²⁹ Taqizadeh, *Tufani*, 114. Amirkhizi, 413-4.

⁵³⁰ Miller, telegram, May 1, 1909 in *Ketab-e Narenji*, ed., Bashiri, 161.

⁵³¹ Sablin, telegram, May 6, 1909 in *Ibid.*, 164.

⁵³² Kasravi, *Tarikh-e Mashruteh-e Iran*, 906.

⁵³³ Barclay to Grey, May 20, 1909 in *Persia No. 1 (1910)*, 15-7.

statement was a promise from the Russian and British governments to the Shah of a fresh loan on condition that the other five articles were put into practice.⁵³⁴

The content of the statements was published in foreign newspapers. The constitutionalists protested against the statement, especially the last article concerning the foreign loan. They believed it marred the independence of the country. The Local Assembly in Tabriz sent a telegram to the Council of Ministers in protest, demanding information about the exact content of the statement. According to Amirkhizi, the telegram was drafted by Taqizadeh. The Foreign Minister replied to this telegram stating that none of the articles were against national interests.⁵³⁵ The fact that the Local Assembly wrote directly to the Foreign Minister and that he felt obliged to reply shows the power and importance of the Local Assembly in Tabriz. Clearly, once the military conflict had come to an end, the Assembly and its non-militant members together with Taqizadeh had increased their political force in decision-making. The importance of Taqizadeh as a key political player grew after Sattar Khan and Baqer Khan had to seek refuge in the Ottoman consulate for fear of being arrested by the Russians.⁵³⁶ Taqizadeh, because of the recommendations of the Russian and British governments, wanted to come to an agreement with the Shah, but Sattar Khan and the others were against this.⁵³⁷ According to a British report, the Russians were apparently planning to send Sattar Khan and Baqer Khan abroad since they believed they were stirring up trouble.⁵³⁸ Meanwhile, the Shah was quick to actualise what the British and Russians had requested. On 5 May, the Shah ordered the re-establishment of the Constitution and the date for the election was set for 19 July 1909.⁵³⁹

⁵³⁴ Barclay to Grey, April 22, 1909, in *Persia No. 2 (1909)*, 128-9.

⁵³⁵ Amirkhizi, 441-4.

⁵³⁶ *Ibid.*, 436-8.

⁵³⁷ Kasravi, *Tarikh-e Hejdah Saleh*, 20. Taqizadeh writes in his autobiography that the British and Russians advised them to make peace with the Shah. Taqizadeh, *Tufani*, 118.

⁵³⁸ Barclay to Grey, July 5, 1909, in *Persia No. 1 (1910)*, 52.

⁵³⁹ Sabline, telegram, May 5, 1909, in *Ketab-e Narenji*, ed., Bashiri, 164.

4:12 The Electoral Law

Negotiations for peace continued between Tabriz and Tehran. In Tehran a council of twenty-one people was formed to draft the new law. The members of the council were mostly constitutionalists. They called the commission “The Assembly of Peace”. As a first priority, the commission sought the opinion of the deputies in important provinces. The representatives of the provinces suggested changing the electoral law. The Tabriz Assembly, as the representative of the other provinces, was in charge of conducting the negotiations concerning the new electoral law. The Local Assembly in Tabriz demanded that the Shah restore the old constitution, “informing him that the proposed arrangement on the lines of religious law was not acceptable.”⁵⁴⁰ The electoral law was completed on 10 June and was presented to the Shah three days later. Taqizadeh writes, “For about two months from early morning to midnight we were busy sending telegraphs. We may have exchanged hundreds of thousands or even a million words before we eventually agreed upon the articles of the new electoral law.”⁵⁴¹

The number of members of parliament under the new law was 120 in contrast to the previous 156. Unlike the elections of 1906, the elections now were to be in two degrees; that is, firstly candidates from town districts were elected by the general public. In a second round of voting only those ‘elected’ in the first round then chose from amongst themselves the desired number of ‘representatives’.⁵⁴² These new elections were no longer based on class. The deputies need not be natives of the region but had to have lived there for at least six months and be currently resident there.⁵⁴³ Due to a lack of facilities, it was decided that elections would be held only in the big cities. Women did not have the right to be elected or vote. Under the new law the five major tribes in Iran: Bakhtiyaris, Shahsavans, Qashqais, Khamseh and Turkomans were allowed to have one deputy each in the parliament. The non-Muslim communities such as Chaldeans, Armenians, Jews and Zoroastrians could also each have one deputy. An attempt was made for the opening of the Senate in line with the Constitution of 1906. An effort was made to reduce the number of foreign words used in

⁵⁴⁰ Barclay to Grey, telegram, April 30, 1909, in *Persia No. 2 (1909)*, 115.

⁵⁴¹ Taqizadeh, *Tufani*, 117-8.

⁵⁴² *Persia No. 2 (1909)*, 94-5.

⁵⁴³ Barclay to Grey, telegram, June 17, 1909 in *Persia No. 1 (1910)*, 42-3.

the documents outlining the new electoral law, using Persian equivalents instead. The word “Vakil” (deputy), due to its religious connotations, was changed to “Namayandeh” (representative).⁵⁴⁴

Meanwhile, as promised to the Russians and British, the Shah had formed a new cabinet which satisfied the constitutionalists, with Naser al-Molk as Prime Minister. Since Naser al-Molk was still in Europe, Saad al-Dowleh acted as his vice. Naser al-Molk was a veteran politician who had served for the previous Shahs and had been Finance Minister during the First Parliament period.

4:13 The Plan to Attack Tehran

While some of the constitutionalists were negotiating with the Shah, searching for a peaceful solution, those in Isfahan and Gilan had other intentions. On 3 May Sardar As‘ad and Samsam al-Dowleh in a joint telegraph to all the foreign legations expressed their intention to march on the capital.⁵⁴⁵ On 5 May 1909 Qazvin was taken from Rasht by 200 constitutionalists.⁵⁴⁶ Now Sepahdar, Yapram Khan and Ali Mohammad Tarbiat and Mo‘ez al-Soltan had settled in Qazvin with their fighters and had made their centre there. The Sattar Assembly was held there.⁵⁴⁷ They began sending telegrams to Tabriz and direct communication was established between the Mojaheds and Tabriz.⁵⁴⁸ They argued that the Shah had re-established the constitution but they did not trust him and would go to Tehran. Kasravi describes this group as well-organised and equipped with good commanders; “Despite being young, due to his valour and perseverance, Mirza Ali Mohammad Khan was popular with everyone. If among the revolutionaries a few others had been as qualified as Yapram and as zealous as this young man, greater tasks could have been performed.”⁵⁴⁹

At the same time the Bakhtiyaris and constitutionalists in Isfahan were preparing themselves to march towards Tehran. Sardar As‘ad was reassured by the constitutionalists

⁵⁴⁴ ‘Ain al-Saltaneh, 2453.

⁵⁴⁵ Barclay to Grey, telegram, May 3, 1909, in *Ibid.*, 117.

⁵⁴⁶ Barclay to Grey, telegram, May 5, 1909, in *Ibid.*, 118.

⁵⁴⁷ Kasravi, *Tarikh-e Hejdah Saleh*, 27.

⁵⁴⁸ Taqizadeh, *Tufani*, 118.

⁵⁴⁹ Kasravi, *Tarikh-e Hejdah Saleh*, 27.

in Tehran that the people of the capital would support the constitutionalists there and would help them. After gathering 700 fighters from Bakhtiyari, Sardar As'ad was now in readiness to leave Isfahan and begin his raid on Tehran.

4:15 Differences of Opinion Concerning an Attack on Tehran

After the opening of Qazvin, the constitutionalists had differing opinions about attacking Tehran. Taqizadeh, who was negotiating with the Shah for a peaceful solution to end the conflict and was discussing arrangements for the reopening of the Parliament, was among those who did not support the idea of attacking Tehran. Before the Russian troops had arrived in Tabriz, in a joint telegram, Taqizadeh together with Sattar Khan, had encouraged the constitutionalists of Rasht to quickly conquer Qazvin.⁵⁵⁰ Later, however, he had changed his opinion. Clearly the presence of Russian troops in Tabriz and the fear that if the constitutionalists attacked Tehran, the Russians would intensify their presence was a grave concern. Remaining diplomatic documents from both the British and the Russians confirm that both governments were much concerned by the approaching of the constitutionalist forces from Gilan and Isfahan to Tehran. In another longer telegraph to Ali Mohammad Tarbiat and Mo'ez al-Soltan, Taqizadeh talked about the idea of attacking Qazvin once more. Besides this point, the telegraph also illustrates the close relationship between Taqizadeh and the leaders of the constitutionalists in Gilan. In the telegraph Taqizadeh put emphasis on the importance of treating the general public well and on not interfering with people with money or businessmen.⁵⁵¹ Amirkhizi has written about this disagreement; "With regards to the departure of the Rasht army towards Tehran, in the assembly there was a disagreement between the late Mosavat and two or three other members of the Assembly and me. This was resolved soon and the Assembly agreed upon the departure of the army towards Tehran."⁵⁵² Amirkhizi does not mention the name of Taqizadeh but there is a remaining telegram from Taqizadeh about this issue. In the telegram, Taqizadeh explains about his reasons for disagreeing with the plan. He states that many were critical of his negative attitude towards an attack on Tehran, but after reading

⁵⁵⁰ Taqizadeh and Sattar Khan to Mo'ez al-Soltan, telegram, in *Nasim-e Shomal*, March 5, 1909.

⁵⁵¹ Taqizadeh to Mo'ez al-Soltan and Ali Mohammad Tarbiat, telegram, in *Oraq-e Tazeh Yab-e Mashrutiyat*, ed., Afshar, 28-29.

⁵⁵² Amirkhizi, 448.

twenty issues of *The Times* he was convinced the constitutionalists should not go to Tehran. He believed:

The presence of the foreign Mojaheds in that region is like poison. In the British Parliament one of the members inquired from the Foreign Minister if the Russian government was going to send troops to secure the Anzali-Tehran road. The minister replied boldly that the Russian government did have the right to send troops, since that road was the communication route between Europe and Tehran and the main Russian route to the centre and was heavily used. The Russian citizen insurgents have occupied there....⁵⁵³

Taqizadeh mentioned in the telegram that he did not want to impose his opinion over them and they were free to act as they wanted. At the same time, Yapram from Qazvin had asked Sattar Khan's opinion about attacking Tehran. Sattar Khan had advised him to act according to their military preparations and suggested that if they could, they should conquer Tehran.⁵⁵⁴ This could be yet another example of disagreement between Taqizadeh and Sattar Khan.

4:16 The Liberation of Tehran

Despite Taqizadeh's opinion, the plan to attack Tehran was carried out. In Tehran Bakhtiyaris who supported the Shah, upon realising the determination of the constitutionalists to conquer Tehran, were anxious about their future. Sardar As'ad's brother, Sardar Zafar, and the other chiefs who supported the Shah agreed to welcome Sardar As'ad. After the departure of Sardar As'ad on 21 May, news spread that the constitutionalists of Gilan had also departed for Tehran under the command of Sepahdar. While the governmental forces were in Kashan and were planning to attack Isfahan, Sardar As'ad managed to avoid confronting them there by taking another route to reach Tehran. In Qom other constitutionalist forces joined Sardar As'ad's troops. Although in Qom the Russian and British consulate generals went to convince Sardar As'ad not to attack Tehran,

⁵⁵³ Taqizadeh to Ali Mohammad Tarbiat, telegram, June 11, 1909, in *Oraq-e Tazeh Yab-e Mashrutiyat*, ed., Afshar, 36-40.

⁵⁵⁴ Amirkhizi, 447.

they were not successful in changing his mind. While residing in Qom, Sardar As'ad had negotiations with Saad al-Dowleh who was now in the office of Deputy Prime Minister. These talks were also unable to dissuade him from attacking Tehran.⁵⁵⁵

In Tehran the situation was confused. The Shah was on the outskirts of Tehran in Saltanat Abad. Liakhoff was in charge of defending Tehran. The constitutionalists reached Tehran at 6 a.m. on 13 July and the fight began. After three days the constitutionalists had captured key positions in Tehran including the parliament. On 16 July, realising there was no hope left, Mohammad Ali Shah decided to seek refuge in the Russian legation. An extraordinary grand council was formed, made up of Ulama, previous members of parliament, businessmen, ministers and other notables.⁵⁵⁶ The council issued a proclamation, announcing that Mohammad Ali Shah had voluntarily abdicated. Sepahdar Tonekaboni was appointed Minister of War and Ahmad Mirza, the thirteen-year-old son of Mohammad Ali Shah, was appointed the new Shah. Until the convening of the parliament, 'Azd al-Molk, the head of the Qajar tribe, would act as Regent.⁵⁵⁷ The extraordinary grand council chose about 20 people to act as the directors to control events. Taqizadeh, as a member of the previous parliament, was invited to join this Directory. He left Tabriz with an escort of Mojaheds of Tabriz and reached Tehran on 6 August. The constitutionalists of Tehran went to Karaj to welcome him and accompanied him to Tehran with a musical troop.⁵⁵⁸ Taqizadeh had now become one of the most influential men of this period of Iranian history. This liberation of Tehran brought to a close the period known as the Lesser Despotism. The Lesser Despotism, the period between the closure of the First Parliament and the dethroning of Mohammad Ali Shah, despite the adverse socio-economic effects of the civil war, is an important phase in the intellectual and political history of Iran. Although Mohammad Ali Shah destroyed the First Parliament, he was unable to become the absolute ruler of Iran as he had wished. The rule of constitution for two years had spread its roots deeply. Due to the influence of freedom of speech, people had become more informed and politically aware. It was no longer possible to eradicate the constitution simply by a coup

⁵⁵⁵ Malekzadeh, 1096-8.

⁵⁵⁶ "The Events in Tehran," 16 July, 1909, in *Ketab-e Nareni*, ed., Bashiri, 243-6.

⁵⁵⁷ Amirkhizi, 451.

⁵⁵⁸ Mojtehed, 148.

d'état. During the aftermath of the closure of the parliament, Tabriz became the main centre of the ideological and military opposition against the Shah. After the uprising in Tabriz, the two main international powers involved in the affairs of Iran had realised that the Shah would not easily be able to suppress the movement. The Russians, despite supporting the Shah, were concerned about the growing sympathy of the Russian revolutionary Social Democrat Party for the Iranian case and wanted to end the conflict. Similarly, the British, due to their interests in the region, also preferred a powerful centralised power to a state of anarchy which had prevailed after the overthrowing of the constitution by the Shah. However, the insistence of the Shah on his policy and the misdeeds of some of his advisors and supporters had resulted in the spreading of the resistance movement from Tabriz to other parts of Iran and culminated in the deposing of the Shah. This was the first time in Iranian history that a Shah had been disposed by an organised movement of the masses.

The destruction of the parliament by the Shah turned the attention of the international media towards Iran and gave an opportunity to the Iranian constitutionalists to present their demands to a global audience. This allowed the intellectuals of the movement greater familiarisation with the concept of democracy and other associated ideas such as human rights. Within this context, Iranian intellectuals began to come into contact with political groups in other countries who had similar demands and who were in the same position as that in Iran; fighting for freedom and constitutionalism. A growing universal outlook enabled the Iranian intellectuals to focus on Iran becoming a unified nation and view the country in relation to other nations. Consequently, a historical consciousness developed in them as they began to make use of history in its modern sense as a vehicle to give meaning to the constitutional revolution and its goals; a history which highlighted the golden periods of the Iranian nation. The dominant theme was to see the position of Iran declining throughout the course of history. This outlook was widely used in the pre-constitutional discourse of the intellectuals in Iran. The period of the Lesser Despotism provided intellectuals with an opportunity to use history as a strong tool to incite the masses and compare the adverse situation of Iran with its glorious past. The culprits of the dramatic decline of Iran were its corrupted rulers and Mohammad Ali Shah was the embodiment of such a ruler. The intellectuals introduced the Constitutional Revolution as a movement

which would elevate Iran to its previous prestigious position among other nations. Taqizadeh, among others, was one who used this discourse on several occasions to justify the fight against Mohammad Ali Shah by mentioning distinguished rulers of Iran from different periods. Although utilising these glorious historical periods was helpful in inciting the masses, it introduced a vague and confusing concept in the political and intellectual discourse in Iran. What was considered outstanding in this selective glorious past of Iranian history was often associated with the military power of a specific ruler or conqueror such as Nader Shah and there was less emphasis on the cultural or democratic aspects of the different periods of Iranian history. In short, this emphasis on the military achievement of the nation resulted in a disregard for a deep social cultural analysis of these periods. It created a superficial glorification of the past and a nostalgia to regain that prestigious past. Taqizadeh was one of the few Iranian intellectuals who utilised these ideas when addressing the public. He was more knowledgeable than many other Iranian politicians at that time about the concept of democracy.

The Lesser Despotism period allows a useful study of key Iranian political players. The difference between the prominent constitutionalist players is crucial here. Characters such as Sepahdar-e Tonekaboni or the Bakhtiyari chiefs like Sardar As'ad, Samsam al-Saltaneh or Zargham-al Saltaneh, for example, clearly lacked the ideological foundation that Taqizadeh possessed and the consistency that he showed. Sepahdar was first sent to Tabriz to fight with the constitutionalists there but due to an argument with 'Ain al-Dowleh had left and returned to Tonekabon before revolting against the Shah and joining the constitutionalists. Zargham al-Saltaneh and Samsam al-Saltaneh showed similar characteristics. They had first been in Tehran with Mohammad Ali Shah supporting him but later had joined the constitutionalist camp. The constitutionalists in Paris had to convince Sardar As'ad to join their camp and organise a plan against the Shah. The documents at hand prove that the constitutionalists were highly suspicious about his intentions before the conquering of Tehran. What these people do not share with Taqizadeh is a solid persistent ideological goal that was used as a road map. Taqizadeh had a clearer idea than other constitutionalists about political, cultural, economic modernisation. He might momentarily veer off his path due to forces beyond his control but the horizon of his

goal would remain constant and he would find his way back to his original route. It is this consistency and unwavering focus towards and awareness of his goals that was lacking in the majority of others who participated in the constitutional movement.

The Lesser Despotism period and the attempts of the constitutionalists to form a strong opposition against the Shah helped to unite throughout the Iranian territory groups of people who might otherwise have been geographically or ethnically on the periphery. The end result of this period was the passing of the first electoral law, allowing more Iranians to be involved in political decision making by giving them the chance to vote and be represented in parliament. The participation of many of the tribes, making up a large part of Iran's population is a good example. The constitutional movement helped to converge Iranian thought into one single specific goal. This laid the foundations for the feeling of a shared destiny among the many different groups and classes of Iranian society.