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Seyyed Hassan Taqizadeh: a political biography

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PART TWO
THE STATESMAN

Chapter Eight

Taqizadeh as Statesman and the Rise of Reza Shah

As stated in the previous chapter, his acceptance of a governmental position was a turning point in Taqizadeh's political life and as mentioned, Taqizadeh had pondered long and hard about it and discussed it with his friends before accepting it. He had had a hard decision to make, to side with the government and power or oppose it. Weighing up the situation, he decided to co-operate with and become a member of the government, opening a new chapter in his life. Taqizadeh was a pragmatist, always eager to put into practice what he had thought long about and theorised. As well as the personal reasons that were explained at the end of the previous chapter, under a new regime, although far from his ideal, by taking up this governmental post, Taqizadeh now saw an opportunity for himself to be able to actualise his thoughts and ideas. Later in this period, with the coming to power of Reza Shah, although Taqizadeh had opposed the ending of the Qajar dynasty and the introduction of Reza Khan as Shah, considering it unconstitutional, there was finally a clear prospect of some of his ideas being actualised. Quite probably he believed that by holding a post within the establishment, he would be able to moderate the dictatorial side of the regime and help steer it in the right direction. After the Great War, he strongly advocated that education should be prioritised in Iran, whilst being cognisant of the fact that this would have to be a gradual process.

His mission began with Russia, a power that he had always considered a threat to the sovereignty of Iran. But he went there now in an official capacity, representing his country to carry out negotiations with a new revolutionary regime in Russia.

8:1 Soviet Union Mission and the Trade Talks

In 1921 the Soviet Union signed four significant treaties with Iran, Ottoman Turkey, Afghanistan and Bukhara. These treaties revitalised independent nationalist movements in Iran, Ottoman Turkey and Afghanistan. The Torkamanchay Treaty, signed in 1828 between Iran and Tsarist Russia was still in force at the time of the Russian Revolution of 1917. However, following the Revolution, the Russian revolutionaries were eager to see their

Marxist-inspired ideology actualised. They wanted all treaties, conventions, accords and protocols previously signed with Iran, including the Torkamanchay Treaty to be terminated. When the new revolutionary regime's minister arrived in Tehran, he officially announced the ending of all the agreements. On 14 January 1918, the Foreign Minister of the new Russian government, Leon Trotsky, sent a letter to the Iranian legation in St. Petersburg confirming the termination of all the past agreements.¹⁰⁹⁷ Consequently a new treaty was signed between Iran and Soviet Russia on 26 February 1921, a few days after the coup led by Reza Khan and the formation of a new cabinet by Seyyed Zi'a.¹⁰⁹⁸ The treaty was signed between the newly assigned Iranian envoy in Russia, Ali Qoli Khan Moshaver al-Mamalek and two representatives of the government of the Russian Socialist Federated Soviet Republic, Georgii Vasilievich Chicherin and Lev Mikhailovich. The treaty had to be ratified by both parties within three months.¹⁰⁹⁹ The "Treaty of Friendship between Persia and the Russian Socialist Federated Soviet Republic" was approved by the Iranian Parliament on 15 December 1921.¹¹⁰⁰ The first clause of the treaty thus abrogated the former arrangements between the former Russian Imperial government and Iran:

Accordingly, wishing to see the Persian people independent, flourishing and freely controlling the whole of its own possessions, the Government of the R. S. F. S. R. declares all treaties, conventions and agreements concluded by the late Czarist Government with Persia and tending to the diminution of the rights of Persian people completely null and void.¹¹⁰¹

This treaty of 1921 is a turning point in Russia's diplomacy in the East and the beginning of a new social order. It strongly criticises imperialism and promises that the Soviet Union will support Iranians to obtain their national rights. Among the other significant changes that this treaty brought to Iran was one concerning trade and business.

¹⁰⁹⁷ Hossein Makki, *Zendegani-e Siyasi-e Soltan Ahmad Shah* (Tehran: 'Elmi, 1944), 220-34.

¹⁰⁹⁸ For the full text of the agreement see: Hossein Makki, *Zendegani-e Siyasi-e Soltan Ahmad Shah* (Tehran: 'Elmi, 1944), 235-8. Also see: *Kaveh*: August 6, 1921.

¹⁰⁹⁹ "Persia's New Alignment," *Current History (New York)*, 14(3), 526.

¹¹⁰⁰ Abdollah Mostufi, *Shareh-e Zendegani Man* (Tehran: Zavvar, 2011), 3: 188.

¹¹⁰¹ "Persia's New Alignment," *Current History (New York)*, 14(3), 526.

According to the Iranian figures from 1906 / 7 to 1913 / 1914, Iran imported more from Russia than from any other country. Britain and India were second followed by the Ottoman Turkey, France and Germany.¹¹⁰² After the Russian Revolution of 1917 and the change of regime which had led to the instability of trade with Russia, the people of the northern provinces of Iran who had traded with Russia in the past were left in poverty and desperation. It was then that the importance of trade with Russia became apparent to the Iranians.¹¹⁰³ People who were affected began sending petitions and telegraphs, imploring the parliament and the government for a trade agreement with the newly established regime in Russia since the Soviet regime had closed the trade routes.¹¹⁰⁴ During 1921 trade talks with Russians were the focus of political life in Iran.¹¹⁰⁵ However, Soviet-Iranian trade was renewed in the spring of 1921, without any trade agreement.¹¹⁰⁶

Iranian businessmen in the past had been able to trade freely without government restrictions. Now, however, the new Soviet regime ensured that all trade was channelled through and regulated by the government, making it increasingly difficult for Iranians to continue trading with the Russians. This particularly affected goods, such as dried fruits, whose sole market had traditionally been Russia.¹¹⁰⁷ The Soviets wanted Iranian merchants to import only Russian-made products into Iran and not to export Iranian products through Russia to other countries.¹¹⁰⁸

Article 19 and 20 of the Russo-Iranian Treaty of 1921 outlined that the parties would resume commercial relations, although the fine details were to be finalised by a commercial convention. In January 1922, Moshir al-Dowleh became Prime Minister and announced

¹¹⁰² Marvin L. Enter, *Russo-Persian commercial relations, 1828-1914* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1965), 64.

¹¹⁰³ Before the Great War Russia ranked top of the countries which traded with Iran but after the war Britain took that position; its exports to Iran were three times that of Russia. For more detail about Iranian trade during this period see: *Kaveh*: February 21, 1920.

¹¹⁰⁴ Mohammad Ali Foroughi to Taqizadeh, 8 June 1923, in *Nameh-hay-e Tehran*, ed., Afshar, 52. Regarding the complaints of businessmen and merchants see also: *Shafaq-e Sorkh*, November 2 & 5, 1922.

¹¹⁰⁵ Mikhail Volodarsky, *The Soviet Union and Its Southern Neighbours: Iran and Afghanistan 1917-1933* (Essex: Frank Cass & Co, 1994), 69.

¹¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 67.

¹¹⁰⁷ "Khoshkbar-e Iran va Rusieh [Iranian and Russian Dried Fruit]" in *Kaveh*, June 15, 1917.

¹¹⁰⁸ *Shafaq-e Sorkh*, September 7, 1922.

that a delegation would be sent to negotiate with the Russians.¹¹⁰⁹ Against this background, Taqizadeh was appointed by the Iranian government to negotiate the signing of an economic agreement with the Soviet Union. Taqizadeh had commented on the Russo-Iranian Treaty of 1921 in two issues of *Kaveh*; he believed one of the reasons he was considered suitable for this mission was because of his background knowledge of Russian and Iran agreements.¹¹¹⁰ According to Mojtehedī, another reason that Taqizadeh was chosen for this mission was the request from Iranians living in the Caucasus that Taqizadeh be sent to Russia to resolve the situation.¹¹¹¹

Although Taqizadeh was positive about this agreement and believed many of its articles guaranteed Iranian rights, he expressed his concerns about article six of the agreement.¹¹¹² According to this article, in the event of a third country intervening militarily or attacking Russia from Iranian soil, Russia had the right to send its troops into Iran. Taqizadeh believed this article was open to misinterpretation and could be problematic in the future. Taqizadeh's fears were to be realised when during the Second World War, the Red Army invaded Iran, referring to this article of the agreement to justify their occupation of Iran. Taqizadeh was sceptical, too, of article eleven; the Russians had previously prevented Iran from having a naval force in the Caspian Sea based on article eight of the Torkamanchay Peace Treaty of 1828 which stipulated that Russia's naval vessels were the only warships permitted in the Caspian Sea.¹¹¹³ Now, according to Taqizadeh, article eleven of the 1921 treaty, regarding the return of Iran's naval rights, was not explicit enough.¹¹¹⁴

¹¹⁰⁹ Sadreddin Moti' Esfahani, "Sayyid Hasan Taqizadeh: The Emergence of Modern Iran" (PhD. diss., New York University, 1981), 137, available online: <https://search.proquest.com/docview/303165529?accountid=12045> (accessed June 21, 2019).

¹¹¹⁰ In 1918 it was proposed by Hossein Qoli Khan Navab, the Iranian Minister in Berlin, that Taqizadeh be sent as the chargé d'affaires to Russia to defend the right of Iran in the peace negotiations between Russia and Germany. See: Hossein Qoli Navab to the Iranian Legation in Saint Petersburg, 12 February 1918 in *Nameh-hay-e Tehran*, ed., Afshar, 126-7.

¹¹¹¹ Mojtehedī, 199.

¹¹¹² *Kaveh*, August 6, 1921.

¹¹¹³ Hossein Makki, *Tarkih-e Bist Saleh-e Iran* [A Twenty-year History of Iran] (Tehran: 'Elmi, 1995), 7: 240-1.

¹¹¹⁴ Marvin L. Enter, 6.

Representing Iran in Russia was the first official position on behalf of the government that Taqizadeh would accept. According to Qazvini, Taqizadeh's acceptance of this position suggests that his experiences during his time in Europe had softened his previously more extreme idealism.¹¹¹⁵ But rather, after the unsuccessful attempts of the Democrat Party to create sustainable change and the closure of the Third Parliament, Taqizadeh had lost his previous leverage in Iran's political arena and this new role would allow him the opportunity to return to the forefront of the Iranian political scene. Significantly, as mentioned above, continuing to reside in post-war Germany had become increasingly difficult due to inflation and the rising cost of living, Taqizadeh was unemployed with no regular income and *Kaveh* was not profitable. Furthermore, he had plans to marry his long-time German fiancé. Financial pressures were thus mounting; he needed a secure, paid position and this was his chance to take one, temporarily, that would also enable him to keep his finger on the pulse of politics.

Taqizadeh left Berlin on 17 April 1922, reaching Moscow on 20 April.¹¹¹⁶ Later, a commission despatched from Iran joined him in Moscow.¹¹¹⁷ Ali Soheyli, who like Taqizadeh was from Tabriz, was Taqizadeh's personal secretary during this mission.¹¹¹⁸ Mirza Hossein Khan Manshoori from the Foreign Ministry, Mirza Rahim Khan Arjomand from the postal department and Gholam Hossein Khan Kayvan from the telegraph department were also missioned to Moscow to work with Taqizadeh.¹¹¹⁹ Taqizadeh first stayed in the Iranian legation in Moscow but, after a few days, the Russian government provided him and his staff with a relatively large and decent house.¹¹²⁰ The negotiations were difficult and initially no agreement was reached.¹¹²¹ During the negotiations supporters of the Soviet Union in Iran criticised Taqizadeh, accusing him of being against

¹¹¹⁵ Qazvini to Taqizadeh, Paris, 27 February 1922 in *Nameh-hay-e Paris*, ed., Afshar, 74.

¹¹¹⁶ *Shafaq-e Sorkh*, April 21, 1922 & June 1, 1922.

¹¹¹⁷ In his autobiography Taqizadeh mentions that he left Berlin in early 1922 and reached Moscow 26 April 1922. Taqizadeh, *Tufani*, 190.

¹¹¹⁸ *Tufani*, 190. Soheyli later took important positions in the Iranian government and even became Prime Minister. Soheyli played an important role in protecting Taqizadeh's life during the reign of Reza Shah, when he was the deputy of the Foreign Minister. This was while Taqizadeh worked as the Iranian minister in Paris and was subjected to the rage of the Shah. Soheyli was Prime Minister in 1942 and from 1943-44.

¹¹¹⁹ Baqer Kazemi, 2: 133.

¹¹²⁰ Taqizadeh, *Tufani*, 190.

¹¹²¹ From Indian Office to Sir P. Loraine, 12 October 1922 *TNA*: FO 371/7835.

the Soviet regime. *Shafaq-e Sorkh* [Red Dawn], however, believed that Taqizadeh was simply defending the interests of his own country against the monopoly of trade that Russia wanted to impose on Iran.¹¹²² Sympathisers of the Soviet Union blamed Taqizadeh for the lack of success of the negotiations. In addition to being instructed by the Iranian government, Taqizadeh had also corresponded personally with businessmen in Iran and had first-hand knowledge of the situation.¹¹²³ Negotiations were interrupted in November 1922. But with the fall of the government of Qavam-al Saltaneh, who was regarded as an anglophile, the negotiations reopened. As British diplomatic correspondence shows, the British followed these talks with great interest. A British document explains the reason for the Russians interrupting the talks: “The Russians broke off negotiations not because they were unable to come to an agreement on the actual subject of the treaty, but on the pretext that, in view of the bad relationship existing between Persia and Russia, they did not wish to proceed further in this matter”.¹¹²⁴ At this point, despite the suspension of negotiations in November 1922, Taqizadeh decided to stay in Moscow “in case the Russians may show a disposition to reopen this matter.”¹¹²⁵ According to Hodgson, Taqizadeh’s theorised that, although the Russians were eager to conclude an agreement, they believed they had been unsuccessful in persuading Iran to agree. The coming to power of a new government had allowed them the opportunity of restarting the discussions without losing face, despite the fact that they had only recently declared it impossible, he believed. Taqizadeh was especially determined to wait in Moscow for a beneficial outcome as he was aware that if the negotiations were unsuccessful, it would be highly disadvantageous for Iran, especially as Sweden, Germany and Finland had already successfully negotiated agreements with Russia. Taqizadeh feared that Iran would be left in an embarrassing situation and it would be an added personal embarrassment for Taqizadeh himself.¹¹²⁶

As Taqizadeh himself stated, the Russians were dissatisfied with him during this mission, believing he was too strict and did not listen to his own government in Tehran.

¹¹²² *Shafaq-e Sorkh*, August 28, 1922.

¹¹²³ See for instance: Baqer Sharoudi’s letter to Taqizadeh in *Shafaq-e Sorkh*, November 19, 1922.

¹¹²⁴ R.M. Hodgson to The Marquess Curzon of Kedleston, 20 February 1923 *TNA*: FO 371/9026.

¹¹²⁵ *Ibid.*

¹¹²⁶ *Ibid.*

According to Taqizadeh, this caused the Russian's unwillingness to accept that Taqizadeh might play a diplomatic role in Iran's dealings with Russia in later days.¹¹²⁷ There were other issues which made reaching an agreement between the two countries challenging. Soviet Russia was determined to concede as little as possible to Iran. The Baku oilfields, where large numbers of Iranian labourers were employed was a key area over which Iran did not want to lose influence. In Azerbaijan Iranian's rights were not secured and Iranians were being taken advantage of by the Soviets; the labourers did not have access to their earnings in hard cash. Iran wanted this issue resolved; Soviet Russia ignored it, instead propagating Communist propaganda among the labourers. Iran was also eager to ensure religious freedom for Iranian labourers in Baku. Again, the Bolsheviks did not give in to this demand and refused to guarantee the freedom of the Muslim clergy to practise their religion without constraints.¹¹²⁸ As a British diplomatic document reveals, Russians were resolute that they wished to avoid any arrangements which allowed Iranians to trade; they wanted Russian-backed control over trade in order to prevent the Iranian private sector from being able to trade independently. The Russo-Iranian negotiations were difficult; at times it had seemed as if there was little hope of any agreement being reached and negotiations had been suspended on several occasions. In mid-December 1922, a telegram from Taqizadeh suggested that he believed the Russians were delaying negotiations due to Russia's involvement in other similar negotiations, a lack of staff and New Year's holidays.¹¹²⁹ The British who had been monitoring the progress of the negotiations with keen interest, had a very different view, believing the real reasons to be far more serious. They were of the opinion that the Russians were looking for any excuse to break off negotiations and "march in troops".¹¹³⁰ British documents show that the Iranians had sought advice from British officials who had opined that some of Russia's demands were "preposterous and no sane government should accept them" and that the Iranian Prime Minister might even have to resign.¹¹³¹ By later December 1922, regarding the discussions, Taqizadeh had had to "admit that further progress is impossible" after the Russians had

¹¹²⁷ Taqizadeh, *Tufani*, 211.

¹¹²⁸ Sir P. L. Loraine to Eastern Department Foreign Office, 13 September 1923. *TNA*: E9144, FO 371/9026.

¹¹²⁹ Minutes of a meeting, 6 January 1923, *TNA*: FO 371/7835.

¹¹³⁰ Sir P. Loraine, 20 December 1922, *Ibid*.

¹¹³¹ Sir P. Loraine, 20 December 1922. *TNA*: FO 371/7835.

adopted an even firmer stance. Taqizadeh went as far as to threaten the Russians that he would return to Tehran, taking all his staff with him.¹¹³² As a British diplomatic report states, Taqizadeh's "demand for his passports produced a sudden change of attitude in the Russian Commission which at once signified its readiness to put forward a new proposal to serve as a basis for further discussion".¹¹³³ According to the report, the main difficulty up until that point had been the monopoly of foreign trade and Russia's demand that while in Iran any Russian officials employed by Vneshtorg, the Moscow-based People's Commissariat of Foreign Trade, should benefit from diplomatic status and immunity.¹¹³⁴

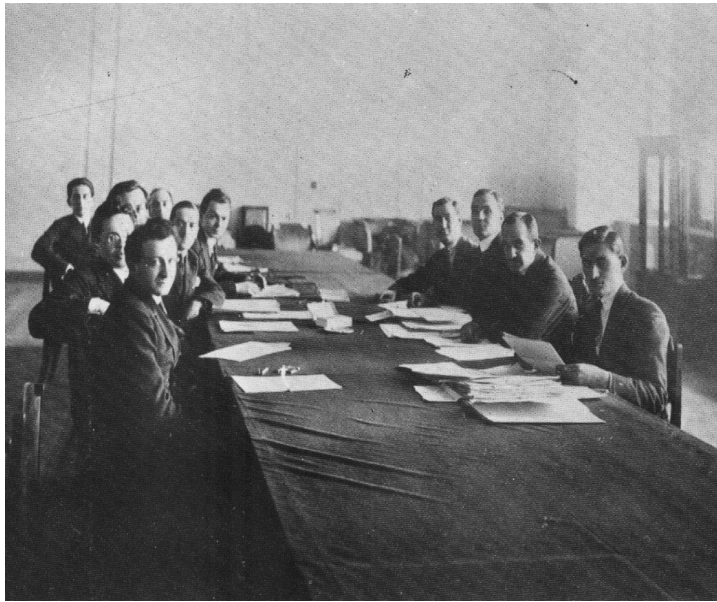


Figure 16: Taqizadeh (third from the right) at the negotiation table with the Russians

The negotiations were lengthy and complicated, lasting a year and a half. Despite all the problems, the wording of a draft of the agreement was finally agreed upon. Taqizadeh was about to sign the agreement when the cabinet in Iran suddenly changed. Moshir al-Dowleh (Mirza Hassan Pirnia), the new Prime Minister, was not in favour of signing the agreement

¹¹³² R.M. Hodgson to the Marquess Curzon of Kedleston, 17 June 1923, FO 371/9026.

¹¹³³ Ibid.

¹¹³⁴ Ibid.

and so in August 1923 Taqizadeh left Moscow for Berlin, assigning someone in his place. Mohammad Ali Foroughi, Foreign Minister, later wanted to send Taqizadeh to Russia to sign the agreement. A telegram from Taqizadeh, in response to a telegram addressed to him from the Iranian Foreign Ministry, indicates his reluctance to return to Moscow. He writes, "You requested me to return at an early date. Certainly, should conditions prove favourable I would be ready to return to Moscow for the purpose of signing the treaty. But as long as there is no hope of reaching an agreement and the Russians are not prepared to hold further conferences, no useful purposes would be served by my sitting in Moscow in a state of idleness".¹¹³⁵ However, later when conditions were deemed more suitable for the signing of the agreement, it was assumed that sending Taqizadeh again to Moscow would arouse suspicion among the Russians that the new government under Sardar Sepah also wanted to delay and might be using this to buy time. Commenting on Taqizadeh's efforts during his Russian mission, Foroughi wrote to Taqizadeh admitting that he never thought the negotiations would go so well and praising Taqizadeh for the sterling job he had done and the great service he had done his country.¹¹³⁶

Upon Taqizadeh's return to Germany once the Russian mission had come to an end, politics would take a back seat temporarily as, perhaps for the first time, Taqizadeh allowed events in his personal life to take precedence; at the age of 45 he married.

¹¹³⁵ Taqizadeh to Foreign Ministry in Tehran, 20 August 1923, *TNA*: FO 371/9026.

¹¹³⁶ Mohammad Ali Foroughi to Taqizadeh, 26 February 1924 in *Nameh-hay-e Tehran*, ed., Afshar, 62.

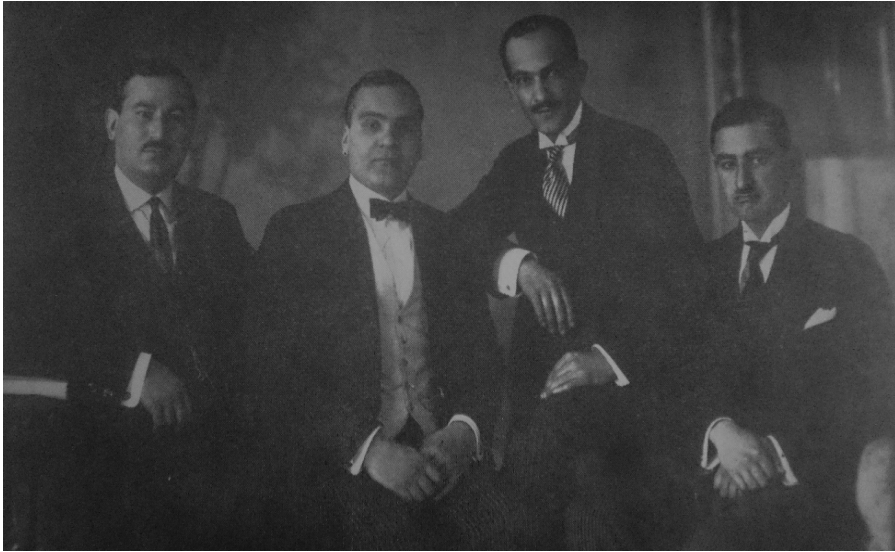


Figure 17: Taqizadeh (second from left) with the other members of the Russian mission

8:2 Marriage

Little is known about the details surrounding Taqizadeh's marriage or indeed his personal life. He was a very private man who gave little away about any personal relationships he might have had either with his future wife or any other women prior to his marriage at the age of 45. One can, thus, only speculate from sparse sources, such as Taqizadeh's private correspondence or acquaintances' narratives, about his married life. It was apparently whilst staying in Germany during the Great War that Taqizadeh met Edith von Jung, the daughter of Max and Bertha von Jung (later known as Young) whom he later married. Edith had been born in Magdeburg, Germany on 26 September 1895 to a middle-class family. At the time of their wedding, she was 28 years old and seventeen years younger than Taqizadeh. Taqizadeh had seemingly first made her acquaintance during his stay in Berlin and a good while before their marriage. We learn some details about the early stages of the relationship from Parviz Kazemi.¹¹³⁷ An Iranian student whom Taqizadeh was helping to study in Germany, he had met Edith in Berlin and gives some further relevant information about the young woman and her family:

¹¹³⁷ It seems likely that, as was customary at that time for middle and upper-class society in Europe, Taqizadeh took Kazemi with him as a chaperone. It was not considered appropriate for a single man to visit the house of a prospective wife unaccompanied.

One Sunday evening he [Taqizadeh] took me with him to one of the well-known wide streets of Berlin called Kaiserdamm and rang the bell of a house on the second floor. The door was opened by a pretty girl with golden hair and white complexion who welcomed us and invited us in. We entered the dining room, where a middle-aged lady and a tall well-built man: the girl's parents received us warmly. After being served tea and chatting a little, most of which I barely understood (because I had only just begun learning German) we left the house. It was in this way that for the first time in my life, I made the acquaintance of a respectable middle-class German family....¹¹³⁸

One entry in the diary of Karl Süsseim (1878-1947) shows that Taqizadeh was well acquainted with his wife long before their marriage:

Taking the train from Munich to Garmisch on August 5, 1918, the famous Liberal Taqizadeh was... in the same railway car [as I was]. He had been accompanied by his mistress all the way from Berlin. We had been friends in Istanbul at Yusuf Akçura's. In 1912-1913, we had exchanged some letters about Sayyid [Seyyed] Hasan's will, but had not been in touch since that time, that is, for the past five-and-a-half years. I was reading the Persian periodical, *Kave[h]*, which I had received in the morning mail. The *Kave[h]*'s editor-in-Chief is Mirza Sayyid [Seyyed] Taqizadeh. He was standing at my side and sat down opposite me with his beloved. The woman, familiar with Mirza Sayyid [Seyyed] Taqizadeh's affairs, saw that I was reading the *Kave[h]*, and looked alternately at me and at her gentleman. This went on for some time. After we had been traveling for an hour, Mirza Sayyid [Seyyed] Taqizadeh came towards me and asked in German: "You are Süsseim, aren't you?" There upon, we talked with each other for

¹¹³⁸ Parviz Kazemi, "Khaterati Chand az Taqizadeh [Some Memories about Taqizadeh]," in *Yadnameh*, ed., Yaghmaei, 114.

another hour. Since we had been acquainted in Istanbul, he had been in Iran and has been living for three years in Berlin. I thought that Christian Beck had gone to Iran but now I heard from him that this was not at all true.¹¹³⁹ Christian Beck is apparently translating articles from *Kave[h]* into German for the German Government, but he speaks only a little Persian. His calligraphy, however, is excellent and the periodical's name on the front page is in Christian Beck's hand. Quite a few Iranians are living in Berlin. Only 40 of them are politicians.¹¹⁴⁰



Figure 18: Taqizadeh and Edith Van Jung in Berlin

There are even scarcer instances of any mention of other personal relationships Taqizadeh may have had prior to his marriage. One example appears in a letter from

¹¹³⁹ "Reference (probably) to Sebastian Beck (1878-1951), Iranist; worked for the Intelligence Agency for the Orient (*Nachrichtenstelle für den Orient*) in Berlin (1915-1921) and was censor for Persian and Turkish letters, cf. W. Björkman, 'Sebastain Beck', in ZDMG 105 (1951), 1-5, 1."

¹¹⁴⁰ Barbara Flemming, Karl Süßheim, Jan Schmidt, *The Diary of Karl Süßheim: 1878-1974* (Stuttgart: Steiner, 2002), 167-8.

Rasoulzadeh dated 19 February 1924. Rasoulzadeh, after congratulating Taqizadeh on his marriage, reminds him of the time they had lived together and writes some lines which may indicate Taqizadeh's vague interest in a woman in Istanbul: "Now that my house is in "charso qapi" [Çarşıkapı district of central Istanbul] every day when I pass her house opposite the Atiq Pasha I remember Farah's apartment. When I see the teaching advertisement, it awakens the memory of your teacher in my mind."¹¹⁴¹

The fact that Taqizadeh and Edith remained married until his death, with Edith nursing him throughout his old age, would suggest that theirs was a marriage of love. This is further supported by the references of several of the couple's acquaintances to the mutual affection and respect that the couple had for each other. 'Isa Sadiq, a close friend of Taqizadeh, describes Edith as a woman with angel-like characteristics who remained loyal to Taqizadeh all her life through good times and bad.¹¹⁴² Mojtehedī also recalls that she had asserted she stayed beside Taqizadeh in both good times and in sickness and would remain nursing him.¹¹⁴³ Manoocher Mohandes, a relative of Taqizadeh and grandchild of Mohammad Ali Tarbiat, who had worked as Taqizadeh's personal assistant also certifies that his wife cared deeply for Taqizadeh.¹¹⁴⁴ Taqizadeh dedicated his well-researched and internationally renowned book *The Old Iranian Calendars* to his wife: "To my wife who from the beginning till the end of the years, throughout my turbulent life and in all circumstances, has been my carer and my lovely and loyal confidante". The book is at the same time dedicated to the soul of Ali Mohammad Tarbiat whom Taqizadeh called his spiritual offspring.¹¹⁴⁵

Whatever the motivation behind Taqizadeh's marriage, at that time, whether in Turkey or Germany or any other European country, it would have been difficult for Taqizadeh to meet eligible Iranian women whom he might have married, due to the social restrictions on

¹¹⁴¹ Mohammad Amin Rasoulzadeh to Taqizadeh in *Tufani* ('Elmi), 471.

¹¹⁴² 'Isa Sadiq, "Taqizadeh" in *Yadnameh*, ed., Yaghmaei, 5.

¹¹⁴³ Mojtehedī, 356.

¹¹⁴⁴ Interview with Manoocher Mohandes, 06/10/2014.

¹¹⁴⁵ Taqizadeh, *Ghahshomari dar Iran-e Qadim* [The Old Iranian Calendars] (Tehran: Ketabkhaneh-e Tehran, 1937).

Iranian women's travel.¹¹⁴⁶ Here it should be added that Taqizadeh's other close friends and colleagues, such as Qazvini, Jamalzadeh and Navab, also chose to marry European women. Little is documented about intercultural marriages of Iranians during that period, but interfaith marriages of European women would not have been without some difficulties. The circumstances of the War and the fact that Taqizadeh was a well-respected political figure who worked closely with the Germans would no doubt have helped make their marriage more acceptable.

The marriage of Taqizadeh and Edith took place in Berlin on October 1923.¹¹⁴⁷ In line with Islamic law, Edith's marriage gift was 100 Toman, which she certified she had received from Taqizadeh at the time of marriage.¹¹⁴⁸ This indicates that their marriage was carried out according to Islamic law. The fact that she also changed her name from Edith to Atiyeh (meaning 'gift' in Arabic) would suggest that she converted to Islam.¹¹⁴⁹ Mojtehedī quotes Taqizadeh's niece, Razeyyeh Ordoubadi, as commenting that Edith was proud of being a Muslim and revered the first Shia Imam Ali. While staying in Iran she apparently never missed an opportunity to visit the holy shrine in Qom. According to Mojtehedī, Razeyyeh had narrated that during a visit to Edith by some German ladies during Christmas, Edith had made it clear that now, as an Iranian, she celebrated Norouz and as a Muslim also other Islamic festivals.¹¹⁵⁰ However, Edith did not follow the Islamic dress code and did not cover her hair in public. In addition, as narrated by Taqizadeh's relative in Tabriz, she kept dogs which were considered unclean according to Islamic rules.

¹¹⁴⁶ Yahya Dolatabadi has made references to the difficulty of Iranian women travelling to Europe and the fact that respectable women could not travel unaccompanied.

¹¹⁴⁷ On 25 November 1923, Qazvini, in a letter to Mohammad Ali Foroughi, writes that after returning from Moscow Taqizadeh had married a German girl whom he previously knew in Berlin. From this reference we can date Taqizadeh's marriage as October 1923. Qazvini to Foroughi, 25 November 1923, in *Nameh-hay-e Mohammad Qazvini be Mohammad Ali Foroughi va Abbas Eqbal Ashtiyani*, eds. Iraj Afshar and Nader Motallebi (Tehran: Tahori, 1394), 82.

¹¹⁴⁸ Taqizadeh to Jamalzadeh, 4 August 1961, in *TINA*: 280000033.

¹¹⁴⁹ According to Homa Katouzian, upon marriage to Taqizadeh, Atiyeh became a naturalised Iranian citizen and converted to Islam. See: Homa Katouzian, *Iran: Politics, History and Literature* (New York: Routledge, 2013), 57.

¹¹⁵⁰ Mojtehedī, 356.

The couple were childless. Mojtehedī writes that Taqizadeh had asked to adopt his youngest sister's daughter but his sister had refused.¹¹⁵¹ Taqizadeh had a close relationship with the family of his wife and during the time Taqizadeh and his wife stayed in Iran, her family would come visit them in Iran.



Figure 19: Taqizadeh with his wife

What we can gather from Taqizadeh's correspondence is that, after his marriage, he was still living in Berlin and considering returning to Iran. He stood as a candidate in the elections for the Fifth Parliament. That is to say, at the time that Sardar Sepah was in power Taqizadeh was considered a political heavyweight and whether or not he should return to Iran was being considered and discussed in earnest by those of many different political persuasions. For example, a remaining letter from Abd al-Hossein Teymourash to Taqizadeh is one document which encourages him to return to Iran. Teymourash, a member of parliament in the Second Parliament, argued that the situation of Iran at that time necessitated Taqizadeh's return. He wanted Taqizadeh to return and establish a strong

¹¹⁵¹ Mojtehedī, 21.

party in Iran which would be an independent power against the increasing influence of the socialists who were inspired and supported by the Soviet regime in Iran.¹¹⁵²

In a letter to Taqizadeh, Foroughi, the Foreign Minister, who had not previously been very optimistic about Taqizadeh's return stated that, "Elections are taking place in Tehran. You will be amongst those elected. Of course, you should not refuse. But whether or not you should come back to Tehran, on that I cannot give my opinion".¹¹⁵³ He further explained that, although the situation was different from that of two years ago, it was important to wait and see who the other members of parliament were as he was not sure whether the current cabinet would remain in power. Foroughi, who had promised to find a job for Taqizadeh outside Iran had offered Taqizadeh the opportunity to go to Moscow, this time as the Iranian Chargé d'affaires. Despite thinking that Taqizadeh's time in Russia would not be so pleasant, he was of the opinion that since Taqizadeh had had previous experience in Russia, it would be better than the uncertain position in which he now found himself. He also suggested that having a stable job in Europe, though not perfect, was better than nothing. The decision to offer him the post in Russia came after consultation with Sardar Sepah, the Prime Minister. Foroughi's letter suggests that Taqizadeh considered this position to be beneath him and thus he refused it. Foroughi continued that he had sought to secure a job for him in the League of Nations but had been unsuccessful. Again, in response to Taqizadeh's inquiry about coming back to Iran, he mentions that he could not guarantee that it would be a good idea considering the political situation of the time and the fact that Taqizadeh might find himself in a parliament which was not as independent as he had hoped. His final advice to Taqizadeh was that if he was able to find a permanent position abroad, he should take that. He ended the letter by offering him a temporary unofficial position in Britain.

8:3 British Mission

With the coming to power in Britain of a Labour government formed by Ramsey McDonald there were hopes in Iran that Britain's policy towards Iran would become more

¹¹⁵² Sardar Mo'ezam Khorasani (Teymourash) to Taqizadeh, 4 November 1923 in *Nameh-hay-e Tehran*, ed., Afshar, 15-8.

¹¹⁵³ Mohammad Ali Foroughi to Taqizadeh, 8 June 1923 in *Nameh-hay-e Tehran*, ed., Afshar, 55.

amicable. According to a confidential British diplomatic record dated 28 March 1924, the Iranian Minister in London had informed the British government that he had received a telegram from Iran giving news of the appointment of Taqizadeh, who was at that time in Berlin, as the Iranian official delegate to the Wembley Exhibition. The telegram added that the task of Taqizadeh would be to “get into personal touch with the Prime Minister to endeavour to bring about relations between Great Britain and Persia.” The Iranian Minister in London was instructed to introduce Taqizadeh to the Secretary of State when he arrived in Britain. In his autobiography Taqizadeh mentions that after Reza Khan had become Prime Minister, he was suspicious of British intentions towards Iran. Reza Khan wished to send to London someone who would be capable of ascertaining Britain’s intentions towards Iran and one who could convince the recently elected Labour government in Britain to respect Iranian autonomy over its own affairs. Taqizadeh was deemed suitable for this mission as he maintained friendships with some Labour Party MPs. Foroughi, Foreign Minister at the time, sent a telegram informing Taqizadeh that he had been appointed to the mission and sent 1000 Lira to cover expenses. Taqizadeh accepted the mission and took Ali Soheyli, his personal assistant in Moscow, with him to Britain. Taqizadeh had no official title and this could explain his lack of success in his attempts to meet with the British high-ranking officials; a Foreign Ministry memorandum indicated that Taqizadeh’s mission should be discouraged and that there should be no non-British attendees at the Wembley Exhibition.¹¹⁵⁴

The British were well aware that Taqizadeh had been actively engaged with the Germans against the British and had more recently been involved in negotiating with the Russian government over customs tariffs and other issues. Taqizadeh’s intention was to meet the very highest-ranking British politicians. He wrote to Arthur Ponsonby, the then Deputy British Foreign Minister: “I would like, certainly, to have the honour of meeting the leading men of the present British Government and to have a conversation with them about the questions relating (*sic*) my country. In this respect I had an (*sic*) special desire to meet his Excellency the Prime Minister...”¹¹⁵⁵

¹¹⁵⁴ Memorandum by Mr. Churchill, 28 March 1924 in *TNA*: FO 371/10154.

¹¹⁵⁵ Taqizadeh to Ponsonby, 18 June 1924 in *TNA*: FO 371/10154.

Despite his best efforts, Taqizadeh managed only to meet a lower ranking British Foreign Ministry counsellor of the Eastern department, Lancelot Oliphant. Oliphant had previously worked in Iran as Third Secretary in Tehran between March 1909 and October 1911. Oliphant, in a memorandum, writes about his meeting with Taqizadeh:

Taki Zadeh [Taqizadeh], the Persian Nationalist, who before and during the war was violently anti-British, has been in this country for some weeks. He desired to see Mr. Ponsonby who, however, was too busy to receive him and requested him to come and see me. He paid a visit yesterday of an hour and a half and set forth his view at considerable length. He stated that he was about to return to Tehran to take his seat in the Majlis and remarked that he would be glad to know the gratitude of His Majesty's Government towards his country....¹¹⁵⁶

What Oliphant writes in the rest of his memorandum implies that Taqizadeh may have been concerned about a possible alliance of Russia and Britain against Iran, similar to what had happened in the past. Oliphant also writes that he “gave the other side of the medal” and put forward Britain's perspective. Britain, he commented, was aware of the “strong opposition in the Majlis to granting a concession to the Standard Oil Company so long as the Anglo Persian Oil Company were co-operating with them” which would discourage the British from developing “economic relations with Persians” as Taqizadeh was clearly pressing for.¹¹⁵⁷

Interestingly, Oliphant ends the memorandum by writing that Taqizadeh “may very likely play a big role in Persian politics in the future” and suggests that Taqizadeh's “influence in the Majlis” should be followed closely by the British.¹¹⁵⁸ Since Reza Shah controlled the Parliament with a strong hand, Taqizadeh's influence in the Parliament was not perhaps as significant as Oliphant and, indeed, Taqizadeh himself would have hoped for.

¹¹⁵⁶ Memorandum by Mr. Oliphant, 19 June 1924 in *Ibid.*

¹¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

It is notable that during this mission Taqizadeh again crossed paths with the English political activist and scholar Edward Browne who tried to help Taqizadeh by introducing him to British politicians, journalists and other influential people in Britain who might have been able to aid Taqizadeh in achieving his task. Browne also heavily edited and corrected the English version of the memorandum Taqizadeh had prepared to hand to the British officials which outlined the Iranian requests and Iran's expectations of Britain.¹¹⁵⁹

Unable to meet the British Prime Minister, Taqizadeh wrote a memorandum to British officials. Taqizadeh's goal, as expressed in the cover letter to the memorandum, was to obtain "a clear idea of the British policy in Persia as well as putting before the British statesmen the Persian point of view about the best means and ways to secure a good relationship and a sincere friendship between the two countries."¹¹⁶⁰ The 10-page memorandum was both frank in its criticism of British policy towards Iran and obsequious, requesting British government support for Iran and leniency in its financial demands towards the country. Taqizadeh, giving a brief history of the Anglo-Iranian relationship, pointed out that Iranians had had a positive image of the British until the 1907 agreement, when the British turned a blind eye to the Russian interventions in Iranian affairs. He requested that, like the Soviet regime, the British government also release Iran from the old concessions conceded by the previous Shahs, arguing that since these concessions had not been approved by the Iranian parliament, they were unconstitutional. The other issue Taqizadeh raised in the memorandum was the right of the Iranian government to build a railway which had been previously sabotaged by the Russians and the British. Taqizadeh also made clear his expectations that as part of the negotiations between the Russians and British, the interests of Iran would not be violated. A further issue he raised was the consular interference in the judicial affairs of Iran by stating that Great Britain was "retaining the primitive old system of foreign office courts, created a century ago by the humiliating Russo-Persian Treaty of 1828."¹¹⁶¹ It is clear from correspondence that Taqizadeh and his requests were not looked on favourably; he was described as "biased

¹¹⁵⁹ Browne to Taqizadeh, Cambridge, 24 April 1924 and June 1924, in *Nameh-hay-e Edward Browne be Taqizadeh*, eds., Zaryab and Afshar, 156-9 and 134-35.

¹¹⁶⁰ Taqizadeh to Ponsonby, 18 June 1924 in *TNA*: FO 371/10154

¹¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*

(sic) and ill informed” by a British diplomat who recorded his displeasure at Taqizadeh’s opinions and suggestions: “Taqizadeh’s memorandum follows the old familiar lines of criticism and shows I fear that the writer has learned very little during his long stay in Europe.”¹¹⁶² Taqizadeh writes that he did his utmost to negotiate with the British and convince them to assist Iran.

8:4 Return to Iran

A British diplomatic record dated as early as July 1920 reveals that the Iranian Prime Minister had invited some constitutionalists living abroad to return to Iran, among them Taqizadeh. It seems that the British were concerned about the return of Taqizadeh although the documents note that the German Minister in Tehran considered the return of Taqizadeh to Tehran “very desirable”. The British believed that Taqizadeh was invited back due to “the possible holding of new elections and impending meeting of Parliament” and this worried them. The British document adds that it was not desirable for Taqizadeh to work openly with the constitutionalists.¹¹⁶³

As mentioned, judging by remaining correspondence, Taqizadeh weighed up the pros and cons of returning to Iran. He hesitated because of the political situation there and sought advice from his friends about whether the situation was suitable for him to come back to Iran. Among his friends, Qazvini believed that the cessation of *Kaveh* and Taqizadeh’s return to politics would be disastrous. He noted that just a single issue of *Kaveh* was as valuable as all the years Taqizadeh had fought for the Constitution in Iran. He believed that if *Kaveh* was published for the next two or three years it would revolutionise the Iranian way of thinking and be a valuable weapon in the fight against superstition.¹¹⁶⁴

Taqizadeh was elected as a member of the Fifth Parliament with 4508 votes from Tehran.¹¹⁶⁵ This time he accepted the position of Member of Parliament and returned to

¹¹⁶² Diplomatic communication on Anglo-Persian Relations by Mr. Churchill, 20 June 1924 in *TNA: FO* 371/4921.

¹¹⁶³ To Mr. Norman, telegram, 30 July 1920 in *Ibid.*

¹¹⁶⁴ Qazvini to Taqizadeh, Paris, 11 July 1920 in *Nameh-hay-e Paris*, ed., Afshar, 41.

¹¹⁶⁵ Mojtehed, 202.

Iran via Russia, landing in Anzali on 20 August 1925.¹¹⁶⁶ Despite his long stay abroad, Taqizadeh had maintained his popularity in Iran. In Qazvin about 3000 people had come out of the city to welcome him.¹¹⁶⁷ Upon his return, Taqizadeh would be faced with a pressing issue. During this period Reza Khan's activities were aimed at enabling dynasty change, carrying out a campaign against Ahmad Shah who was in Europe. Reza Khan as Prime Minister and commander-in-chief had previously tried to topple the Qajars and establish a republic in Iran though this had not successful, mainly due to the opposition of the ulema. Reza Khan had interfered in the elections of the Fifth Parliament and having strong support, Reza Khan was expecting to be declared Shah. This is the situation Taqizadeh found as he set foot once again on Iranian soil. Taking up his seat in the Parliament, Taqizadeh found himself facing the important issue of dynasty change in Iran which required amendments to constitutional law. This was challenging for Taqizadeh as he believed this contravened the Constitution. He was clear in his opposition and suggested that better ways might be found. Although he was optimistic about Reza Khan's leadership and was content with the security that had now been established in the country, Taqizadeh may have sought to imply that a change of dynasty from Qajar to Pahlavi should be directed by a constituent assembly.¹¹⁶⁸

Taqizadeh has described this turn around in Iranian history in his autobiography.¹¹⁶⁹ His descriptions shed more light on the intentions of Reza Khan and Taqizadeh's own reaction towards those intentions. According to Taqizadeh, following his return to Tehran he had formed a close relationship with Mostufi al-Mamalek, Moshir al-Dowleh (Mirza Hassan Pirnia), Mosaddeq al-Saltaneh (later known as Doctor Mosaddeq) and Hossein 'Ala. As Taqizadeh states, Reza Khan had shown interest in co-operating with well-reputed people. Through the mediation of Haji Rahim Qazvini, a business man, the above-mentioned people together with Mokhber al-Saltaneh and Yahya Dolatabadi held weekly meetings with Reza Khan at Reza Khan's residence. According to Taqizadeh, the gist of Reza Khan's

¹¹⁶⁶ Taqizadeh, *Tufani*, 173.

¹¹⁶⁷ Baqer Shahrودي, "Be Monasebat-e Chahelomin Ruz-e Vafat-e Seyyed Hassan Taqizadeh [On the Occasion of Fortieth day of Taqizadeh's Death]," in *Yadnameh*, ed., Yaghmaei, 30.

¹¹⁶⁸ Mojtehed, 205.

¹¹⁶⁹ Taqizadeh, *Tufani*, 172-80.

demand was that he had worked hard to form an organised army and if his power was not guaranteed in his post, at any moment the Shah, by law, had the power to depose him. Reza Khan wanted reassurance that this would not happen. Taqizadeh mentions that numerous discussions were held about how to find a legal way to secure Reza Khan's position.¹¹⁷⁰

These discussions resulted in an official recommendation to the Parliament to secure the post of Reza Khan and his control over the armed forces. But Reza Khan, according to Taqizadeh, was still suspicious of the Crown Prince, Mohammad Hassan Mirza. Reza Khan gained more influence among the Members of Parliament and considered deposing Ahmad Shah. He eventually succeeded in doing so by bribing and threatening many of the parliament members, resulting in the official vote of 31, 1925. On that day the Fifth Parliament voted for the removal of Ahmad Shah and his power then passed to Reza Khan. Later a constituent assembly was formed, and Reza Khan was declared the new Shah. Taqizadeh was not a member of that assembly.

Only a few Members of Parliament opposed this move: Mostufi al-Mamalek, Moshir al-Dowleh, Hossein 'Ala, Mosaddeq al-Saltaneh and Taqizadeh himself. As Taqizadeh writes, Dolatabadi, for the most part, was in favour. On the day of the voting, 31 October, this group discussed their opposition. Taqizadeh was the first to give his opinions and express that the change of dynasty was unconstitutional. Taqizadeh's speech was brief and carefully worded. He considered the matter a crisis and suggested that a solution to this crisis should be well-measured and not rushed. He implied that haste could be interpreted as "pressure" from Reza Khan on the Parliament to proclaim him Shah. Taqizadeh knew that deep down the majority of Members of Parliament were against the idea of changing the dynasty but had accepted it under duress.¹¹⁷¹ Taqizadeh expressed his gratitude for the security that Reza Khan, as Prime Minister and commander of the armed forces, had established in the country. Taqizadeh highlighted his position as someone who was eager to protect the good of the country and Reza Khan. Taqizadeh also referred to the fact that he had been warned by other members against revealing his opposition to the Parliament

¹¹⁷⁰ Ibid., 174.

¹¹⁷¹ Ibid., 175.

as this could endanger his life. This highlights the absolute power of Reza Khan. Taqizadeh said that he loved Reza Khan more than himself but was at pains to express his opinion that it was not in Reza Khan's best interest to become Shah. Taqizadeh's suggestion is that the matter should be referred to a commission and that, in that way, a better and more lawful solution would be found. And at the end of his speech he again expressed his opinion that he considered the act to be against the constitution and therefore unlawful and against the good of the country. Taqizadeh immediately left the Parliament once his speech had been delivered.¹¹⁷²

What is clear from this speech is that despite his insecure position and his need for a job and income, Taqizadeh, as one of the veterans of the Parliament and someone who had worked towards the Constitution and who had been involved in preparing the draft of the supplementary law of the Constitution, was adamant that the law should be respected and staunchly defended the position of the Parliament as an independent establishment. He knew that this act would be a strong blow to the Constitution. On the other hand, however, Taqizadeh saw Ahmad Shah, despite his weakness as Shah, as someone who would respect the Constitution and did not want power to be in the hands of a sole individual.

Following Taqizadeh's speech, other members similarly put forward their points and left. After that neither Taqizadeh nor Mosaddeq or Moshir al-Dowleh attended the parliamentary sessions and were absent for about two months. The sitting of the Fifth Parliament was about to end. The group was faced with the question of whether they should continue attending parliamentary sessions or not. Taqizadeh and 'Ala decided to continue attending and Moshir al-Dowleh followed their lead. Mosaddeq was opposed to this and insisted that no-one should attend. Mosaddeq, who knew Taqizadeh and 'Ala were financially in a weak position which meant attending parliament would secure them some income, offered to pay their salaries if they did not continue to attend the Parliament. 'Ala and Taqizadeh resented his offer, refused it and thus continued attending the parliamentary sessions of the Fifth Parliament. They were later elected to the Sixth Parliament.¹¹⁷³

¹¹⁷² Proceedings of the Fifth Parliament, Session 211, 31 October, 1925.

¹¹⁷³ Taqizadeh, *Tufani*, 202-5.

The change of dynasty could be considered as one of the key events in the history of modern Iran. The shift from Qajar to Pahlavi rule was exceptional. Dynastic changes in Iran had usually taken place as a result of the rising up of a tribal chief or military commander and thereby the removal of the current ruler. Here, however, a new dynasty took charge without violence or bloodshed but for the first time through the Parliament. After Taqizadeh's return to Iran and his acceptance of the post of Member of Parliament, Taqizadeh was no longer the revolutionary fiery young man. He had become a mature politician who sided with neither the minority nor the majority, but was, in fact, an independent.¹¹⁷⁴

¹¹⁷⁴ *Yadnameh*, ed., Yaghmaei, 168.