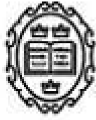

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Source: *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 88, No. 3 (Jun., 1983), pp. 579-598
Published by: Oxford University Press on behalf of the American Historical Association
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Iranian Revolutions in Comparative Perspective

NIKKI R. KEDDIE

THE IRANIAN REVOLUTION of 1978–79 shocked the world and set in motion a search for causes. Most of the resulting analyses tend to locate the origins of the revolution in the errors of the shah and of various Americans, although some scholarly works assay socioeconomic explanations for the upheaval. Enough time has now passed to permit a greater range of investigations, and one written from the comparative perspective ought to be revealing. This essay will venture two types of comparison: (1) internal—comparison, on a few significant points, with other Iranian rebellions and revolutionary movements since 1890—and (2) external—comparison, more briefly, with other great world revolutions, employing theories of revolution that seem to fit the Iranian case. Both are difficult and tentative exercises, because Iran's "Islamic revolution" appears to bear little ideological resemblance to revolutions in the West or to Iran's "constitutional revolution" of 1905–11.

Western revolutions have tended, especially in their radical phase, to shift to the left and move toward secularism; even if religious ideology was dominant, as in the English Civil War of the 1640s, it was not fundamentalist, nor was it proclaimed by the leaders of the existing religious structure. In the Islamic revolution, however, much of the leadership came from the orthodox clergy, who propounded a return to Islamic fundamentalism.[1] Even recent socioeconomic theories of revolution, which tend to stress the role of the the peasantry (probably because of the partial example of Russia and the clearer ones of China and other Third World countries), do not apply to either Iranian revolution; a peasantry living mainly on arid or semi-arid land, dependent on landlords or others for irrigation, and unprotected by forest or mountain shelter for guerilla warfare seems to produce neither the middle peasantry nor the close associations needed to organize politically. By contrast, the supposed impermeability of modern cities to successful mass revolution, especially in the absence of peasant support, was disproved in both Iranian revolutions; the

Earlier versions of this paper were delivered in 1981 at the University of California, Irvine, Seminar on Social History and Theory and at the Conference on Islam and Social Movements, University of California, Berkeley. Thanks are due to Ira Lapidus, Edmund Burke, and Gene R. Garthwaite for suggesting revisions to the manuscript and to Eric Hooglund, Andrew Newman, and the editors and staff of the *American Historical Review* for their help in preparing it for publication.

[1] Fundamentalism is here used for movements calling for a return to scriptural religion. Fundamentalist movements are mostly nineteenth- and twentieth-century phenomena, and none of them aims at or achieves a true re-creation of the religious past.

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cities were vulnerable in 1905–11 largely because the shah had no significant military force and in 1978–79 owing not only to the shah's miscalculations but also to the amazing unanimity and organization of the urban population against him.

Iranians, who in peaceable periods seem eager to please and loath to disagree openly with the powerful, whether in the home or with political superiors, have in the last ninety years engaged in an unusual number of large-scale popular revolts and revolutions. With the exception of several northern provincial revolts after World War I and the large demonstrations against the shah in the early 1960s, all of these rebellions spread to Iran's major cities, and some encompassed tribal areas as well. Indeed, Iran stands in the forefront of rebellious and revolutionary countries in the twentieth century—unmatched, to my knowledge, in the Muslim, Hindu, or Western world for the number and depth of its movements; only China, Vietnam, and possibly Russia provide competition.

This claim may be unexpected to some, not only because modern Iranian history is not generally known but also because Iran's two major twentieth-century revolutions, and especially the second, appear so aberrant. They do not fit very closely widespread ideas of what modern revolutions should be like. Yet there is no doubt that the Islamic revolution in 1978–79 provided a thoroughgoing overthrow of the old political, social, and ideological order, although what will replace it is not yet clear. And the constitutional upheaval of 1905–11 was massive enough in participation and important enough in altering the political system to deserve the name "revolution." Several movements that were not revolutions contained revolutionary elements. The mass rebellion against a British tobacco concession in 1890–92, the reformist-autonomist revolts in the provinces of Gilan, Azerbaijan, and Khorasan after World War I, the rebellions in Azerbaijan and Kurdistan after World War II, the mass-supported oil nationalization movement under Mosaddeq that ruled the country from 1951 to 1953, and the popular antigovernment demonstrations of the early 1960s all involved, to a greater or lesser extent, efforts to throw off foreign control over the Iranian economy and to build an independent society and state.

To attempt anything more than superficial comparisons among Iran's rebellions, not to mention comparisons between some of these upheavals and revolts in other Muslim and non-Muslim countries, requires locating the various Iranian movements of the last century within the framework of modern Iranian history. Under the Qajar dynasty (1796–1925), Iran was increasingly subject to Western economic penetration and domination, particularly by Great Britain and Russia. As in many Third World countries, Western powers exacted from Iran treaties that limited customs duties to 5 percent, thus virtually creating a free trade area for Western imports, which often undersold Iranian handicrafts. Although Oriental carpets began to be a significant export around 1875, it is unlikely that the rise in carpet exports compensated for the fall in production of other crafts and the consequent discontent and displacement of their artisans.

In the same period the decrease in Iran's handicraft exports was partially offset

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by rising raw material and agricultural exports, particularly opium, cotton, and fruits and nuts. The commercialization of agriculture and carpets, which continued in the Pahlavi period (1925–79), increased economic stratification between the owners of land, water, or workshops and those who worked for them. Whether there was general immiseration or an increase in prosperity is a question on which scholars of the Qajar period have disagreed.[2] But the increase in stratification and the peasants' increased vulnerability to famine, owing to their dependence on land planted in cash crops like opium that were subject to bad market years, brought new sources of discontent to the peasantry, just as the displacement of craftsmen contributed to the grievances of middle-level urban residents. Iran did, however, have an advantage over countries like Egypt and Turkey, which had a much larger trade with Europe and far more European residents, in that the native Iranian bazaar structure remained largely intact. And wealthy import-export and local merchants and moneylenders proved important in every Iranian revolution.

The Qajars did much less than the Middle Eastern rulers of, for example, Turkey, Egypt, and Tunisia in trying to strengthen the central government and the army in order to resist further encroachments either by Western powers or by their own neighbors. Turkey saw a long series of efforts, beginning in the eighteenth century, to strengthen both its military and its technical and educational support structure; the first stage of those efforts culminated in the reforms of Sultan Mahmud in the 1820s and 1830s. And Egypt under Muhammad Ali saw even more significant transformations until Western powers limited both the economic independence and military strength of the Egyptian government in the 1840s. Iran had no parallel developments. Largely abortive reforms under Crown Prince Abbas Mirza (d. 1833) and chief ministers Amir Kabir (d. 1851) and Mirza Hosain Khan (d. 1881) left Iran without a modernized army, bureaucracy, and educational

[2] Gad G. Gilbar has noted that in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries grain production fell greatly, so that wheat and barley changed from export to import commodities. The consequent rise in the price of foodstuffs resulted in bread riots, often led by clerics, and demands that grain exports be discontinued. Large-scale merchants encouraged transferring production from grain and cotton to opium, which according to Gilbar improved the welfare of almost all groups engaged in opium production and marketing. Gilbar, "Persian Agriculture in the Late Qajar Period, 1860–1906: Some Economic and Social Aspects," *Asian and African Studies*, 12 (1978): 321–65. Roger T. Olson's more detailed study of opium growing and sale indicates that opium production aided the better off but subjected poorer peasants and townspeople to large price fluctuations in agricultural staples and, occasionally, to famine. Emphasis on opium clearly increased social and economic stratification. Olson, "Persian Gulf Trade and the Agricultural Economy of Southern Iran in the Nineteenth Century," in Michael E. Bonine and Nikki R. Keddie, eds., *Modern Iran: The Dialectics of Continuity and Change* (Albany, N.Y., 1981), 173–89. Claiming "a certain improvement in the standard of living of the peasants," Gilbar stated, "First, there are various pieces of evidence to show that peasants in many areas had a more diversified daily diet, consuming commodities which they could hardly have afforded before. Sugar, tea, tobacco, and opium are perhaps the best examples of articles which peasants consumed in large quantities in the late 19th century." There are problems with Gilbar's analysis. Not only has he presented evidence for four commodities that are unhealthful and should not be cited as proof of a "more diversified daily diet," but he has also failed to note that these four items quite likely replaced nutritious ones that, by his own evidence, were becoming expensive. The experience of most modern countries suggests that a kind of dietary Gresham's Law works to supplant fruits, vegetables, and meat when less nutritious and less costly products become available, and British documents as well as travel literature support the contention that the experience of modern Iran proves no exception. Some of Gilbar's other points are more convincing, but the argument is far from settled, and Willem M. Floor, in a paper at a 1981 conference at Harvard on the Iranian revolution of 1905–11, argued for the general immiseration of Iranians in the prerevolutionary period. For my arguments and conclusions, see Nikki R. Keddie, *Roots of Revolution: An Interpretive History of Modern Iran* (New Haven, 1981), esp. 54–57.

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system. The small Russian-officered Cossack Brigade, founded in 1879, remained the Qajars' only modern military force.

This lack of change is not altogether surprising. Iran had much less contact with the West than did Middle Eastern countries bordering on the Mediterranean and had a very arid terrain with a scattered population. As a result, the country was very difficult to subject to centralized control. Other countries in similar circumstances—Afghanistan and Morocco, for example—also saw relatively little centralization or modernization in the nineteenth century. The shahs had to permit considerable devolution of power to groups not totally tied to the center. Among these were nomadic tribes (often organized into confederations for the main purpose of dealing with the authorities), whose mobility, mastery of gunfighting on horseback, separate languages and cultures, and geographical location (frequently near the borders) made them semi-autonomous units. Their ties to the government were frequently limited to annual payments or to cavalry duties in case of war. Even some local governors or mayors had considerable authority, although the central government exercised increasing control over them, especially under Naser ed-Din Shah (1848–96).[3]

The lack of centralization in Iran was also dependent on the increasing power and pretensions of the Shi'i ulama. By the early nineteenth century, after a long prior evolution, the *usuli* or *mujtahidi* school of ulama won out over the rival *akhbari* school. The latter claimed that individual believers could themselves understand the Quran and the Traditions (*akhbar*) of the Prophet and the Imams and did not need to follow the guidance of mujtahids, who claimed the right of *ijtihad* ("effort to ascertain correct doctrine"). The usulis, in contrast, claimed that, although the bases of belief were laid down in the Quran and the Traditions, learned mujtahids were still needed to interpret doctrine for the faithful. As usuli doctrine developed, particularly under Mortaza Ansari, the chief *marja'-e taqlid* ("source of imitation") of the mid-nineteenth century, every believer was required to follow the rulings of a living mujtahid, and, whenever there was a single chief mujtahid, his rulings took precedence over all others.[4] The usuli ulama have a stronger doctrinal position than do the Sunni ulama. While not infallible, mujtahids are qualified to interpret the will of the infallible twelfth, Hidden Imam.

In addition to doctrinal power, which extended to politics as well as religion and law, the Iranian Shi'i ulama had economic and social power that similarly exceeded that of the ulama in most Sunni countries. Shi'i ulama, unlike most Sunni ulama, directly collected and dispersed the *zakat* and *khums* taxes, and they also had huge *vaqf* mortmains as well as personal properties, controlled most of the dispensing of justice, were the primary educators, oversaw social welfare, and were frequently courted and even paid by rulers. Although most of the ulama were often on good

[3] See Gene R. Garthwaite, *Khans and Shahs: The Bakhtiari in Iran* (Cambridge, 1983), and "Khans and Kings: The Dialectics of Power in Bakhtiari History," in Bonine and Keddie, *Modern Iran*, 159–72; Willem M. Floor, "The Political Role of the Lutis in Iran," *ibid.*, 83–95; Ervand Abrahamian, *Iran between Two Revolutions* (Princeton, 1982); John Malcolm, *The History of Persia*, 2 (London, 1815); and Keddie, *Roots of Revolution*, chaps. 2–3. For additional information, see the numerous anthropological articles on Iranian nomads.

[4] Especially see Juan R. Cole, "Imami Jurisprudence and the Role of the Ulama: Mortaza Ansari on Emulating the Supreme Exemplar," in Nikki R. Keddie, ed., *Religion and Politics in Iran* (New Haven, 1983), 33–46; and Mortaza Ansari, *Sirat an-Najat* (n.p. [Iran], A.H. 1300 [1883]).

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terms with the crown, they resisted Qajar encroachments on their power, whereas in most Sunni states the ulama became more and more subordinate to the government. Some of the Iranian ulama worked for the state, but as the nineteenth century progressed conflicts between important ulama and the secular authorities increased.

The relative independence of the ulama facilitated their alliance with the bazaar—a term used to designate those engaged in largely traditional, urban, small-scale production, banking, and trade—and its artisans, merchants, and moneylenders. The bazaar has long been the economic, social, and religious center of towns and cities, and even in recent times has encompassed a large population and share of the economy. As early as the 1830s bazaaris complained to the government about the large-scale importation of foreign manufactures, which undermined their own production and trade. Given the long-term trade treaties limiting Iranian tariffs, there was little the government could do, short of risking war with the Western powers, even if Iranian rulers had been more energetic.

Regardless, then, of whether certain individuals or groups were better or worse off as the result of the Western impact on Iran, including British and Russian protection of Qajar rule, various groups in society had reason to be actively discontented with the Qajars and with Western incursions. Those craftsmen who were displaced had clear grievances, and many of them petitioned the government for redress. Even those merchants who prospered, however, saw that Western merchants received favored treatment—Westerners were exempt, for example, from road and municipal taxes that Iranian merchants had to pay. And the ulama were opposed to the limited steps the Qajars took toward Western education—missionaries were allowed, for instance, to teach Christians in Iran. The ulama also objected to steps toward reform and to concessions granted to Westerners. Except in the densely populated areas of heavy rainfall, like Gilan and Mazenderan on the Caspian, however, peasants were generally too scattered and too subject to landlord control of land and water to organize or coordinate movements of discontent, although those who migrated and became urban subproletarians were willing participants in urban-based rebellions, not only in the Qajar period but also, and to a greater extent, in the revolution of 1978–79.[5]

[5] Especially see Eric Hooglund, "Rural Participation in the Revolution," *Middle East Research and Information Project Reports*, 87 (1980): 3–6; and Mary Hooglund, "One Village in the Revolution," *ibid.*, 7–12. Ervand Abrahamian and Farhad Kazemi in a seminal article have stressed what I see as partly derivative features of the Iranian peasantry in explaining its generally nonrevolutionary character—namely, the absence of significant outside market ties and of a substantial middle peasantry, which has elsewhere been found crucial in leading peasant revolts; Abrahamian and Kazemi, "The Non-Revolutionary Peasantry in Modern Iran," *Iranian Studies*, 11 (1978): 259–304. The authors have understated, though less than many social and comparative historians, the roles of geography, technology, and ecology. The arid climate of most of Iran has meant that its peasants have always been less densely settled and, hence, more difficult to organize; they have been, as the authors have noted, more than usually dependent on relatively expensive underground irrigation systems that easily came under landlord control. Tribal khans' dominance over peasants may also have decreased peasant revolutionary potential. Local peasant rebellions have been frequent but could not spread, given scattered villages and strong local power. The densely populated, productive, and organized lands of China, for example, were conducive to a far more organized and organizable, and frequently rebellious, peasantry. A strong middle peasantry has largely been due to such an environment. This argument based on environment is supported by Iran's own experience; Iran's most revolutionary peasants are found in the high-rainfall, densely settled, rice-growing province of Gilan, as the authors discussed, though with less stress on ecology. Abrahamian and Kazemi have covered all of the important questions, but I would emphasize more the ecological base of the issue.

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Among the discontented in the nineteenth century was also a small but growing group of intellectuals, many of whom had mercantile or government positions, who learned of Western ways. Frequently their knowledge of the West was obtained second hand, by travel to India, Istanbul, or Egypt or by temporary migration to Russian Transcaucasia. Hundreds of thousands of Iranians, mostly workers, settled semi-permanently in the Transcaucasus, which also supported a few Iranian intellectuals. Several educated Iranians, most notably Mirza Malkum Khan and Sayyed Jamal ed-Din "al-Afghani," also traveled as far as France and England. Those who went abroad were generally struck by Western economic development, comparative justice, and lack of arbitrary rule; their manuscript writings contain praise of Western ways and criticism of Iran's autocratic rulers, petty officials, venal clerics, and arbitrary courts, and of the low status of women.[6]

To a large degree, the recurring alliance between the bazaaris and many of the ulama on the one hand and secularized liberals and radicals on the other has been based on the existence of common enemies—the dynasty and its foreign supporters—rather than on any real agreement about goals. The ulama wanted to extend their own power and to have Shi'i Islam more strictly enforced; the liberals and radicals looked for greater political and social democracy and economic development; and the bazaaris wanted to restrict favored foreign economic status and competition. The alliance formed by many of the ulama, the bazaaris, and a few secular intellectuals first showed its power following the issuance of a tobacco concession in 1890; Iran granted to a British subject a full monopoly on the purchase, sale, and export of all tobacco grown in Iran. Not only did this follow a whole series of concessions to Europeans, but it also covered a widely grown, exported, and profitable crop rather than previously unexploited products, like most minerals. Thus, growers and merchants became aroused by the threat to their livelihood as well as by nationalistic fervor. Active and often massive protests in most of Iran's cities in 1891, largely led by ulama in partnership with bazaaris (and with some Russian behind-the-scenes encouragement), culminated in a successful boycott of tobacco dealing and smoking (as against the will of the Hidden Imam). The shah was forced to cancel the tobacco monopoly in early 1892.[7]

The tobacco rebellion of 1890–92 shared with later revolutionary and rebellious movements a substantial anti-imperialist and antiforeign component. Although this component is also found in most of the world's colonies and dependencies, anti-imperialism seems to have been stronger and to have resulted in more mass rebellions and revolutions in Iran than in other Middle Eastern countries, with the possible exception of Afghanistan. Despite the lesser degree of direct control that

[6] Especially see Hamid Algar, *Mirza Malkum Khan* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1973); Nikki R. Keddie, *Sayyid Jamal ad-Din "al-Afghani"* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1972); and Mangol Bayat, *Mysticism and Dissent: Socioreligious Thought in Qajar Iran* (Syracuse, N.Y., 1982). Among the important primary works and analyses of Qajar reformers in Persian are Fereidun Adamiyyat, *Fekr-e Azadi* (Tehran, A.H. 1340 [1961]); Mirza Aqa Khan Kermani *et al.*, *Hasht Behesht* (n.p., n.d.); Nazem al-Islam Kermani, *Tarikh-e bidari-ye Iranian* (Tehran, A.H. 1332 [1953]); Ibrahim Safa'i, *Rahbaran-e Mashruteh* (Tehran, A.H. 1344 [1965–66]; Sefatallah Jamali Asadabadi, ed., *Maqalat-e Jamaliyyeh* (Tehran, A.H. 1312 [1933–34]); Iraj Afshar and Asghar Mahdavi, *Majmu'eh-ye asnad va madarek-e chap nashodeh dar bareh-ye Sayyed Jamal ad-Din mashhur be Afghani* (Tehran, 1963); and Mohammad Mohit Tabataba'i, *Majmu'eh-ye asar-e Mirza Malkum Khan* (Tehran, A.H. 1327 [1948–49]).

[7] Nikki R. Keddie, *Religion and Rebellion in Iran: The Tobacco Protest of 1891–1892* (London, 1966), and the Persian, French, Russian, and English sources cited therein.

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foreigners in Iran have had in comparison with those in many other countries of the Middle East and North Africa, Iranians, along with Afghans and a few others, have been more resistant to foreign domination than have most other peoples. Resistance has often been less obvious or militant in Iran than it has in Afghanistan, since in Iran periods of external accommodation to foreigners have alternated with periods of active rebellion. But Iranian antiforeign feeling has always been strong.

Among the territories subjugated in the original wave of Muslim conquest, Iran was the only large area that retained its own language and a great deal of its old culture, albeit considerably modified by Islam. Iran's state religion since 1501, Shi'i Islam appears to have been even more resistant to foreign influences than Sunni Islam. (If the comparison is extended further, both main branches of Islam seem to have been more resistant to Westernization than have the dominant religions and traditions of non-Muslim Asia and Africa; thus Iranian Shi'i Islam may be the most resistant of all non-European religions to European culture.) Part of Shi'i Islam's strength in this regard lies in its insistence on ritual purity—including prohibiting physical contact with nonbelievers, preventing nonbelievers from entering mosques and shrines, and the like. Throughout the nineteenth century certainly, and for many Iranians much longer than that, the growing economic, political, and ideological influence of Westerners was perceived largely as the usurpation of the rights of believers. Economic, political, and religious resentments were thus intertwined, although different groups tended to stress different types of grievances. Governments seen as complaisant to foreign unbelievers were considered almost as culpable as the foreigners themselves. Not just in 1891 but in the constitutional revolution of 1905–11, the oil nationalization of 1951–53 under Mosaddeq, the demonstrations of 1963 around Khomeini, and the revolution of 1978–79 Iranians held their government responsible for Western depredations.[8] A similar theme has certainly been sounded elsewhere, most notably among the Muslim Brethern and other Muslim militant groups in Egypt, Pakistan, and the Arab East, but in Iran the question of government accountability has attracted a wider and more revolutionary following. Attacks on any regime that permitted Western involvement in Iran have been strongly voiced by respected representatives of the orthodox ulama and the bazaar, which partly accounts for Iranian fervor. The strength of Iranian revulsion to foreign influence also arose from the long-held belief that Western nonbelievers were out to undermine Iran and Islam, and Shi'i Islam's encouragement of self-sacrifice to combat enemies has certainly added to resistance to foreigners based on exploitation and domination. For many, Shi'ism and nationalism were part of a single blend.

THE TWO TWENTIETH-CENTURY IRANIAN MOVEMENTS that clearly merit the title "revolution"—the "constitutional" revolution of 1905–11 and the "Islamic" revolution of 1978–79—demonstrate the importance of this Iranian outlook. In part, the events preceding the first Iranian revolution in this century were merely a continuation and intensification of the tobacco rebellion of the 1890s. The

[8] Richard W. Cottam, *Nationalism in Iran* (2d edn., Pittsburgh, 1979); and Keddie, *Roots of Revolution.*

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economic and political power of Britain and Russia grew rapidly after 1892. The tobacco "victory" saddled Iran with a £500,000 payment to the British tobacco company in compensation for its lost monopoly. On May 1, 1896, Mirza Reza Kermani, instigated by the antishah, pan-Islamic activities of Sayyed Jamal ed-Din "al-Afghani" and his Iranian and Shi'i circle in Istanbul, assassinated Naser ed-Din Shah. The shah's weak successor squandered far more money on courtiers and extravagant trips abroad than had his father. The son obtained the necessary monies from two Russian loans, granted on the basis of further Russian economic concessions. The British, not to be outdistanced by Russia in the race for profit in the Middle East, retaliated by requiring further concessions, chiefly the D'Arcy oil concession, which resulted in the first significant exploitation of Middle Eastern oil (following its discovery in 1908).

The Russo-Japanese War of 1904–05 and the Russian revolution of 1905 gave impetus to an Iranian opposition movement that had been growing since 1901. After a century of successive defeats, an Asian power had defeated a European power, an event that bolstered pride throughout Asia. This feeling was particularly strong in those countries, like Iran, that had experienced Russian penetration and oppression. Many considered it significant that the only Asian power with a constitution had defeated the only Western power without one, and constitutions came to be looked upon as the "secret of strength" of Western governments. In Iran, as in a number of Asian countries, treatises explaining constitutions and their virtues began to circulate, and news of Japanese victories was happily and rapidly spread. The Russian revolution demonstrated the possibility, at least in its first stage, of a mass revolt weakening a despotic monarchy and forcing it to adopt a constitution. Both the Russo-Japanese War and the Russian revolution also effectively, if temporarily, took Russia out of Iranian internal politics, an important consideration to those who expected Russia to intervene if the power of the Qajars was threatened or weakened.[9]

The constitutional revolution began late in 1905, when respected sugar merchants raised the price of the commodity in the face of rising international prices. The merchants were bastinadoed, and a rebellion broke out in the streets. When some of the ulama took sanctuary (*bast*), the shah promised a "house of justice" and other concessions. But the promise was not fulfilled, and a new rebellion broke out in 1906, highlighted by a new ulama *bast* in Qom and a *bast* by roughly twelve thousand bazaaris at the British legation. The crown then promised to accept a constitution, and a parliament was soon elected. The constitution of 1906–07 was modeled on the Belgian constitution, with one major exception. The Iranian constitution provided for a committee of five or more mujtahids to pass on the compatibility of all laws with the Islamic *sharia*, although this provision was never enforced. The framers intended real power to reside in the parliament and its ministers, rather than in the crown, but parliament was rarely able to wrest power from the shah.

[9] The change in Iranian attitudes at this time is clear in documents pertaining to Iran in the British Foreign Office. Also see Nikki R. Keddie, "Religion and Irreligion in Early Iranian Nationalism," in Keddie, ed., *Iran: Religion, Politics, and Society* (London, 1980), 13–52.

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The revolution became stormy and violent when a new shah, Mohammad Ali, closed parliament by a coup in 1908. Revolutionary guerrillas (*fedayin* and *mojahedin*) held out against the crown, first in Tabriz and later in Gilan, and then marched south to take Tehran along with Bakhtiari tribesmen moving up from the south. The second constitutional period saw a split between the moderate party, led by clerics, and the democrats, who had a program of agrarian and social reform. But the British and the Russians provided the revolution's *coup de grâce* in late 1911. The Russians presented an ultimatum demanding, among other things, that the Iranians get rid of their pronationalist American adviser, Morgan Shuster. The British, who had signed an entente with Russia in 1907, went along with the Russian demands, Russian and British troops moved in during 1911–12, and parliament was closed.[10]

Although parliament passed some social, judicial, and educational reform measures, the revolution was chiefly political, aimed at reducing monarchical and foreign power through the introduction of a Western-style constitution and parliament. This instrument and this body were seen as the best means to limit Iranian autocracy. Some of the revolution's participants expected Iran and its people to be able to return to more Islamic ways (like the barber who said he would shave no more beards, now that Iran had a constitution, since shaving was non-Islamic), while a smaller number hoped to become more Western, if only to be strong enough to escape Western control. In this revolution, unlike that of 1978–79, ulama leaders did not adopt a new political ideology. Those who supported the revolution were content to occupy a high proportion of the positions in parliament and to have a veto over legislation. One of the ulama wrote a treatise defending constitutionalism as the best government possible in the absence of the Hidden Imam, but there is no evidence that it was widely read.[11] Many of the ulama accepted the constitution as a means both to limit the shah's power and to increase their own; some became disillusioned by secularist laws and trends and quit oppositional politics.

Just as the revolution of 1905–11 followed smaller "rehearsals"—the movement against the all-encompassing concession to Baron Julius de Reuter in 1872 and the tobacco protest of 1891—so the revolution of 1978–79 built on resentments and organizations that surfaced in earlier protests and movements. The immediate

[10] The Persian literature on this revolution is enormous. It includes invaluable classics by Nazem al-Islam Kermani, Ahmad Kasravi, Mehdi Malekzadeh, and Sayyed Hasan Taqizadeh as well as major background works by Fereidun Adamiyyat and Homa Nateq. For the main books in English, see Edward G. Browne, *The Persian Revolution of 1905–1909* (Cambridge, 1910); and Robert A. McDaniel, *The Shuster Mission and the Persian Constitutional Revolution* (Minneapolis, 1974). Other Persian works I have found useful in studying the constitutional revolution include Amin ad-Dauleh, *Khaterat-e siyasi*, ed. Hafez Farman-Farmaiyan (Tehran, 1962); Abolhasan Bozorgomid, *Az mast ke bar mast* (n.p., n.d.); "Haidar Khan Amu Oghli," *Yadgar* 3 (A.H. 1325 [1946–47]): 61–80; and Mehdi Qoli Hedayat Mokhber as-Saltaneh, *Khaterat va khaterat* (Tehran, A.H. 1329 [1950–51]).

[11] The defense of constitutionalism was written in 1909 by Ayatollah Na'ini. Although it is discussed by H. Algar, among others, I have seen no Persian or Western books that refer to it before its republication with an introduction by Ayatollah Taleqani in 1955; see Algar, "The Oppositional Role of the Ulama in Twentieth-Century Iran," in Nikki R. Keddie, ed., *Scholars, Saints, and Sufis* (Berkely and Los Angeles, 1972). Na'ini apparently withdrew the book from circulation shortly after its publication; see Abdul Hadi Hairi, *Shi'ism and Constitutionalism in Iran* (Leiden, 1977), 124, 158.

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post–World War II period was marked by the rise of leftist organizations, especially the Tudeh party, whose many strikes included a general strike in the oil fields, and of autonomist movements in Azerbaijan and Kurdistan, which expressed in considerable part genuine local sentiment. Then came the oil nationalization movement, which demonstrated deep anti-imperialist feeling and culminated in the nationalization of oil in 1951 and the two-year prime ministership of Mosaddeq. He was overthrown with the aid of the United States and Great Britain. Last in the series was the economic and political crisis of 1960–64, highlighted by demonstrations in 1963 that resulted in many deaths and brought about the exile of the religious leader of the movement, Ayatollah Khomeini, in 1964.

Pahlavi rule reversed the Qajars' policies on modernization and the development of the military, and after 1925 Iran was subjected to accelerated modernization, secularization, and centralization. Especially after 1961, the crown encouraged the rapid growth of consumer-goods industries, pushed the acquisition of armaments even beyond what Iran's growing oil-rich budgets could stand, and instituted agrarian reforms that emphasized government control and investment in large, mechanized farms. Displaced peasants and tribespeople fled to the cities, where they formed a discontented subproletariat. People were torn from ancestral ways, the gap between the rich and the poor grew, corruption was rampant and well known, and the secret police, with its arbitrary arrests and use of torture, turned Iranians of all levels against the regime. And the presence and heavy influence of foreigners provided major, further aggravation.

Ironically, the OPEC oil price rise of 1973 that the shah helped engineer was one cause of his undoing. He insisted on using the oil money for radical increases in investment and armaments that the economy could not bear: Iran faced galloping inflation, shortages of housing and consumer goods, and an increase of rural to urban migration that compounded the other problems. In addition, Iran became economically overcommitted as oil income fell after 1975. To cool the economy, the shah appointed Jamshid Amuzegar prime minister in 1977, but steps Amuzegar took to bring down inflation brought more hardship and discontent. A major cutback in construction, already in decline since early 1976, brought massive unemployment, which especially affected recent urban migrants, and a reduction in payments to the ulama increased the discontent of this influential class. In late 1977, partly emboldened by statements by Amnesty International, the International Confederation of Jurists, and President Jimmy Carter, Iranian intellectuals and professionals began to circulate petitions and letters calling for an extension of democratic rights.[12] A large educated and student class and a newly politicized class of urban poor, aided and influenced by the mosque network, provided the backbone for a new mass politics.

Early in 1978, the semi-official paper *Ettela'at* published an inspired and scurrilous assault on Khomeini, who was then attacking the regime from Iraq.

[12] The economic and political events of the 1970s are well covered in F. Halliday, *Iran: Dictatorship and Development* (Harmondsworth, Middlesex, 1979); R. Graham, *Iran: The Illusion of Power* (rev. edn., London, 1979); and Keddie, *Roots of Revolution*, chap 7.

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Demonstrations with casualties ensued. Thereafter, on the traditional forty-day mourning intervals, demonstrations recurred, and religious, liberal, and leftist forces gradually coalesced against the regime. Khomeini went to France, where he could easily communicate with revolutionary leaders in Iran; the liberal National Front leadership reached an accord with him; and the shah's concessions were too few and came too late. The shah's gesture of appointing Shahpour Bakhtiar as prime minister led to Bakhtiar's expulsion from the National Front. Bakhtiar was unable to prevent Khomeini's return to Iran. And the ayatollah had become, even for many secularists, the symbolic revolutionary leader. In February 1979, air force technicians, supported especially by the Marxist guerrilla Fedayan-e Khalq and Muslim leftist guerrilla Mojahedin-e Khalq, took power for the revolutionaries in Tehran, and Khomeini's appointed prime minister, Mehdi Bazargan, took office.

Thenceforth, at least until 1983, the revolution moved ever more toward Khomeini's brand of absolutist religious radicalism. First, the National Front ministers resigned. Then, when U.S. embassy personnel were taken hostage by young "followers of Khomeini's line" on November 4, 1979, Bazargan and his foreign minister, Ibrahim Yazdi, were forced to resign in the face of their inability to obtain the hostages' release. Khomeini's choice for president, Abolhasan Bani Sadr, kept his post longer, but with decreasing power, and he was ousted in June 1981. Khomeini's Islamic Republican party came overwhelmingly into control of the cabinet and parliament. Once the party achieved a virtual monopoly on government, however, it lost cohesion, and increasing rumblings have been heard of internal disagreements—dissension within the ruling groups—on such issues as further land reform, personal power, foreign policy, and succession to Khomeini's position as the holder of *velayat-e faqih* ("guardianship of the jurisprudent"). While Khomeini-type religious radicals were first in the ascendant, in early 1983 conservatives became more powerful and blocked measures for land reform and a monopoly on foreign trade. Bazaar and other middle-class influences appeared to be growing, and there were moves toward political normalization and central control over religious radicals.

Among the theories of revolution that shed light on Iran's two major upheavals in this century are James C. Davies's J-curve theory of revolution and Crane Brinton's *Anatomy of Revolution.* Davies suggests that revolutions emerge after a considerable period of economic growth followed by a shorter, sharp period of economic contraction and decline. C.-E. Labrousse had already described the economic improvements followed by a sharp downswing that preceded the French Revolution.[13] Davies's J-curve matches the prerevolutionary experience of Iran in the 1970s. To a lesser degree, the revolution of 1905–11 may also fit the model, since some scholars have a period of growth in the late nineteenth century followed

[13] See Davies, "Toward a Theory of Revolution," in Davies, ed., *When Men Revolt and Why* (New York, 1971), 137–47; and Labrousse, *La Crise de l'économie française à la fin de l'ancien régime et au début de la revolution* (Paris, 1944), introduction.

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by economic difficulties that stemmed from the shah's extravagance and Russia's economic and political troubles after 1904.

Apart from Davies's model, the comparative pattern that best fits the revolution of 1978–79 is Brinton's more descriptive than explanatory typology.[14] The political, economic, and financial troubles of an *ancien régime* that made rule in the old way impossible and forced accommodation with new groups were clearly seen both in the lesser crises that preceded the revolution and in the revolution of 1978–79. Such crises, in somewhat different form, were especially characteristic of the financial situation before the English (seventeenth century) and French (eighteenth century) revolutions discussed by Brinton. And political alienation of the intellectuals and the elite, including government figures, from the court was as characteristic of Iran in the 1970s as it was of Russia in the early twentieth century. The gradual and somewhat unexpected movement from demonstration to revolution, characteristic of Brinton's revolutions, has also characterized both Iranian revolutions. As late as the summer of 1978, after many major demonstrations and riots, most Iranian intellectuals voiced the view that the movement was over, having achieved its goal of liberalization with the shah's promises, especially of free elections, and many persons close to the Khomeini wing of the movement have insisted that he and his followers did not expect the shah to be ousted anytime soon.

The Iranian revolution of 1978–79 does not conform exactly to the pattern of growing radicalization fundamental to all four of Brinton's revolutions. To locate Khomeini on a right-left scale is not as easy as it may seem. On the one hand, he is a fundamentalist, a believer in a literalist application of scripture (except when it does not suit him); on the other, he is not only a fierce anti-imperialist, with particular dislike for encroachments by the United States and Israel, but also a man with concern for the poverty-striken, a concern that has been manifested in such programs as free urban housing, state-supplied utilities, and further land reform,

[14] James A. Bill has noted the correspondence between Brinton's views and the events of 1978–79; see Bill, "Power and Religion in Revolutionary Iran," *Middle East Journal*, 36 (1982): 22–47, esp. 30. The closeness of this fit is apparent in Brinton's own summary of the patterns apparent in the four great revolutions he discussed: "First, these were all societies on the whole on the upgrade economically before the revolution came, and the revolutionary movements seem to originate in the discontents of not unprosperous people who feel restraint, cramp, annoyance, rather than downright crushing oppression. . . . Second, we find in our prerevolutionary society definite and indeed very bitter class antagonisms. . . . Fourth, the governmental machinery is clearly inefficient, . . . partly because new conditions . . . —specifically conditions attendant on economic expansion and the growth of new monied classes, new ways of transportation, new business methods— . . . laid an intolerable strain on governmental machinery adapted to simpler, more primitive conditions. Fifth, . . . many individuals of the old ruling class . . . come to distrust themselves, or lose faith in the traditions and habits of their class, grow intellectual, humanitarian, or go over to the attacking groups. . . . [T]he ruling class becomes politically inept. . . . [I]t is almost safe to say that no government is likely to be overthrown from within its territory until it loses the ability to make adequate use of its military and police powers. That loss of ability may show itself in the actual desertion of soldiers and police to the revolutionists, or in the stupidity with which the government manages its soldiers and police, or in both ways. . . . [W]ith the attainment of power it is clear that [the revolutionists] are not united. The group which dominates these first stages we call the moderates, though to emotional supporters of the old regime they look most immoderate. . . . [A]t the crisis period the extreme radicals, the complete revolutionists, are in power. . . . This pervasiveness of the Reign of Terror in the crisis period is partly explicable in terms of the pressure of war necessities and of economic struggles as well as of other variables: but it must probably also be explained as in part the manifestation of an effort to achieve intensely moral and religious ends here on earth. . . . A striking uniformity . . . is their asceticism or . . . condemnation of what we may call the minor as well as the major vices." Brinton, *The Anatomy of Revolution* (Vintage Books, rev. edn., London, 1965), 250–51, 550.

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despite their scant success. Perhaps "populist" is the closest political adjective—with the simultaneous leftist and rightist characteristics and xenophobic and sometimes fundamentalist components that that word connotes in American history. Populist rebellions that have appealed to the subproletariat in the West have sometimes turned into autocratic and even fascist movements, and some Iranians and Americans would say that this change has occurred, or is occurring, in Iran.

Brinton, in his typology of revolution, posited the fall of the radical element during a Thermidor, in which most people, overtaxed by the rule of virtue and justice, long for more accustomed, laxer ways. This deradicalization is in turn often followed by autocratic, usually military rule; in France Napoleon succeeded the Directory, and in Russia Stalin replaced the NEP. Neither of these stages has occurred in Iran as of early 1983, but both are possibilities. Indeed, the early phases of Thermidor may be discernible; Iran has taken major steps toward normalizing its economic and political relations with ideologically divergent regimes—notably Turkey, Pakistan, and some Western and Eastern European countries. And, although much of Iran's internal and external policy has not softened as of March 1983, the growth in strength of the conservative faction in government and Khomeini's December 1982 decrees providing some protection for legal rights may be early signs of a Thermidor.

With the rise of social history, socioeconomic explanations of revolutions have become more general than Brinton's phenomenological comparisons. Although its revolution of 1978–79 can be explained in terms of socioeconomic causation (as I have attempted to do above and elsewhere), Iran fits less neatly into most existing socioeconomic comparative schemes than it does into the basic J-curve or more varied Brinton typology. The closest socioeconomic revolutionary model for Iran's experience appears to be the Marxist formula, without any of the elaborations or modifications added recently.[15] This formula, in essence, postulates that revolution occurs whenever the relations of production—particularly the control and ownership of the society's basic means of production—have changed beyond the ability of the old forms of political power and state organization to subsume the new economic order. This situation essentially obtained prior to both Iranian revolutions.

During the revolution of 1905–11 the majority of economically dominant groups and classes—the growing and often thriving class of big and medium merchants, the landlords, particularly those engaged in growing cash crops, and the tribal

[15] Marx and Engels' basic view is stated, with some variations, in several works from the *Communist Manifesto* onward. Recent theoretical works touching on comparative revolution and influenced to some degree by Marx include those by Theda Skocpol, Charles Tilly, Eric Hobsbawm, George Rudé, and Barrington Moore. Although these shed much light on such topics as "primitive rebels" (Hobsbawm), the autonomy of the state (Skocpol), the nature of urban and rural rebellious crowds (Rudé), and the reasons why some societies have had major revolutions and others not (Moore), they have less to say than has Marx on the kind of forces that led to revolution in Iran. Naturally, examining the Iranian revolution is not their aim, but certainly more work now needs to be done by social historians and sociologists to produce general hypotheses or theories that will encompass the Iranian phenomenon, especially since it may not be the last of its type. Skocpol has modified some of her views in the aftermath of the Iranian revolution; see Scopkol, "Rentier State and Shi'a Islam in the Iranian Revolution," *Theory and Society*, 11 (1982): 265–83, with comments by Eqbal Ahmad, Nikki R. Keddie, and Walter L. Goldfrank, *ibid.*, 285–304.

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khans—were decreasingly represented by the Qajars. The crown made few attempts to make laws and create conditions under which trade could flourish or to build up the state so as to be able to limit foreign control. At the same time the Qajars, unlike some other Middle Eastern rulers, had no strategy for increasing the loyalty of the ulama; instead, the crown added to the causes of ulama disaffection while allowing their independent power to grow. Although Iran did not yet have a strong bourgeoisie in the modern sense, groups whose interests lay in rationalizing the economy, encouraging trade and manufacture, and decreasing foreign control, were growing in size and influence. But the last Qajar shahs tended to squander the state's funds on luxurious living and foreign travel for court favorites and members of the royal family without foreseeing the disastrous financial consequences.

In the revolution of 1978–79 the conflict between major classes and the autocracy is even clearer. The reversal of Qajar policy toward modernization helped create a sizable, well-educated stratum of society, most of the members of which became bureaucrats and technocrats; others from this stratum entered the professions and arts or private industry. Many industrialists also sprang from humble origins in the bazaar. In addition to the workers' and subproletariat's grievances over the growing privileges not only of foreigners but of the rich as well, Iran's *nouveau riche*—that is, the relatively privileged new middle and upper classes and rich bazaaris—were discontented. Their economic futures were often determined arbitrarily and irrationally by fiat from the top, while they were denied all real participation in self-government and the political process. Both the successes and the failures of modernization put different classes, from the urban poor to the new middle classes, at odds with the autocratic government. And such contradictions were also felt by national minorities, which were economically oppressed and denied their own languages and cultures.

These various disaffections coalesced in two main ideological strains that already existed in embryo in the revolution of 1905–11: the liberal or leftist desire for Westernization, and the fundamentalist wish to return to a "pure" Islam, particularly as interpreted by Ayatollah Khomeini and those around him. The latter won out—hence the appellation "Islamic revolution"—but the grievances behind the revolution were at least as much socioeconomic as cultural.[16]

To COMPARE THE REVOLUTIONS of 1905–11 and 1978–79 to each other can contribute as much to our understanding of Iran in the twentieth century as to compare them jointly to theories and paradigms developed by Western scholars. Although many points of similarity and difference can be noted, the most striking point of comparison may be stated as an apparent paradox: the constitutional revolution, despite the leading role played by many of the ulama, resulted in an

[16] For an important comparative discussion of the revolution of 1978–79, see Gary Sick's forthcoming book. He has covered some of the same points in preliminary fashion in a recent article; see Sick, "Washington's Encounter with the Iranian Revolution," in Nikki R. Keddie and Eric Hooglund, eds., *The Iranian Revolution and the Islamic Republic* (Washington, 1982), 127–31, and his transcribed remarks in the ensuing "General Discussion," *ibid.*, 155–68.

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almost wholly Western-style constitution and form of government, while the revolution of 1978–79, in which secular leftists and liberals—in addition to religious forces—played a major role, resulted in a self-styled Islamic republic and a constitution stressing Islam. This is not, moreover, simply a matter of constitutions. The revolution of 1905–11 was clearly secularizing in a number of spheres of life and law, while that of 1978–79 was just as clearly Islamicizing, despite the far greater Westernization of education, law, government, culture, and the economy that taken place by then. It is true that the revolutionaries in both the first and eighth decades of this century were fighting against autocracy, for greater democracy, and for constitutionalism, so that there was much ideological continuity. Nonetheless, the ideology of the revolutionary leaders was quite different in the two revolutions. Why?

The answer to this question lies largely in the nature of the enemy perceived by each group of revolutionaries. In 1905–11 the revolutionaries were fighting against a traditionalist regime and a shah whose dynasty had made very few efforts at Westernization, including reforms of potential benefit to Iran. At the beginning of the century, therefore, non-ulama reformers in particular, but also some liberal members of the ulama, found it easy to believe that the politically and economically encroaching West, which was obviously more powerful than Iran, could only be combatted if some Western ways were imitated. Nineteenth-century reformers called for Western-style armies, legal reforms, a clearly organized cabinet system, and modern economic development. For Muslims, many such ideas were justified by appropriate interpretations of the Quran and Muslim Traditions favoring change, acquiring knowledge from outside Islam, and taking the steps necessary to oppose unbelievers. When constitutions became a matter of interest after the Russo-Japanese war, the idea of adopting a Western-style constitution in order to limit autocracy and achieve the secret of Western strength gained greatly. Nor was this a ridiculous notion. Most Iranians were not yet ready to overthrow the Qajars, but many wanted to curb their arbitrary power; a constitution seemed—and under better circumstances might have been—a good way to accomplish their relatively limited objectives.

Both parts of the Iranian constitution (which lasted until 1979), the Fundamental Law of 1906 and the Supplementary Fundamental Law of 1907, were largely derived from the Belgian constitution. The clear intent was to have a constitutional monarchy of very limited power, a prime minister and his cabinet (appointments to which required the approval of parliament), and guarantees of freedom of speech, the press, and other civil rights. The provision for an appointed senate, half of whose members were to be designated by the crown as a conservative counterweight to the *majlis* ("lower house"), was not put into effect until 1950, and a key provision insisted upon by ulama leaders—for a committee of at least five leading members of the ulama to pass on the compatability of majlis legislation with Islam—was never enforced, for reasons that have never been adequately explained. Perhaps the ulama under the leadership of Sayyed Abdollah Behbehani already so dominated the first majlis that the ulama no longer feared the passage of secular laws contrary to religious doctrine, or perhaps Behbehani secretly opposed

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enforcing the provision because it might have reduced his own power. In any event, revolutionary leaders in 1905–11 found their model in Western-style liberalism and constitutionalism, and many of the ulama at least permitted the adoption of the constitution. Others broke away as the implications of secularization became clearer, and many tried to block certain aspects of Westernization.[17] The growth of new bourgeois forces and of secularist ideas continued for many decades after 1911.

In 1978–79, however, the perceived enemy had changed, and the Iranian response was correspondingly different. For fifty years the Pahlavi dynasty had forced the Westernization of Iran. In the course of that Westernization the customs and beliefs as well as the prerogatives not only of the ulama but of many bazaaris and ordinary peasants, nomads, and the urban poor were attacked. Far more than the Qajars, the Pahlavis were perceived as tools of Western or Westernized powers, chiefly the United States and Israel. No longer could Iranians accept strong armies, Western-style industries, and modern legal codes and educational systems as solutions, in themselves, to Iran's problems. Even the liberal constitution had been subject to autocratic manipulation. The regime came to be seen as, among other things, too Western, and there developed among the alienated a search for roots and for a return to "authentic" Iranian or Islamic values. The nationalism that had read modern, liberal virtues into pre-Islamic Iran—expounded by intellectuals like the nineteenth-century Mirza Aqa Khan Kermani and the twentieth-century Ahmad Kasravi—had been largely coopted by the Pahlavi shahs. The shahs promoted pre-Islamic motifs in their speeches and in their architectural styles, and Mohammad Reza even sponsored a wasteful mythomaniacal celebration of a fictitious twenty-five hundredth anniversary of the Iranian monarchy and abortively changed the starting date of Iran's calendar from Mohammad's *hijra* to the foundation of the pre-Islamic monarchy.

Although many educated Iranians clung to their own liberal or leftist versions of this pre-Islamic and Western form of nationalism, some important intellectuals by the early 1960s began to turn to new ideas. In a famous essay, Jalal Al-e Ahmad attacked such "Westoxication," suggesting that Iranians look rather to their own and Oriental ways. Later he tried to rediscover Islam for himself, although his critical account of his pilgrimage makes it doubtful that he succeeded. Clerical and lay religious opposition grew at the same time, and some intellectuals published new essays and republished with new introductions works by religious reformers like Jamal ed-Din "al-Afghani" and the early twentieth-century Ayatollah Na'ini, who had in 1909 written the first reasoned clerical defense of a Western-style

[17] The role of the ulama in the revolution of 1905–11 has become a point of controversy, in part because scholars have let their interpretation of history reflect their view of ulama action since the early 1960s. In 1969 Hamid Algar stated even more strongly than previous authors the general view of the ulama's importance and progressivism then, but Said Amir Arjomand in various articles and Willem M. Floor in a recent re-evaluation have played down the progressive role of the ulama in 1905–11 as in other periods. See Algar, *Religion and State in Iran, 1785–1906* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1969), esp. chap. 14; Arjomand, "The Ulama's Traditionalist Opposition to Parliamentarianism, 1907–1909," *Middle East Studies*, 17 (1981): 174–90, and "The State and Khomeini's Islamic Order," *Iranian Studies*, 13 (1980): 147–64; Floor, "The Revolutionary Character of the Iranian Ulama: Wishful Thinking or Reality?" *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 12 (1980): 501–24; and Keddie, *Religion and Politics*, 73–98.

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constitution as the best protection against autocracy. The important guerrilla group, the Mojahedin-e Khalq, combined new interpretations of Islam with socialist ideas that were often close to those of the great orator and hero of progressivist Islamic revolutionaries, Ali Shariati (d. 1977).[18] Significantly, none of these groups or individuals should properly be termed "fundamentalist" or even fully "traditionalist." Most merely wished to escape the related evils of internal despotism and of "Westoxication"—socioeconomic and cultural dependence on the West.

Increasing numbers of Iranians shifted to progressive versions of an indigenous Islamic ideology perceived as likely to restore Iranian self-esteem and combat Westernization. Such versions were possible because so many liberal and even leftist ideals were contained in different strands of the Islamic revival. Liberal ideals were perhaps best represented by Mehdi Bazargan and, in a more traditionalist way, by Ayatollah Shariatmadari, both of whom were important in the revolution. The more progressive interpretations of Islam came from the very popular Ayatollah Taleqani and from Shariati, and leftist ones chiefly from the Mojahedin. Many continued as late as 1978–79 to advocate enforcement of the constitution of 1906–07, although they stressed the necessity of implementing its provision for a committee comprised of five or more of the ulama to ensure the compatability of laws with the *sharia*.

Even the interpretations of the Ayatollah Khomeini, which in the end largely won out, were not, despite their partially "fundamentalist" emphasis on scriptural morality and punishments, really traditional. They contained new ideological elements appropriate to an Islamic revolution and to direct rule by the ulama. Khomeini's notion of direct ulama rule is new to Shi'ism, as not only Western scholars like myself but also a Muslim supporter of Khomeini has noted:

> [T]he *mujtahids* were to some extent inhibited by the doctrine of the inherent illegitimacy of political authority in the absence of the Imam. The *usuli* position did not consider the possibility of the emergence of one of the *mujtahids* as the *mujtahid* of the *mujtahids*, as the Imam himself. And this confusion was there when Imam Khomeini returned to Tehran from Paris during the Revolution. For a time he was called "Naib-i-Imam." It was only gradually that he word "naib" was dropped and he became Imam Khomeini. Of course, the title of Imam does not mean that he is the twelfth Imam. It simply means that he is the leader of the *Ummah* at this moment. In other words, this is a new doctrine something akin to "first among equals." . . . [W]hile [people] can follow other *mujtahids* in religious matters, they can also follow Imam Khomeini as the political leader of the Islamic State, of the Revolution, indeed of the *Ummah* today. So, the Revolution has in a sense taken the Shi'ia political thought further. An actual practical difficulty has created a situation where it is possible for one of the *mujtahids* to become Imam of the *Ummah*. And this, of course, is a great advance on the earlier position of the Shi'ia political thought.[19]

[18] On these intellectuals, see Yann Richard, "Contemporary Shi'i Thought," chapter 8 part 2 of Keddie, *Roots of Revolution*; and Keddie, *Roots of Revolution*, chapter 8 part 1: "Intellectual and Literary Trends to 1960." Among the most important works of these intellectuals, which give an idea of their criticism of the "Westoxication" of many Iranians and suggest the alternative Islamic reforms that some of them put forth, are Jalal Al-e Ahmad, *Gharbzadegi* (Tehran, A.H., 1341 [1961–62]), and *Dar khedmat va khianat-e raushanfekran* (Tehran, n.d.); Abolhassan Bani Sadr, *Eqtesad-e tauhidi* (n.p., n.d.); Ali Shariati, *Tashayyo'-e 'Alavi va Tashayyo'-e Safavi* (n.p., A.H. 1352 [1973?]), and *Islamshenasi* (n.p., n.d.); and Ayatollah Mahmud Taleqani, *Islam va Malekiyyat dar moqayeseh be nezamha-ye eqtesadi-ye gharb* (n.p., n.d.).

[19] Kalim Siddiqui [*sic*, Siddiqi] *et al.*, *The Islamic Revolution: Achievements, Obstacles, and Goals* (London, 1980), 16–17.

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The victory of Khomeini's more absolutist version of Islam, with the addition to existing doctrines of ulama power the notion of direct rule, did not come because most people really preferred this to the more latitudinarian or progressive version of other clerical and lay Islamic thinkers but because, as a corollary to his doctrinal absolutism (as well as his charisma and leadership qualities), Khomeini was the most uncompromising opponent of the Pahlavis, of the monarchy itself, and of foreign control and cultural domination.

There is some convergence, not wholly accidental, between the "Manichean" world outlook of Khomeini and other Muslim thinkers and the more widespread phenomenon of "Third Worldism." The Manichean trend sees the world as largely divided into the just Muslim oppressed and the Western or Western-tied oppressors, and the more general ideology of the Third World similarly sees itself as economically drained and culturally colonized by an imperialist West. Such perceptions of "we" and "they," the Third World and the West, evince little appreciation of internal problems and class and other contradictions within either culture. Shariati, Bani Sadr, Ghotbzadeh, and others were directly influenced by varieties of Third Worldism, including the sophisticated version of Marxist dependency theory espoused by Paul Vieille, long Bani Sadr's friend and mentor, and the ideas of Frantz Fanon, whom Shariati admired. Khomeini himself has probably not been immune to such currents. At least one student of Khomeini's thought has noted the ayatollah's brand of Third Worldism and tentatively attributed it to contacts with Palestinians in Iraq, since such arguments entered his talks and writings during his exile there.[20] The fusion of "modern," secular Manicheanism, "traditional" Islam, and uncompromising hostility to monarchy, dependence, and imperialism created a revolutionary ideology that distinguished the revolutionaries from the Western and Westernized oppressors as much as the constitutionalist ideology of 1906 distinguished revolutionaries from traditional, nonmodernizing autocrats.

The blend of Islam and Third Worldism fits an anti-Western, anti-imperialist mood, particularly among students and those sections of the urban population who—in contrast to the minority of Westernized Iranians with Western-style, usually well-paying jobs in the government or private sector—were either poor or in the traditional economy. The revolutionaries in 1905–11 disliked Russian and British encroachments, but their main wrath was directed against the Qajar dynasty and its inability to organize a strong and functioning state and nation. Even though the main wrath of the revolutionaries in 1978–79 was apparently also directed against a dynasty and a shah, the cases are not really parallel. The late shah, with whatever degree of accuracy, was seen as a willing tool of the West, whose culture

[20] Gregory Rose, "*Velayat-e Faqih* and the Recovery of Islamic Identity in the Thought of Ayatollah Khomeini,"in Nikki R. Keddie, ed., *Religion and Politics in Iran* (New Haven, 1973), 166–88. Also see Nikki R. Keddie, "Islamic Revival as Third Worldism," in J.-P. Digard, ed., *Le Cuisinier et le philosophe: Hommage à Maxime Rodinson* (Paris, 1982), 275–81. Many of Khomeini's speeches are available in rough translations from the Foreign Broadcast Information Service, and some of his works are translated in Hamid Algar, ed., *Islam and Revolution: Writings and Declarations of Imam Khomeini* (Berkeley, 1981). Not yet translated is the very important early book by Khomeini, *Kashf-e Asrar* (n.p., n.d. [ca. 1944]), in which he attacked both the Pahlavi monarchy and secularist intellectuals but did not yet completely reject monarchy or call for total rule by clerics.

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and economic control had pervaded Iran in a way far more offensive to most than was the case in 1905. Iranians associated things Western with their plight, and they thought their cultural and economic problems could only be solved by a return to what they saw as purely Islamic ways. Hence, the paradox of a more "traditionalist" Islamic, more "antimodern" reaction in the revolution of 1978–79 than in that of 1905–11 can be explained primarily as a reaction to the rapid, exploitative growth of Western influence, of Westernizing rulers, and of new forms of imperialism in the intervening period.

THE DISILLUSIONMENT WITH THE WEST and the desire to return to Islam is not unique to Iran; it is found in different forms thoughout much, if not most, of the Muslim world, sometimes in revolutionary ideologies and movements. These movements do not reject modern technology but call for a return to Islamic traditions, which are interpreted differently by reformists and fundamentalists. Often, as in Iran, enthusiasm for ideas like constitutionalism and republicanism continues, but in an Islamic context. The independent power, wealth, and ideological claims of the Shi'i ulama probably allowed its members to become the first leaders of a twentieth-century Islamic revolution. The unique strength of the Shi'i ulama and their consequent revolutionary leadership does not, however, negate the possibility of related revolts and revolutions in non-Shi'i lands. Similar conditions could provide the foundation and the desire for revolt, possibly intensified by the Iranian example and military success much as the Russo-Japanese War and Russian revolution in 1905 contributed to the Iranian constitutional revolution of 1905–11. The importance of the organized network of socioideological ties between the Iranian ulama and Iran's urban residents bears some resemblance to the urban organization of new Muslim groups in Egypt and elsewhere, despite lesser participation by the ulama in non-Iranian movments.[21] And the widespread feeling that Western liberalism and socialism have been tried and found wanting is also important.

The changes wrought by the Iranian revolution have not run their course. Most Iranians who fought for an Islamic republic (and many were fighting rather for secular versions of justice, democracy, or even socialism) wanted a well-functioning, egalitarian state—the kind of government suggested by Shariati and by Khomeini in 1978. The growth of open discontent and its suppression in a series of small civil wars and rampant executions since the revolutionary victory is evidence that many, and probably most, were not fighting for what they got. What they did in fact get includes economic decline and upheaval, strict laws and rules (often "Islamic" at most in the sense that literalist Quranic and other legal punishments have sometimes been enforced in Muslim countries), arbitrary trials and summary

[21] On the importance of Shi'i urban networks to the organization and fulfillment of the Iranian revolution, especially see Skocpol, "Rentier State and Shi'a Islam." On the economic and intellectual forces in contemporary Egypt, especially see Malcolm H. Kerr and El Sayed Yassin, eds., *Rich and Poor States in the Middle East: Egypt and the New Arab Order* (Boulder, Colo., 1982); and Fouad Ajami, *The Arab Predicament* (New York, 1981).

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punishments (not Islamic in any sense), a scramble for wealth and power among some of the ulama, new restrictions on women, and the like. Granted, the revolution had its more positive aspects: some concern for the poor and for equalization of incomes as well as limited kinds of local self-government and self management. Some Iranians also point to the decline in U.S. influence as a benefit of revolution, but how much this decline is a real advance in the absence of a well-functioning economy and a united country is questionable. The current balance has not proved satisfactory to most Iranians, although the mullas have shown themselves far more politically organized and capable of holding onto power than many, both within and outside Iran, would have expected.

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