

## CHAPTER 5 - DISASTER AND ANARCHY

### a. INVASION AND OCCUPATION

Upon the outbreak of the war in 1939, Iran proclaimed her neutrality. It was not surprising that Iran decided to remain neutral. Such a policy was beneficial to Iranian ruling circles, mostly pro-German, as well as to Germany, because it permitted them to continue and event to increase their mutual trade. An outright alliance between the two countries would have presented unnecessary inconveniences to both of them. Iran might have become a theater of hostilities because of possible British action, and consequently Germany would have lost a valuable source of supplies, carried on via Russia. But the German invasion of Russia in June 1941 suddenly changed the whole situation. The British government ranged itself on the side of Russia and declared its readiness to assist her in every possible way. This situation presented the west with the problem of supplying the Russian allies. There were four possible routes: through Murmansk, through Valadivostok, through the Turkish Straits, and over the Iranian highlands. Neither the Murmansk nor the Vladivostok route could handle really large quantities of supplies. Turkey closed the Straits, and to force their opening would have necessitated war with her, an alternative the Allies refused to consider in view of the fact that Turkey was a nonbelligerent ally of the west. Thus Iran remained the only practical transit route to Russia, through which, given proper organization, bulky supplies could

could be shipped. In mid-summer 1941 Soviet Russia and Britain approached Iran, asking for permission to use her territory for transit purposes. Iran refused, whereupon Russia and Britain launched a vigorous propaganda campaign intending to intimidate the government. Broadcasts from London, Delhi and Baku in the Iranian language accused the Iranian government of sheltering a German fifth column, gave exaggerated numbers of Germans in Iran, and spread false rumors about tribal unrest, dissatisfaction in the army, and so forth. Simultaneously, in August, Soviet and British envoys presented Reza Shah with an ultimatum, demanding the expulsion of large numbers of the German fifth column, and opening of the country for the transit of war equipment. The Iranian government again insisted, in notes of August 7 and 21, that its record of impartiality toward the belligerents was of the strictest character, and that to expel the Germans would be tantamount to the violation of neutrality. In conversations with foreign diplomatic representatives, the Iranian ministers asserted that all the Germans were closely watched and that the Government had the situation well under control, so that no danger from the Germans existed. At that time it was reported from a high diplomatic source that the German Minister in Teheran had on 6 August presented a note warning the Iranian government that the expulsion of German travelers and residents from Iran would be regarded as an unfriendly act and would force his government to break off diplomatic relations.<sup>1</sup> However, in conversation with the British and Russian diplomatic representatives, Iranian officials would not admit that the presence of the Germans constituted a danger: they offered to reduce

<sup>1</sup> New York Times, 8 Aug 1941.

their number, but not substantially or quickly. In the week that followed the presentation of the notes of 16 August the German armies had made considerable gains in southern Russia and were seriously threatening both Odessa and Kiev. The Germans in Teheran boasted that they would be across the Dnieper in early September; the Black Sea fleet and the Luftwaffe would simultaneously appear at Batum to cut the Russian communications if they invaded northern Iran; and if only the Iranians would stand firm for a few weeks, the German forces would be in Teheran to help them.<sup>2</sup>

On 20 August the Shah told the Cadets of the Military Academy at their passing-out parade that in view of the critical situation their customary leave was cancelled and they should be ready for every sacrifice.

In thus temporizing, Reza Shah seemed to be unaware of the seriousness with which the Allies treated the whole problem, but as Iranian reinforcements had been sent to Ahwaz and probably further north, it was apparent that the Iranian government fully expected an early British and Russian advance. It is clear from this that the Iranian authorities must have been aware that the Allied intentions to impose their will were serious; but it is more than likely that no one in Teheran dared to emphasize this point to the obstinate and furious Shah. On August 25 the final Allied notes were presented. On that day the Soviet and British envoys appeared together at 4 a.m. at the private residence of the Iranian Prime Minister to submit their

<sup>2</sup> Times 25 Aug, 1941.

message. The parallel notes expressed disappointment that Iran had not complied with Allied requests, voiced regret that the Allies were now compelled to take unilateral action, gave assurances that the Allies had no designs on Iran's territorial integrity and independence, and expressed the hope that Iran would not resist Allied advance.

Simultaneously, at dawn August 25, Soviet and British forces invaded Iran. The Soviet army entered in three columns; the first heading from Julfa to Tabriz, the second marching through Astara toward Pahlavi and Rasht, and the third invading the northeastern border province of Khorasan. The British advance was written clearly by Winston Churchill. Since this document is so important, it is reproduced:

#### THE GRAND ALLIANCE

Winston S. Churchill

(Persia and the Middle East)  
Book 2. 6. Page 476 to 480

The need to pass munitions and supplies of all kinds to the Soviet Government and the extreme difficulties of the Arctic route, together with future strategic possibilities, made it eminently desirable to open the fullest communication with Russia through Persia. The Persian oilfields were a prime war factor. An active and numerous German mission had installed itself in Teheran and German prestige stood high. The suppression of the revolt in Iraq and the Anglo-French occupation of Syria, achieved as they were by narrow margins blotted out Hitler's oriental plan. We welcomed the opportunity of joining hands with Russians and proposed to them a joint campaign. I was not without some anxiety about

embarking on a Persian war, but the arguments for it were compulsive. I was very glad that General Wavell should be in India to direct the military movements. On July 11-1941, the Chiefs of Staff were asked by a Cabinet Committee to consider the desirability of joint military action in conjunction with the Russians in Persia in the event of the Persian Government refusing to expel the German community at present employed in that country. On July 18 they recommended that we should adopt a firm attitude in dealing with the Persian Government. This view was also strongly held by General Wavell, who had telegraphed the War Office July 10 in the following terms:

General Wavell to War Office

10 July 41

The complaisant attitude it is proposed to adopt over Iran appears to me incomprehensible. It is essential to the defence of India that Germans should be cleared out of Iran now. Failure to do so will lead to a repetition of events which in Iraq were only just countered in time. It is essential we should join hands with Russia through Iran, and if the present Government is not willing to facilitate this is must be made to give way to one which will. To this end the strongest possible pressure should be applied forthwith while issue of German-Russian struggle is in doubt. . . .

On the 21st I replied to General Wavell:

Prime Minister to General Wavell

21 July 41

Cabinet will consider Persian situation tomorrow. I am in general agreement with your view, and would like to give Persians an ultimatum from Britain and Russia to clear out the Germans without delay or take the consequences. Question is what forces we have available in case of

refusal.

The Chiefs of Staff advised that action should be confined to the South, and that we should need at least one division, supported by a small air component, to secure the oilfields. This force would have to come from Iraq, where we had already insufficient troops even for internal security. They concluded that if a force had to be sent into Persia during the next three months it would have to be replaced from the Middle East.

In a minute of July 22 the Foreign Secretary sent me his view of the situation:

Foreign Secretary to Prime Minister

22 July 41

I have been giving further consideration this morning to the problem of pressure upon Iran (Persia). The more I examine the possibilities of doing this, the clearer it becomes that all depends upon our ability to concentrate a sufficient force in Iraq to protect the Iranian oilfields. It would be highly dangerous even to begin economic pressure until we were militarily in a position to do this, for the Shah is fully conscious of the value of the oilfields to us, and if he sees trouble with us brewing he is likely to take the first step.

Reports, apparently reliable, have reached us of Iranian concentrations on the Russian frontier, on the Iraqi frontier, and in the area of the oilfields. I hope that every effort will be made to strengthen our forces in Iraq at the earliest moment. If we can do this before the Russians suffer a severe reverse in the south there is a reasonable chance of imposing our will on the Iranians without

resort to force. But we must not move diplomatically ahead of our military strength or we shall court disaster.

There is a further factor which increases the need for the early reinforcement of Iraq. Should Russia be defeated we shall have to be ready to occupy the Iranian oilfields ourselves; for in such an eventuality German pressure on the Iranians to attempt to turn us out would be irresistible.

\* \* \* \* \*

I was not satisfied that this Persian operation had received the co-ordinated planning essential to its eventual success. On July 31 therefore on the eve of my voyage to Placentia I gave instructions that a special committee should be set up under the Lord President for this purpose.

I cannot feel that this operation, involving war with Persia in the event of non-compliance, has been studied with the attention which its far-reaching character requires. While agreeing to its necessity, I consider that the whole business requires exploring, concerting, and clamping together, as between the Foreign Office and the War Office, and between the Middle East Command and the Government of India. We must not take such grave steps without having clear-cut plans for the various eventualities. For instance, what happens if the Persian troops around and about the Ahwaz oilfields seize all Anglo-Persian Oil Company employees and hold them as hostages? What attitude is expected from the Bahktiari and the local inhabitants? What happens to British residents in Teheran? Is there any danger of the oilwells being destroyed rather than that they should fall into our possession?

We must be very careful not to commit an atrocity by bombing Teheran. Are our available forces strong enough to occupy the Ahwaz oilfields in the face of local and official Persian opposition? How far north do we propose to go? What aerodromes are available? How is the railway to be worked if the Persians refuse to help?

These and many other questions require to be thought out. It would be well if the Lord President with the Secretaries of State for Foreign Affairs, War, and India reviewed the whole matter and reported to the War Cabinet during the early part of each week. Meanwhile all necessary action of a preparatory character should proceed. I am in favour of the policy, but it is of a very serious character, and should not be undertaken until the possible consequences and alternative situations have been thoroughly surveyed and careful, detailed plans made and approved.

I was sure that the similarity of the names, Iran and Iraq, would lead to confusion.

Prime Minister to Foreign Secretary, Sir Edward  
Bridges and General Ismay

2 Aug. 41

In all correspondence, it would be more convenient to use the word "Persia" instead of "Iran," as otherwise dangerous mistakes may easily occur through the similarity of Iran and Iraq. In any cases where convenient, the word "Iran" may follow in brackets after Persia.

Formal correspondence with the Persian Government should of course be conducted in the form they like.

And later:

Prime Minister to Minister of Information

29 Aug. 41

Do try to blend in without causing trouble the word Persia



instead of Iran.

I am indeed glad to learn that the Persian Government have now (1949) adopted officially this change.

During my absence at sea this Committee reported to me by telegram the results of their work, which had meanwhile been approved by the War Cabinet. It was clear from their message of August 6 that the Persians would not meet our wishes regarding the expulsion of German agents and residents from their country, and that we should have to resort to force. The next stage was to co-ordinate our plans, diplomatic and military, with those of the Russians. On August 13 Mr. Eden received Mr. Maisky at the Foreign Office, and the terms of our respective Notes to Teheran were agreed. This diplomatic move was to be our final word. Mr. Maisky told the Foreign Secretary that "after the presentation of the memoranda the Soviet Government would be ready to take military action, but they would not take such action except in conjunction with us." On receiving this news I minuted (August 19), "I think the Russian view is reasonable, and we ought to move with them while there is time."

We were now committed to action. In the event of stronger Persian resistance than had been anticipated, we had to consider the possibility of further reinforcement of the Middle East area. On August 24, on the eve of our planned advance into Persia, I sent the following minute to the Chiefs of Staff:

Prime Minister to Chiefs of Staff

24 Aug. 41

It is essential that more reinforcements should be set in motion eastwards at once. Is it true that the 10th Indian Division has not got a British battalion to each brigade? If so, three battalions

of British troops should be sent to join General Quinan by the fastest possible route.

As General Auchinleck proposes to remain inactive in the Western Desert for many weeks, he should be directed to move larger forces eastwards than are at present arranged. At least the equivalent of one extra division, including the three British battalions aforesaid, should be set in motion now. If all goes well they can easily be countermanded. Let me know what forces are likely to be available in Egypt. Where is the last brigade of the 50th Division? Surely Cyprus is in no immediate danger.

In view of the recalcitrance of the Persian Government, General Quinan, who was commanding in Iraq, had been ordered on July 22 to be ready to occupy the oil refinery at Abadan and the oilfields, together with those two hundred and fifty miles farther north near Khanagin.

The joint Anglo-Soviet Note of August 17 met with an unsatisfactory reply, and the date for the entry of British and Russia forces into Persia was fixed for the 25th. The Imperial forces in the Abadan sector, under General Harvey, comprised the 8th Indian Infantry Division; in the Khanagin sector, under General Slim, the 8th Armoured Brigade, one Indian regiment of tanks, four British battalions, and one regiment of British Artillery. The supporting air forces consisted of one army co-operation, one fighter, and one bomber squadron. The first objective was the capture of the oilfields; the second, to advance into Persia and, with Russia co-operation, to control Persian communications, and secure a through

route to the Caspian. Opposition on the southern front could be expected from two Persian divisions, with 16 light tanks, and in the north from three divisions.

The capture of the Abadan refinery was made by an infantry brigade, which embarked in naval craft at Basra and landed at dawn on August 25. The majority of the Persian forces were surprised but escaped in lorries. Some street fighting took place and a few Persian naval craft were captured. At the same time other troops of the 8th Division captured the port of Khurram Shahr from the landward side, and a force was sent north toward Ahwaz. As our troops were approaching Ahwaz, news of the Shah's (Cease fire) order was received, and the Persian general ordered his troops back to barracks. In the north the oilfields were easily captured, and General Slim's force pushed thirty miles along the road toward Kermanshah. They were now faced however with the formidable Paitak Pass which if held by determined troops would have been a definite obstacle. To deal with this a column was sent to turn the position from the south. After overcoming some opposition these troops reached Shahahad, behind the Persian defense, on August 27. This movement, combined with some bombing, proved too much for the defenders of the pass, who abandoned their positions hastily. The advance on Kermanshah was resumed, and on the 28th the enemy were found again to be drawn up on a position across the road. But just as the attack was about to be launched, a Persian officer arrived with a white flag and the campaign was over. Our casualties were twenty-two killed and forty-two wounded.

Map of Operation in Persia

Thus ended this brief and fruitful exercise of overwhelming force against a weak and ancient state. Britain and Russia were fighting for their lives. Inter arma silent leges. (We may be glad that in our victory the independence of Persia has been preserved.)

Persian resistance had collapsed so swiftly that our contacts with the Kremlin became again almost entirely political. Our main object in proposing the joint Anglo-Russian campaign in Persia had been to open up the communications from the Persian Gulf to the Caspian Sea. We hoped also, by this direct co-operation of British and Soviet forces, to establish more intimate and friendly relations with our new ally. We were of course both agreed on the expulsion from Persia or capture of all Germans and the wiping out of German influence and intrigues in Teheran and elsewhere the deep and delicate questions about oil. Communism, and the post-war future of Persia lay in the background, but need not, it seemed to me impede comradeship and goodwill.

Prime Minister to General Ismay

27 Aug. 41

For C. O. S. Committee

Now that it seems that the Persian opposition is not very serious, I wish to know what are the plans for pushing on and joining hands with the Russians and making sure we have the railway in working order in our hands. We do not simply want to squat on the oilfields, but to get through communication with Russia we have made

certain proposals to the Shah, but these may be rejected, or the Russians may not agree to them. What therefore are the plans to joint hands with the Russians, and what are the troop movements foreseen in the next week by our different forces?

Prime Minister to General Wavall

30 Aug. 41

I am so glad the Persian adventure has prospered. There is now no reason why you should not return home as you proposed. I am deeply interested in your railway projects, which are being sedulously examined here.

Everyone here is delighted you have had another success. General Wavall's visit to London was however shelved by the need for his presence in Teheran. I also hoped that speaking Russian fluently as he did, he might become an important link with the Soviet High Command.

Prime Minister to General Wavall

1 Sep 41

I agree with Chiefs of Staff that your presence in Teheran at present would be helpful to Bullard (the British Minister) in dealing with military requirements and for ensuring that Russian influence is kept within reasonable bounds.

Prime Minister to Sir R. Bullard (Teheran)

3 Sep 41

We cannot tell how the war in these regions will develop, but the best possible through route from the Persian Gulf to the Caspian will be developed at the utmost speed and at all costs in order to supply Russia. It is very likely that large British forces will be operating in and from Persia in 1942 and certainly a powerful airforce

will be installed.

We hope it will not be necessary, in the present phase at any rate, to have an Anglo-Russian occupation of Teheran, but the Persian Government will have to give us loyal and faithful help and show all proper alacrity if they wish to avoid it. At the present time we have not turned against the Shah, but unless good results are forthcoming his misgovernment of his people will be brought into account. Although we should like to get what we want by agreement with Persian Government, and do not wish to drive them into active hostility, our requirements must somehow be met, and it ought to be possible for you to obtain all the facilities we require bit by bit, by using the leverage of a possible Russian occupation of Teheran. There is no need to fear undue Russian encroachment, as their one supreme wish will be to get the through route for American supplies.

Prime Minister to Premier Stalin

16 Sep 41

I am most anxious to settle our alliance with Persia and to make an intimate efficient working arrangement with your forces in Persia. There are in Persia signs of serious disorder among tribesmen and of breakdown of Persian authority. Disorder, if it spreads, will mean wasting our divisions holding down these people, which again means burdening the road and railway communication with movements and supplies of aforesaid divisions, whereas we want to keep the lines clear and improved to the utmost in order to get supplies through to you. Our object should be to make the Persians keep each other quiet while we get on with the war. Your excellency's decisive indication

in this direction will speed forward the already favorable trend of our affairs in this minor theatre.

Prime Minister to Lord Beaverbrook  
(on mission to Russia)

21 Sep 41

General Wavell proposes to go to Tiflis via Baghdad on his return to India. He speaks Russian, and I contemplate his directing, or possibly, if the forces grow large enough, commanding the right hand we shall give to the Russians in and about the Caspian Basin in the forthcoming campaign. It is therefore important that he should confer with high Russian military authorities on the whole position of their southern flank and in Persia.

You may bring this into your discussions, and see that the most is made of it.

Prime Minister to Premier Stalin

12 Oct 41

Our only interests in Persia are, first, as a barrier against German penetration eastward, and, secondly, as a through route for supplies to the Caspian Basin. If you wish to withdraw the five or six Russians for use on the battlefront we will take over the whole responsibility as keeping order and maintaining and improving the supply route. I pledge the faith of Britain that we will not seek any advantage for ourselves at the expense of any rightful Russian interest during the war or at the end. In any case, the signing of the Tripartite Treaty is urgent to avoid internal disorders growing, with consequent danger of choking the supply route. General Wavell will be at Tiflis on October 18, and will discuss with your generals

any questions which you may instruct them to settle with him.

Words are useless to express what we feel about your vast heroic struggle. We hope presently to testify by action.

All arrangements with the Russian were smoothly and swiftly agreed. The conditions imposed on the Persian Government were, principally, the cessation of all resistance, the ejection of Germans, neutrality in the war, and the Allied use of Persian communications for the transit of war supplies to Russia. The further occupation of Persia was peacefully accomplished. British and Russian forces met in amity, and Teheran was jointly occupied on Sept 17, the Shah having abdicated on the previous day in favor of his gifted twenty-two year-old son. On Sept 20 the new Shah, under Allied advice, restored the constitutional monarchy, and his father shortly afterwards went into comfortable exile and died at Johannesburg in July 1944. Most of our forces withdrew from the communications, and Teheran was evacuated by both British and Russian troops on October 18. Thereafter, our forces under General Quinan, were engaged in preparing defenses against the possible incursion of German armies from Turkey or the Caucasus, and in making administrative preparations for the large reinforcements which would arrive if that incursion seemed imminent.

The creation of a major supply route to Russia through the Persian Gulf became our prime objective. With a friendly government in Teheran, ports were enlarged, river communications developed, roads built, and railways reconstructed. Starting in Sept 1941, this enterprise, begun and developed by British Army, and presently to be adopted and completed by the U. S., enabled us to send to Russia, over a period of four and a half years, five million tons of supplies.))



However, Iranian opposition to this invasion was negligible. Russia and Britain divided the country into two zones of occupation. Russia obtained control of the five northern provinces and Britain got the rest of the country. Teheran became a neutral enclave. Simultaneously important political developments were taking place in Teheran. On August 27 the Cabinet of Ali Mansur resigned. It was clear that the complexion of the government would have to change to meet a new situation. On the same day the Shah appointed Mohammad Ali Furugi, to head a new government. Furugi acted quickly; on the 28th of August, announced that orders were given to the army to cease resistance, Martial law and a curfew was proclaimed in Teheran. These events were followed by an exchange of notes between the Allies and Iran that brought about a new political settlement. In the first parallel notes presented by Russia and Britain on August 30, the two Allies reiterated that they had no designs against the independence and territorial integrity of Iran and that their military action had been necessitated by the German menace and the non-co-operative attitude of the Iranian government toward their proposals. This note contained the following demands:

(I) The Iranian government must expel within one week all German citizens except those that had taken refuge in the German Legation and certain indispensable technicians and furnish a list of all German to the Allied diplomatic representative.

(II) The Iranian government must undertake not to admit any more Germans to Iran for the duration of war.

(III) The Iranian government must facilitate the transport of Allied war materials by road, rail, and air.

(IV) The Iranian government must agree to remain neutral and refrain from any hostile acts against Britain or Russia.

In return the Allies offered the following guarantees:

- (a) The British promised to continue payment of oil royalties.
- (b) Iran was assured of economic assistance.
- (c) The Soviet and British advance would be halted and their forces withdrawn from Iran when the military situation permitted.

The Soviet note of August 30 differed from the British in the following points:

(1) Iran was asked to facilitate the task of the Soviet government in developing the oil resources at Kavir-Khurian as well as the fisheries on the Caspian.

(2) The Soviet government agreed to continue payment of royalties for fisheries on the Caspian as provided by the treaty of Oct 1, 1927.

One day later, on Aug 31, the British hastened to send a second additional note to the Iranian government in which they demanded the handing over to British and Soviet troops of all Germans except the bonafide members of the German Legation and certain technicians. This demand was thus to replace the previous demand for expulsion only.

In its reply to these notes on Sept 1, the Iranian government complied with Allied demands and made a number of requests and observations of which the following were most important. Iran - (a) requested the occupation troops should have as little contact as possible with the Iranian population, (b) asked the Allies to consider an indemnity for the loss of Iranian life and property and the return of captured arms and munitions, (c) stated that no mention of Kavir-Khurian oil

deposits was made in the treaties with the U. S. S. R. and added that any agreement made with the Soviet Union concerning these deposits were considered as abandoned since no action to exploit them had been taken. The Iranian government declared its willingness, however, to enter into friendly discussions concerning this matter with a view to protecting the rights of both parties.

This communication was followed by the third parallel Allied note on Sep 6. This time the Allies demanded the expulsion of German, Italian, Rumanian, and Hungarian legations and immediate cancellation of their code, radio, and pouch privileges. On the 9th of Sept, the Iranian Premier obtained the Majlis's consent to the acceptance of the Allied demands. The Iranian attitude, dictated by the angry and sullen Shah, was still as defiant as it dared to be, and an editorial in the official Ittial at of 10 Sept, stated to have been almost certainly inspired by the Shah provoked Allied protests. After deploring the closing of the Axis Legations, it continued: Our missions in the capitals of those countries will remain as before, and our political relation with them will continue with the connivance of the Iranian administration acting on the Shah's orders.

During these days of feverish activity the position of Reza Shah became obviously very uncomfortable. The change of cabinet signified a change in policy, and it was difficult ot imagine that the ruler who had so closely collaborated with the Germans during the past decade could continue on his throne in the new circumstances.

On Sept 14, accordingly, the war office informed Wavell that a joint Anglo-Russian advance to Teheran would begin as soon as arrangements

with the Russians had been completed. The Russians agreed to a simultaneous entry into the suburbs of the capital at 3 p.m. on 17 Sept.

Consequently a vigorous radio campaign beaming from New Delhi and London was inaugurated. These broadcasts stressed the tyrannical rule of the Shah, his injustice and exploitation of the people. As a result the ruler whom nobody had dared to criticize openly for the past two decades became subject to more and more pronounced attacks among the people. His prestige fell rapidly, and soon became obvious that the incessant hostile propaganda made his position untenable. On Sept 16, 1941, Reza Shah, who had been master of Iran for eighteen years under Soviet and British pressure abdicated in favor of his twenty-year old son, Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, who was proclaimed Shah by the Majlis on the same day. Significantly the British and Soviet force entered Teheran on the following morning, Sept 17. The deposed monarch necessarily agreed to leave the country. He stipulated that a sum of about 13 million dollars in the bank should be transferred in trust to his successor to be expended for public-welfare projects, and that the agricultural lands, factories, hotels, and miscellaneous enterprises, which Reza Shah had made his personal property, should be returned to their original owners or ceded to the government. On 28 Sept, the British escorted the ex-Shah with two of his sons and a few aides and servants on a British vessel S. S. Bandera, which took him to the island of Mauritius. Reza Shah, who had hoped to sail to one of the Latin-American countries, or India, found himself an exile in British custody. Later he was transferred to Johannesburg, in South Africa. He died there in 1944. ✓ (end of First Book)

By 21 Sept 1941, the Germans in Iran had been largely eliminated,

the British having taken about 400 suspects and the Russians about sixty, and the remainder being allowed to return to Europe via Turkey.

So, the elimination of Axis influence from Iran, which was only the negative aspect of the Anglo-Soviet intervention there in Aug 1941. Now, its positive aspect was to open up this route for the supply of war materials to the U. S. S. R., a route which was all the more important because of the difficulties of operating the Artic convoy and the doubt whether supply to Russia's Far East ports would long be possible in view of the attitude of Japan.

Negotiations for an Anglo-Soviet-Iranian treaty of alliance to regulate the relations of the three countries for the duration of the war were began late in Sept, because the Iranians were still carefully watching the course of the war in southern Russia and furthermore German sympathizers still remained in official positions. Above all, the Iranian anti-Allied group, under the guidance of the two German Secret Service agents, who had managed to escape arrest and lived hiding among the Qashqai tribesmen, organized a national movement called Melliyun-i-Iran, headed by a committee including two Iranian generals. Its task was to incite the Kurdish and other tribes to revolt in the north and the south and carrying out of military operations against the Allies behind their lines. But on 5 December the Allied representatives presented the Iranian government with their final draft of the treaty, and it was placed before the Majlis on 21 December. There was, however, considerable opposition and consequently it was not until 20 January 1942 that the Majlis ratified the treaty.

The treaty which was signed on 29 January 1942 established an alliance between Britain and the U. S. S. R. on the one hand and Iran on the other. <sup>1</sup> The two powers jointly and severally undertook to respect the territorial integrity, sovereignty, and political independence of Iran and to defend her from any foreign aggression, <sup>2</sup> they and Iran undertook reciprocally not to adopt in their foreign relations an attitude prejudicial to the other party or parties to the alliance, and the Iranian Government would not maintain diplomatic relations with either of the Axis Powers (this excluded Japan, who was still in diplomatic relations with the U. S. S. R.). <sup>3</sup> The Iranian armed forces would not be required to take part in military operations against any foreign power, but only to maintain internal security on Iranian territory. <sup>4</sup> Iran conceded to the Allies the use, with the right of military control if necessary, of all means of communication throughout Iran for the passage of troops or supplies from one Allied power to the other, and gave them all facilities for obtaining materials and recruiting labor for the maintenance and improvement of these communications. <sup>5</sup> She would establish and maintain in collaboration with them such censorship measures as they required. <sup>6</sup> The allies might maintain in Iran such armed forces as they considered necessary until six months after all hostilities between the Allies and Germany and her associates had been suspended. <sup>7</sup> The presence of these forces would not constitute a military occupation, and would disturb as little as possible the Iranian administration and security forces, economic life, the normal movement of the population, and the application of Iranian laws. <sup>8</sup> The Allies would do all they could to safeguard the Iranian economy against wartime

difficulties and would open negotiations with the Iranian Government to this effect.

Meanwhile, although Iran had been an exporter of cereals before the war, the Allied occupation was followed by a serious shortage of grain and other essential foodstuffs in the towns which grew steadily worse throughout 1942.

Also at the beginning of 1942 there had been great tribal insecurity, resulting from the sudden removal of the iron hand of Reza-Shah and aggravated by the sale or abandonment of large numbers of arms to the tribesman by the demoralized Iranian troops after the Allied intervention in August 1941.

The tribal disorders, pro-Axis Iranian activities and his inability to deal with the economic problems had led to the resignation on 28 February 1942 of the Prime Minister, Mohammad Ali Furugi, an elderly and ailing, though completely honest and cultivated man. His successor, Ali Suhaili, on 13 April broke off diplomatic relations with Japan and closed the Japanese Legation which since the Allied intervention had been a headquarters of Axis espionage and conspiracy; and on 22 April the Government announced that they would severely punish the spreading of anti-Allied or pro-Axis propaganda or the harboring of Axis nationals, as activities directed against the interests of the state. However, when the German army failed before Stalingrad and at Al-Alamin in the fall of 1942, complicated the execution of the schemes of Pro-Axis Iranian and brought about some defections among them. One of them handed over to British intelligence agents a suitcase containing 250 documents. These seriously incriminated a number of prominent Iranians including the Mullah Seyyid Abol Qusim Kashani.

Qavainus-Saetanh's succession to the premiership in August 1943 had been followed by the arrest of a number of pro-Axis Iranians. At the same time General Zahidi (who was become Prime Minister in 1953) was arrested and deported for internment early in December. The defeat of German intrigue was complete when Iran declared war on the Reich on September 9, 1943. When Iran formally declared war on Germany, it was not so much a manifestation of hatred against the Reich or of friendship toward the Allies. By this act Iran expressed her conviction that the Germans had lost the war and ensured her position on the winning side.

That was about as much as Iran could do on her own initiative in the field of foreign policy. Also the Russo-British-American Conference took place in Teheran in November 1943.

The conference was primarily devoted to European problems and war strategy. Hence it was not unnatural that the presence of Iranian representatives was not required. Yet, even at the time when the problems of Iran were discussed, the Iranian government was not invited to participate.

As it turned out, the conference, so tragic in its decisions concerning eastern Europe, proved to be of inestimable benefit to the Iranians. The Declaration on Iran, signed by Stalin, Roosevelt, and Churchill, recognized the assistance that Iran had given in the Allied war effort; promised economic aid; reaffirmed Iran's independence, sovereignty, and territorial integrity; and reiterated the Allies' adherence to the principles of the Atlantic Charter.



As far as Iranians are concerned, even after the signing of the Tri-Party treaty of Alliance, they never became generally and enthusiastically Pro-Ally. Their historic distrust and fear of the British or the Russians or both precluded any clear recognition of a common cause or genuine spirit of collaboration. When American came into the war, the Iranian thought they saw more meaning and safety for themselves on the Allied side, for they looked to America for help and for a balancing of the scales. Although, as Iranians saw it, America's entrance into the war and America's presence in Iran did not bring about Allied solidarity or any alteration of British or Russian attitudes. ✓ ← (تاریخچه)

b. EMOTION AND ANARCHY. To Iran the swift events of the world war were a severe stroke. As to internal affairs, the existence of world war, the foreign occupation, and a strong ruler's abdication brought in their wake an interruption of the reforms, an upsetting of normal economic life, and pronounced inflation, famine and unrest. There was a visible recrudescence of extremist movements. On the one hand, the hitherto restrained Shi'a clergy reasserted their influence. This was accompanied by a return of the tribes to militant autonomy; on the other hand, the radical leftist elements emerged in the shape of the communist-dominated Tudeh (masses) party, thus complicating the nation's turbulent politics.

As to foreign policy, everything receded into the background before the major task of regaining full independence. Iran had to change overnight from neutrality to alliance, revamp the enemy occupation into friendly co-operation, gain the recognition and gratitude of the allies,

obtain a seat at the future peace conference, and secure the evacuation of the Allied Armies. The last of these objectives seemed especially difficult inasmuch as the Soviet Union showed signs of considering her occupation as more than a temporary expedient.

This was not an easy task to accomplish. To cope with this difficult situation Iran should have possessed certain qualities which, alas, she lacked. There was an evident lack of strong leadership to the country after the deposition of Reza Shah. There was no strong government enjoying the confidence of the country. As a matter of fact, with respect to its psychological effect, Iran's recent past is not much different from the more distant period. During the 40 years since 1906, government in Iran has been weak or practically nonexistent more than half the time and more or less corrupt all of the time. Only during the time of Reza Shah had the country enjoyed a combination of strong government with comparative honesty and comparative justice. Reza Shah kept order for 20 years; but during 15 of them the people lived under the immense influence of the oriental autocracy. Except for the twenty-year period, foreign interferences and armed interventions continued. Thus, the course of events after 1906 was in essentials and in effect a repetition of previous history. The chief differences were that in 1906 the revolution and the constitution had given the people a hope which unfortunately had not completely been realized; and since 1906 Iran has felt in increasing measure the unsettling impact of modernity.

A prolonged period of dictatorship, no matter how beneficial, invariably leaves a country without prominent leaders. The dictatorship

destroyed both leaders and capacity for leadership. It was as if Reza Shah had followed the advice given to the Greek dictator, to go through the grain-field and lop off all the heads that rose above the rest. No new men of capacity and courage, with possibly one or two exceptions, have appeared on the scene since then. For political leadership, Iran is now using the vestiges of what it had 20 years ago, and it did not have much then. Yet, those who appear on the scene either lack idealism or, if idealistic, lack practical experience of independent government.

It is fully evident that democracy must be Iran's goal. No other form of government offers any hope of creating within the country the conditions essential to internal progress or to an eventual and durable solution of the international problem. So, the new government was committed to democracy - a natural reaction against the former dictatorship. But democracy could not be implanted at once, and the war era, together with the occupation of the country for foreign powers, was hardly a propitious period for the gradual introduction of a new and more liberal system of government.

Iran had not developed the basic essentials of democratic nationalism. The country was not a community of feeling or of undivided loyalties. The tribes were unassimilated, armed and rebellious. Still a country of minorities and classes, Iran had not yet acquired the habit of toleration. In the strictly political sphere no party system or party division such as that which dominates American and British politics, had ever evolved in Iran. Humanitarianism had not become an appreciable force, and social consciousness was necessarily weak. Ownership of property helped to inculcate a sense of individual independence, while earning social respect for the individual personality.

However Iran was pledged to liberalism, she obtained instead something that resembled anarchy.

A number of newspapers sprang into existence. Various political groups vented their feelings of hatred and revenge against the old regime, and at the same time they heaped abuse upon their rivals, upon the governments actually in office and upon particular cabinet ministers. The level of political dispute was low. The invectives and vocabulary used by the newspapers would normally in the West lead to a series of libel suits. The internal situation was marked by growing instability and constant shifting of forces. The lack of traditional political parties with clear-cut programs and aims only confused the picture, for often the issues were purely personal among the competing politicians. In these circumstances all sections of the population with fixed income, especially the government employees, were greatly victimized; rising prices reduced the purchasing power of the salaries of these so that many, perhaps most, had no choice but to starve or steal. So bribery, often became a necessary device for a government official to survive. The morale of public servants was lowered considerably, and this opened the road to foreign intrigue. It was not difficult for a foreign legation to "buy" a newspaper, an editorial writer, or an underpaid employee in one of the administrations. With all these changes in Iran, one factor, however, remained rather constant, namely, the ruling class. This class was composed of wealthy landowners, wealthy merchants, and higher army officers. The deposition of Reza Shah might have eliminated from office a number of individuals, but those who replaced them did not represent a different social stratum. Thus many criticisms that

could be addressed to the former ruling clique likewise could be maintained against the new cabinets. The selfish and economically unprogressive attitude of the ruling circles did nothing to endear them either to the masses, despite new official liberalism, or to facilitate their position vis-a-vis the Soviet-sponsored extremist elements. ✓

The corrupt, the greedy, and the selfish exploited the deterioration and demoralization in the governing class. Merchants became profiteers and, incredibly blind to their own long-run interests, joined with those who were making the most of confusion and thus promoted it.

Most employers exacted bribes for the doing of anything that benefited anyone else; some of them stole goods and money, bargained with landlords over grain-collections, used the income tax as a highwayman uses his bludgeon, sold monopoly goods into the black market, and stripped government automobiles of tires and parts, In high places ministers profited from the privileges that they signed away and from the tangible things that they sold or distributed.

No organized movement against graft took form; few of those accused were prosecuted; and fewer convicted and punished. The big thieves almost invariably escaped and the known crook could continue in politics or administration with slight loss of prestige. ✓

In order to understand fully internal conditions in Iran during the war, an analysis of the role played by parliament and political parties is necessary.

The Parliament or Majlis was single-chambered legislature of 136 members elected by districts every two years. Deputies were not required to live in their districts and a considerable proportion of them

were residents of Teheran. At the time of constitutional revolution the memberships of the Majlis consisted of some revolutionists and clergymen, but largely of landlords who, though generally selfish and reactionary so far as their own privileges were concerned, entertained a rather wholesome distrust of government, and, since they then paid taxes, a real desire for economy and honesty in administration. During the reign of Reza Shah, elections were mostly controlled and the Shah had placed in the assembly some self-seeking new merchants and so-called capitalists, some members of the landed families who had acquired their own businesses, and a few formal newspaper men and politicians; leaving no real law-making power to those whom he favored with appointments to the Parliament. Members of the Majlis were freed of dictation and since the burden of taxation had been largely shifted to the backs of the poor, the deputies had little to lose and in many cases much to gain from the government's investments and subsidies, as well as from its waste and extravagance. This assembly, which could speak as one compact group undivided into any political parties, had presided since the invasion of the Allies in Iran.

Although the cabinet changed after the deposition of Reza Shah the thirteenth Majlis remained unchanged for some time to come. It was filled with deputies who often had been nominees of the late ruler. With the passing of the dictator the Majlis emerged as an independent force with which to government found it necessary to reckon. The role played by the parliament was not constructive in the western sense of the word. There was little of which the Majlis could boast in the way of solving urgent national problems. 4

Elections for a new parliament, the Fourteenth Majlis, began in the fall of 1943, and dragged on through more than eight months. In view of the dictatorial practices of the old regime, politically conscious public opinion had been agitated over the issue whether the elections would be really free. Rumors that the government would try to influence the elections by illegal means arose, and several papers even hinted that soldiers, disguised in civilian dress, might be employed by the government to ensure electoral victory. The real issue in these elections was not, however, the presence or lack of government intervention. Such intervention undoubtedly existed, and will probably exist in Iran for some time to come.

The problem that concerned the government more than anything else was that of representation from the northern provinces. Would the traditional ruling class win the elections in the Soviet Zone or would new men, with different ideas and loyalties, emerge from obscurity? Until the time of the 1943 elections no strong anti-communist center had been organized. Thus the entire burden of combating Russian or Communist influence in the election fell to the government. The elections were conducted in an atmosphere of rivalry among Britain, the Soviet Union, and the Iranian groups trying for power. Except for the Communist Tudeh party the contenders fought for seats on a personal rather than an ideological basis. There were no party machines to back up the candidates. Very often the electoral struggle was reduced to the amount of money a candidate could distribute among the voters. These expenses, it was publicly claimed, would be refunded to the deputies during their two-year tenure in the parliament.

The Parliament was finally elected at the beginning of 1944. It differed from the former in one important respect. It seated a block of eight communist deputies who knew what they wanted and who behaved like a disciplined group. Of the remainder of the deputies, 60 per cent new and 40 per cent re-elected. Toward the end of the election period one of the papers stated bluntly:

"The newly elected deputies are not representatives of the nation. They have been elected either by bribery or through the intervention of the authorities."

The deputies divided themselves into a majority and minority, yet neither the majority nor the minority could be regarded as fixed in character, for a marked instability in their composition prevailed. This, in turn, resulted in instability of the cabinets, which could never count upon consistent and prolonged support of any parliamentary majority. Yet the deputies redoubled their interferences in administrative affairs and their pressure for favors and jobs.

Cabinet responsibility to such a Parliament meant governmental instability. A cabinet usually fell when it had exhausted its power to supply the deputies with personal favors, patronage, and "pork." A government never fell on a question of policy or principle, except perhaps at those times when it had incurred the determined displeasure of the Soviet Embassy. No prime minister ever had behind him a united disciplined majority with principles and a program.

Instability of Majlis and government and the weakness of cabinets produced serious effects on the ministries and the administration. Far from confining their interests and activities to the political game or to high policy, the ministers felt that they must take direct charge of



the organization, personnel, and operations of the ministries. None had had opportunity to learn the art of administration or to gain experience in it. Nevertheless, most of the ministers launched ambitious half-baked plans which their successors discarded. All ministers, with rare exceptions, devoted themselves to finding jobs for their relatives and friends and for the relatives and friends of the deputies.

Occasionally a good minister, favored by luck, could accomplish something constructive, while a bad one usually found time and opportunity to replenish his fortune.

The condition outlined above produced demoralization in the administration and something worse than inefficiency. In this system, honest and able civil servants were dismissed or demoted to make room for political appointees, while the dishonest, lazy, and incompetent ordinarily escaped retribution and frequently won advancement. Since ministers liked to appoint but found it difficult to dismiss, the number of employees multiplied, while their morale and usefulness declined. In 1943 the number of government civil employees had risen to about 100,000, four or five times the number in 1927. A profusion of regulations had been issued by the council of Ministers. Advancement depended upon length of service, a system that effectively killed initiative and raised inferior men to the top positions. This system and the manner of applying it worked injustice to all worthy employees, young and educated along with old and experienced.

These shattering conditions were quite favorable for the war time policy of Russia which did not waste a good opportunity, to carry on her

revolutionary tactics through a variety of means. Soviet organs did everything possible to upset Iran's stability and to create conditions for a violent change. She supported the communist party (Tudeh), whose leaders owed liberation from Reza Shah's jails to the Red Army, stirred up labor trouble, supported a number of pro-Soviet newspapers, bribed politicians and intellectuals, and operated a huge propaganda machine. However, in the course of 1944, when political cleavage between the growing Tudeh party and the conservative elements of the nation became more acute, one could perceive a gradual tendency toward crystallization of the blocs and a movement toward greater stability in the Majlis. It seemed that the Communist menace wakened the deputies to the necessity for stronger organization. So a few groups were formed among the deputies cutting across the groups and factions in the Majlis were the political parties, which, after the collapse of Reza Shah's regime, acted as a powerful stimulant for the creation of a number of political groups ambitious to carry out reforms. These parties had practically no past and no tradition upon which they could rely. True, various political parties existed between 1906 and 1921, i.e. between the Iranian revolution and the coup made by Zia ed-Din and Reza Khan. But that was a generation ago. In 1942 political life had to begin anew. The number of parties formed in 1942 and 1943 could be said to be about fifteen. Many of them had either ceased to exist or suspended their activities by 1944. Many were replaced by others. Some splits and fusions took place. The year 1944 was one of considerable political crystallization. In that year the most important parties were the Tudeh, Eradeh-Melli-Mihan, Iran, Mardom, Socialist and Adalat

parties. Two of them, the Tudeh and the Eradeh-Melli, stood apart because of close connection with Russia and Britain. Except for the Tudeh party, none of these parties possessed a regular faction in the parliament. The previously mentioned parliamentary groups in fact had nothing to do organizationally with the political parties; only in some cases did they bear the same names and occasionally there existed an overlapping of leadership. No political party could claim to present a real mass movement. All of them, even those that could boast of membership of prominent government or Majlis leaders, were ephemeral in character and were apt to disappear from the political scene of the nation without leaving any traces whatever. Their programs did not contain anything to permit political and ideological differentiation among them. Some of the papers were the organs of these political parties, but the majority of the newspapers had no stable political affiliation; they belonged to all those who wanted to express their opinions in writing. If the number of political parties was unusual, even more amazing was the sudden growth of the press. From the time of the entry of the Allies into Iran, approximately 150 newspapers and periodicals appeared within two years. They were even more ephemeral than the parties. Many of them were liquidated for lack of funds; many were suspended by the government, which possessed the right under martial law to prohibit any publication. In 1944-1945 the number of newspapers and periodicals published in Teheran alone was approximately 50.

The level and quality of articles in the papers was generally low. If a political adversary was attacked, one could be sure that

an array of vile epithets would be used. Dishonesty constituted the most frequent charge. The journalistic vocabulary abounded in such blunt words as "stealing" or "thieving", and-by way of contrast - the greatest compliment that could be paid by the press to a politician or cabinet member was that he was honest. Because of the inevitable connection of Iranian internal politics with outside influences, the papers often accused various persons and groups of treason.

The government was sensitive to press criticism and made frequent use of its powers of suspension, and in some cases such a suspension acted as a deterrent to further publication. More often, however, the suspended paper reappeared on the next day under a changed name. Often as many as ten or twelve newspapers were suspended by the government on a single day. Since the cabinets did not possess any papers to defend their policies during the war, suspensions became the government's only weapons.

However, in August 1944, the parliamentary groups formed a common bloc in order to create a stable majority. This new bloc did not publish any program, but one could assume that its members represented conservative elements.

In short, one may say, from the viewpoint of the development of Iranian democracy, that, after a long period of dictatorship, the parliament's authority, the parties and the press, despite of all their shortcomings, were playing a useful role to keep alive interest in public affairs and encouraged independent thinking among the people. Although the presence of foreign troops in the country had an upsetting effect on economic life and permitted free exercise of foreign intrigue,

there was a danger that the political ambitious of various groups might be channeled into the wrong direction and that Iran would deviate from the necessary road of reform. But democratic tendencies under the activities of nationalist leaders were clearly visible and with regard to foreign policy, her freedom of movement was limited. In this respect Iran was compelled to adopt a positive attitude for fear of further blows at her independence. In short, the destiny of Iran ceased to be shaped by the Iranians alone. The rivalry of the Big Powers, and their diplomatic and military activities, constituted the main substance of political life during this stormy period. This rivalry, however, was conducted in an Iranian setting, and, therefore, what the Iranians themselves did or did not do was altogether without effect on the course of history. ✓