

## ***Miron Rezun***

### REZA SHAH'S COURT MINISTER: TEYMOURTASH

The reign of Reza Shah characterized a difficult and controversial period in the contemporary history of Iran. Properly speaking, it may be said that it represented not only the beginning of the Pahlavi dynasty which Reza Shah had founded in December 1925, but also what could be considered pioneering efforts designed to modernize a feudal system in a land that had in the past commanded a venerable culture. The scholarly literature dealing with the earlier period of Reza Shah's rule has developed almost in response to continuing interest shown in things Iranian, and particularly in the country's recent history.

An examination of the existing bibliography shows that both the West and the Soviet Union have produced an equal share of the studies on Reza Shah. In Iran itself, however, due to the restrictions and constraints imposed on the study of this period by the Pahlavi government, Iranian publications, when the Shah was in power, appeared to concentrate on studies of previous dynasties, or on subjects other than politics. Writings of high caliber by renowned Iranian historians have nevertheless appeared – even if sporadically. But a large percentage of the books that were published with the political history of the country in mind were – for all practical purposes – either translations of carefully selected material of Western scholarly literature, or duly recognized and approved classical works. In this respect, the National Library in Teheran used to publish an annual list of such books: *Kitabhay-i-Iran*, and periodicals: *Intisharat-i-Iran*. The Teheran Institute for International, Political and Economic Studies, which was Mohammed Reza Shah's think tank, dealt with subjects which had a direct bearing on contemporary Iranian foreign policy, leaving little scope for questions of recent history.

While biographies of Reza Shah – both old and new – are not few in number, they are at one in depicting the Shah as a “*deus ex machina*,” come to save Persia from the throes of chaos, feudalism and stagnation.<sup>1</sup> This view reinforces the assumption that the apotheosis of the first Pahlavi monarch in the twentieth century would have to be in keeping with the greatness associated with the ancient rulers of Iran that had originated with the Achaemenids and has become a characteristic feature of the political tradition of the nation.

Further inquiry into the Pahlavi mystique, however, should sooner or later illuminate other factors which have hitherto been only vaguely accounted for. In fact, a more objective reassessment of much of the evidence obtained should provide some indication that Reza Shah was decidedly not the only individual

acting in Persia. Moreover, it seems difficult to accept the generally held contention that a semi-literate Persian cossack trooper – albeit possessed of a strong and willful personality – should be exclusively credited with the first, progressive social changes wrought in the fabric of Iranian society and in the shaping of its foreign policy, without the assistance of better informed supporters. Research on Iran has led this writer to discover scant reference made to Reza Shah's Court Minister, Abdul Hossein Khan Teymourdash, the person responsible for having brought Reza to the throne, and who, until 1932, was the most powerful personality in Persia next to the Shah. To be sure, passing mention of the Court Minister's contribution to his country has been made; but so far most of it has been hearsay or undocumented, obviously owing to the mystery surrounding his disgrace and to the events attending his trial, his imprisonment, and ultimately his demise.

Yet, sufficient primary and secondary sources have always existed to warrant an article, or even a tentative biography of his life. This may at least establish his positive role as a statesman, until further research and a more comprehensive study could adduce documentary evidence to prove otherwise.<sup>2</sup>

Teymourdash was born into a family of Mongol stock belonging to the Persian nobility, and inherited extensive lands along the Russian border in the Persian province of Khorasan. As a young lad he had been sent to St. Petersburg to be educated at an Imperial Russian Military School.<sup>3</sup> Travelling widely throughout Western Europe, he had become fluent in several languages,<sup>4</sup> and upon his return to Persia, which at the turn of this century had been burgeoning with the constitutional movement, he set out on a political career and was elected, at the age of 26, as deputy to the 2nd Persian Majlis.<sup>5</sup> He is reputed to have been the most cultivated and educated Persian of his time, with a thoroughly Occidental outlook on life. It has been asserted, too, that he was the first to have translated Turgenyev and Lermontov from the original into Persian.<sup>6</sup>

His name and aristocratic background presumably helped gather round him the intellectuals of Teheran, who, issuing from the disintegration brought to Persia by the First World War, had decided to weld a centrally organized authority with the concurrence of the best military formation available in Persia at that time: the Persian Cossack Brigade. This unit had successfully been brought under the direction of Reza Khan after its commanding Russian officers had lost their base of support due to the revolutionary upheaval in Russia and to the Civil War which ensued there.<sup>7</sup>

When Zia-ed-Din had been dismissed from his post as Prime Minister and subsequently sent into exile, it is probable that Teymourdash was – although it cannot be proven conclusively – about to fill the prime ministerial post vacated by Zia-en-Din. When this failed, because Reza Khan took the post himself in 1923, it is likely Teymourdash supported Reza Khan. In so doing, he quickly came to exercise two important functions: first as a Minister of Public Works,<sup>8</sup> and second, as a military governor over several Iranian provinces, where the ever-present recalcitrance of various semi-independent tribes inhabiting the peripheral regions necessitated their submission to the central authority.<sup>9</sup>

The close collaboration between the two men had proved to be of considerable benefit to Reza. It was Teymourtash who had been instrumental in helping to pass a law in the Majlis providing for the security and defense forces to pass exclusively under the control of Reza Khan, a move that had made the latter the supreme Commander-in-Chief of the army.<sup>10</sup> In 1925 Teymourtash again supported Reza, when, with other Majlis deputies, he drafted an Act, the *Inqiraz*, which was subsequently passed in the Majlis on October 31, by a vote of 80 to 5, legalizing the overthrow of the Qajar dynasty. The *Inqiraz* had, nevertheless, been hotly debated in the Majlis and – for different reasons – had met with opposition from some members of the rival factions, notably from men like Muddaris of the Shia religious leadership, and Mossadeq, who held the passage of such a bill to be unconstitutional.<sup>11</sup>

Towards the end of 1925 Reza was thus able to acquire dictatorial powers and to proclaim himself Shahinshah of Iran: Teymourtash was appointed Minister of Court, and in 1926 alone directed the formal arrangements with regard to the coronation.<sup>12</sup> There is no indication, however, that Teymourtash, though himself a constitutionalist, favoured the establishment of a republic in Persia at this stage in his career; there is, on the contrary, every reason to believe that his intentions lay in unifying a disparate Persia under the strong leadership of a new monarch. Whether he ardently believed in the concept of an hereditary monarchy is an open question. With Reza's consolidation of power in the twenties, Teymourtash assumed the leadership of the nationalist-oriented intelligentsia, and himself brought into being the reforms that were designed to modernize – even if only outwardly – the country along Western European lines.<sup>13</sup>

Under Reza's dictatorship the deputies of Parliament were not elected as members of political parties, but as individuals. To remedy this situation, Teymourtash, at the head of the triumvirate, founded the *Iran-i-No*, New Iran, party in July 1927. The party's program was socially progressive, bearing the motto "loyalty to the Shah and devotion to progress."<sup>14</sup> The move signalled the appearance of three more parties: *Taraqqi*, Progressives; *Tajaddud*, Revival; and *Iran-i-Javan*, Young Iran; the latter was soon absorbed by *Iran-i-No* which became the majority party of the government. But in September of the same year Reza nipped the life of the party in the bud. In his biography of the ruler, Dr. Wilber writes:

*Iran-i-No* actively sought members from among government officials and merchants and was thought to have anti-foreign sentiments, exemplified in the opposition of its leaders to the continuation of the Millspaugh mission . . . It was suspected that Reza Shah had felt that a powerful party might agitate for the establishment of a republic, that he thought that it would give Teymourtash too much power and prestige, or that he may have yielded to the opposition of the religious leaders.<sup>15</sup>

The parliamentary system, a legacy of the constitutional movement, was hardly more than a facade and servile tool in the hands of the Persian Court. However, Teymourtash probably did try to introduce parliamentary reforms by encouraging the formation of political parties within the framework of a constitutional monarchy. Be that as it may, whatever increase in power the Majlis

would have gained, Teymourash was not blind to the fact that the logical consequence of this would have been a diminution of the Shah's supremacy.

On the other hand, the Court Minister also knew that Persia was in large measure dependent on Great Britain through the long-standing interests of the Anglo-Persian Oil Company and of the Imperial Bank. In the view of Teymourash, a strong government party, rallying the support of the articulate classes, might well have served as a pillar of the monarch in his opposition to the British presence and the elimination of its influence from the country. The need for such a party was justified if we bear in mind that, however anti-British Reza Shah may have appeared, he was far too weak to act alone against the British government or to oppose any of its interests. In fact, it would not be an overstatement to say that the Persian sovereign was quite at the mercy of the British in order to remain on the throne. A secret memorandum drafted by Sir Knatchbull-Hugessen, and submitted to the Foreign Office two and a half years after Teymourash's death, may illustrate this point:

In long periods of disorder and weakness in the past we have had to adopt direct methods to protect our vital interests . . . if regime is suddenly overturned a republican form of government would never last in Persia, for Iran will never be blessed with an organized form of government unless it has a strong man at the center . . . our course would not appear difficult – as soon as we were satisfied that the new Sovereign or President was in full control we should presumably open relations with him, the Oil Royalties would be paid in due course to him and things would go on as before. In the event of (chaos) it might become necessary to take precautionary measures to protect the oil fields but the Oil Royalties would give us an important hold. None of the aspirants to power would wish to risk prejudicing the prospects of abundant payments and, on our side, we should, I presume, be able to have the last word as to who the recipient of the Royalties should be. In such circumstances it would be most important that a clear understanding should exist between His Majesty's Gov't and the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company that the royalties should only be paid to the candidate or conqueror approved by his Majesty's government. I presume this is already assured.<sup>16</sup>

The role Teymourash played in the foreign affairs of Persia can be documented in greater detail. In addition to a number of studies and personal memoirs on the subject of Persia, the major part of the essential sources may be gleaned from foreign policy documents and the archives of those countries which have had a traditional interest in Persia: Great Britain, the USSR, Germany, and the United States. No Court Minister since Teymourash has wielded so much power, or for that matter, carried as much responsibility in the realm of foreign affairs. In fact, during his lifetime the office of the Persian Foreign Minister was more or less nominal:<sup>17</sup> at one point it was held by Mohammed Ali Khan Farzin, and at another time by Mohammed Ali Foroughi. Yet, it was always subject to the authority of Teymourash, and he, as Court Minister, was only superseded by Reza Shah. In this capacity it was possible for Teymourash to negotiate treaties and commercial agreements with representatives of foreign governments, and more often than not, it was he alone who represented Persia's interests abroad.<sup>18</sup>

It is exceedingly difficult to ascertain where Teymourash's political sym-

pathies lay. It has been suggested by some that, because of his intimate association with everything Russian since his youth, his sentiments were naturally with the Soviets.<sup>19</sup> But this argument must necessarily subscribe to the view that he had been sympathetic to and welcomed both a proletarian revolutionary movement and the new order established in Russia following the October Revolution. Such a view would then contradict the upbringing and world outlook he had acquired at an exclusive Military Academy in Tsarist Russia – unless Teymourash later himself became convinced that the seizure of power by the Soviets in Russia was a turn for the better, and that, as far as Persia was concerned, it was to be emulated. Academic circles in Britain considered him an Anglophobe, sympathizing with Russia.<sup>20</sup>

The Soviets themselves are extremely ambivalent about him, and one Soviet journalist, residing in Persia at this time, later wrote in his memoirs:

Teymourash was without any doubt a statesman of the first magnitude. Some people have tried to portray (Teymourash) as a friend of our country, associated as he was with Russia's general culture, upbringing and education. These assertions are without foundation . . . Teymourash wanted the northern frontiers sealed off, he sought to hinder the flow of information about life in the Soviet Union into Iran, and did not desire the growth of Soviet power; he was afraid of it.<sup>21</sup>

In this context, too, it is noteworthy that in a conversation with the German Minister, von Blücher, Teymourash is quoted as having said: "Russia will sooner or later become a victim of internal disorders."<sup>22</sup>

However, it would not be an exaggeration to conclude that Teymourash did possess strong pro-Russian proclivities, at least culturally; and it is likely that the nature of his fondness for things Russian – however distrustful he may have been of the Soviet political regime – was such that his position in the Persian government was at times susceptible of being exploited by the Soviet leadership to promote Soviet interests. In support of this fact is evidence published in the West in the early thirties by George Agabekov, the former Resident Chief of the Soviet OGPU in Persia, who had concurrently acted as official attaché to the Soviet embassy in Teheran.<sup>23</sup>

Although official Soviet documents on foreign policy contain no reference to the Agabekov disclosures, in general it can be safely established from this evidence that, in formal talks with the Court Minister, Soviet ambassadors continually pointed to the strategic importance to Persia of the islands of Bahrein, and especially to their position in the Persian Gulf which could potentially serve as a British naval base in the event of a collision between Persia and Britain. Indeed, as early as 1927 and 1928, such moral support from the Soviets definitely reinforced Persia's persistent claim to the islands throughout this period.<sup>24</sup> Further, with the severance of British-Soviet relations in May of 1927, the Soviets alerted Teymourash to the possibility of formally liquidating the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company Concession in southern Persia: an act which had been long since nurtured by both Persian nationalists and Soviet strategists.<sup>25</sup>

On the whole, Soviet diplomatic overtures elicited a favourable response from the Persian Court Minister. There is sufficient evidence to indicate that Teymourash shared a community of interests with the Soviet leadership, a fact

which may explain why he was not averse to Soviet suggestions regarding the conclusion of a treaty of security and neutrality. Such an accord was above all designed to safeguard the USSR's southern flank against the strong presence of the British in Persia, India and Mesopotamia. In Moscow, in 1926, Teymourash went so far as to assure Chicherin that he alone possessed the relevant full powers to sign any agreement regulating Soviet-Persian relations.<sup>26</sup>

These talks between Soviet leaders and Teymourash were held in an atmosphere of mutual understanding and confidence; and Teymourash did not conceal this later in a conversation he held with Sir Reginald Hoare in Constantinople. He said, "he had spent thirty-six days at Moscow, and he had spent thirty nights from 10 P.M. till 4 A.M. in discussions with Mr. Chicherin."<sup>27</sup> The British government, however, had always viewed Persian-Soviet negotiations with extreme apprehension: The Foreign Office suspected that the Soviet leaders were intent on creating an Asiatic Pact, which, in the British view, could only be interpreted as nothing less than a mutual alliance with the Soviets directed against British interests. In order to forestall such an eventuality the British began to appeal to various Anglophile elements in the Persian cabinet to exert a moderating influence on both Teymourash and Reza Shah. The power of Teymourash was especially feared, so much so that it was minuted in the Foreign Office on the 30th of July 1926 that, "Teymourash, the Minister of the Court and most intimate adviser of the Shah is a clever and unscrupulous man and was educated in Russia."<sup>28</sup>

After the British Minister's interview with one such Anglophile, Vossuq-ed Dowleh, he proceeded to compile a report on Soviet-Persian relations which was subsequently circulated in the British Cabinet. At the end of it we read: "All I wish to do is to leave you under no misapprehension regarding the present situation, and to convey to the Persian government that there exists somewhere a limit beyond which we cannot allow them to transgress."<sup>29</sup>

While the Soviet Union was, in effect, contemplating a network of bilateral treaties of neutrality at this time with Persia, Afghanistan and Turkey, the idea of an "Asiatic Pact" was, at least so far as Teymourash was concerned, unrealistic under the prevailing political conditions. He explained this frankly to Sir Reginald Hoare when being questioned about the pact by stating that Persia's only interest lay in liquidating all outstanding questions with her neighbours in order to be able to devote all her energy to the creation of wealth in a country which was desperately poor. He also added that, with all her neighbours – Russia, Turkey, Iraq, Afghanistan and Great Britain – there were issues to be resolved; their settlement was the business of the day, and political combinations involving embarrassing commitments were not envisaged.<sup>30</sup>

Finally, in January of 1927 Reza Shah temporarily recalled his Court Minister from Moscow in the hope of transferring these negotiations to Teheran.<sup>31</sup> The event perhaps marked the first time the monarch had acted independently of Teymourash, and his desire to do so was clearly motivated by his greater fear of the British, with whom he had had to reckon in view of the royalty payments accruing to the Persian treasury from the APOC concession, and whom he would not have antagonized unduly.

Despite this episode, it would nevertheless be incorrect to say that Reza alone had begun to court Great Britain at the expense of Soviet Russia. Nor would it be correct to presume, as some writers have suggested, that monarch and minister spoke different political languages. Against the background of the international political environment of the mid-twenties, that is, to the extent that the USSR was developing socialism within its own country and becoming increasingly isolated, it merely afforded Persia the expediency of playing off one power against another. In this way, by concluding friendly treaties with the Soviet Union in 1927, and by showing that the Persian government was willing to become more amenable to Soviet policy, Persia was able to exert the necessary pressure on the British government when she needed British recognition of her plans to abolish the system of capitulations.<sup>32</sup>

By the same token, when Turkey and Afghanistan had concluded a treaty of friendship and economic cooperation on 25 May 1928, four days later Teymourdash went to see the Soviet ambassador, Davtyan, to explain that he considered this treaty a threat to Persian interests, and as such, that it would be regarded by him as proof of the aggressive intentions of Turkey and Afghanistan against his country.<sup>33</sup> He intimated to the Soviet ambassador that, insofar as the treaty could be construed as a military alliance, the Persian government might be compelled to seek security arrangements with Britain, should the Soviet Union fail to guarantee Persia's territorial integrity against Panturanian encroachments.<sup>34</sup>

Here then was a graphic example of the Court Minister's duplicity. Teymourdash had been expecting a scheduled visit to Teheran by the Afghan King, Amanullah Khan, with the likelihood of entering into treaty negotiations himself;<sup>35</sup> and it was known that a recent understanding had been reached between his government and the British respecting the grant of transit routes to a British airline flying over Persia.<sup>36</sup> No doubt, by taking advantage of the isolated position of the Soviet government, Teymourdash consciously endeavoured to blackmail the Soviets, and at the same time to justify Persia's accommodation with Great Britain.

Curiously, the Court Minister's apparent responsiveness to the Soviet government in many matters did not ease the plight of the Persian Communists inside their own country, nor did it further their movement abroad, where they remained irreconcilably opposed to the Shah. The irony of this situation was that, so far as it served Soviet interests, the Shah and his Court Minister were lauded by Moscow as the principal leaders of a bourgeois national liberation movement which was struggling against foreign domination. Yet in Persian Communist circles this situation appeared quite different, becoming evident only when Teymourdash visited Berlin on September 8, 1928. A pamphlet was distributed on his arrival in that city by Persian students (belonging to the Persian Communist Party abroad), describing the visit as an attempt to "sell the peasants and workers of Persia to the German capitalists."<sup>37</sup> The Communists claimed that the Shah and Teymourdash had transformed Persia into a British vassal state and were building a railway in preparation for war against the USSR.<sup>38</sup>

The ban on Communist activity in Persia did not deter the Soviet from employing its own Secret Service for the purpose of achieving certain prescribed objectives in the country, with the Soviet O.G.P.U. frequently resorting to methods which did not fight shy of deviousness. It was later learned from Agabekov, for instance, that the Soviet, *inter alia*, had intended to test the Court Minister's sincerity in 1927 during the course of the treaty negotiations between the Persian and Soviet governments. This had been accomplished by making use of dispatches, sent by Teymourash to his Persian colleague in Moscow, without the knowledge of both the Court Minister and his negotiator. To do this, of course, the Persian cipher expert in the Council of Ministers had successfully been bribed beforehand by O.G.P.U. agents; and the result was that the Soviet government knew the details of Teymourash's intentions in the negotiations, and consequently, whether his earlier pronouncements to the Soviet leaders were likely to be fulfilled or not.<sup>39</sup>

In much the same way, at least before 1930, Soviet Intelligence had maintained several agents in Iran, some of whom had been directly recruited from Teymourash's own relations. One such agent was an official of the Ministry of Public Works and a close relative of Teymourash. Agent Nr. 4, as he was called, had two brothers: agents Nr. 8 and 9, who worked in the same Ministry. Their task was largely to peruse various government correspondence and documents, and then photograph any of the relevant material for the O.G.P.U.<sup>40</sup>

Teymourash, not surprisingly, was thought to have been implicated in some of these Soviet activities. The reason why has now become clear. Actually what had first appeared and caused so much speculation was not in book form as cited above, but rather a series of articles published in the Paris newspaper *Le Matin*, between the 26th and 30th of October 1930. It is these accounts of Soviet subversion that pointed an accusing finger at the Court Minister by implying that he had been working closely with Loganovsky, chargé d'affaires at the Soviet embassy in Teheran.<sup>41</sup> Not a word was said about the important discrepancies between these articles and the memoirs published later by either British officials or Iranians in responsible positions. Only Charles Hart commented in his report to the U.S. Department of State, "I have no way of ascertaining in which papers these articles appeared, but I understand they are not included in the Agabekov book."<sup>42</sup>

Indeed, on close examination of the Russian version of Agabekov's memoirs – and he did originally write these in Russian – it transpires that Teymourash does not himself figure in these descriptions as an agent of the Soviet Union. In the French and English editions of Agabekov's account, there is a serious anomaly in that the name of the Court Minister sending instructions to his representative in Moscow is not even given; its omission at the time, however, appeared to be more a case of faulty translation from the original than an effort to conceal the Court Minister's identity.<sup>43</sup>

Having left the affairs of state in the hands of Teymourash, Reza Shah lived a far more reclusive life than has been thought.<sup>44</sup> If anything, he seems to have been largely preoccupied with the newly created armed forces of the country and with the problem of internal security. This was understandable since the



military remained his major base of support. He elevated his most trusted officers to the position of landed proprietors; and, indeed, it has long been generally recognized that he himself strove to rise well above his own humble origins by the rapid acquisition of vast tracts of land in northern Persia, becoming in due course the largest land-owner in the country.<sup>45</sup> These were principally to be bequeathed to his son when he came of age and succeeded to the throne. The ubiquity of Teymourtash's position in the life of the nation soon aroused Reza's fear for both his own position and that of the Crown Prince, Mohammed Reza. A contemporary writer, well-disposed to the Shah, subsequently pointed out that most of Teheran's politicians had begun to regard Teymourtash as the true creator of the new Iran, even referring to him as the sovereign's logical successor.<sup>46</sup>

Responding to his legitimate fears, the ruler, supported by his army, now began to expand his police force with the appointment of General Ayrom as Chief of Police of Teheran on April 6, 1931. While this could not be called a state security organization in the strict sense of the word, it served effectively to enforce the Shah's ban on all political opposition in the country as well as ensuring the safety of his person. A journalist who was a spectator to these events in 1931, described the situation thus:

Ayrom was not only entrusted with the safety of the Shah, but also with the task of preventing the emergence of a political force or of a political figure capable of opposing the Shah. . . . Obviously, the most likely rival of the Shah appeared to be Teymourtash: in Teheran's political circles and among diplomats, it was said that General Ayrom was keeping a close watch on him. It was rumoured that the Shah sought a favourable pretext to rid himself of his inordinately energetic and talented Minister.<sup>47</sup>

Charles Hart was soon able to report to the U.S. State Department that Ayrom's appointment coincided with the determination of the Persian government to "combat Bolshevism."<sup>48</sup> Anonymous letters began to stream in to the Shah, alleging that Teymourtash had received funds from Soviet concession seekers.<sup>49</sup> Idle rumours spread throughout Teheran that while gambling at the Iran Club, Teymourtash sometimes lost sums of up to 10,000 Tomans (equivalent of 1,500 pounds gold sterling) in one night.<sup>50</sup> It was not difficult, therefore, for the news media and members in the government elite – both in Iran and in the West – to further emphasize the link between Teymourtash and Soviet activities.

Within two months of the appointment of General Ayrom, a military tribunal accused thirty-two Iranians of spying for a foreign power on the evidence of the Agabekov disclosures. Twenty-seven of them were finally convicted, and among those sentenced to death included the government cipher clerk mentioned above. But no formal charge was as yet brought against Teymourtash, who, outwardly at least, still enjoyed the royal favor.

Between the spring of 1931 and the latter part of December 1932, when the Court Minister was ultimately dismissed from his duties, a multitude of events took place which were not only incidental to his downfall, but which also precipitated the decision of the ruler to move against him.

Reza Shah may have hesitated throughout the whole of 1931 to permanently

oust his Court Minister, in view of the preparations which were being made at this time by the Majlis to implement a law, conceived earlier by Teymourtash, for the introduction of a legal monopoly on Persia's foreign trade. This government monopoly was intended to balance monetary values on specific items of import and export in order to protect newly created Persian industries from foreign competition and to offset somewhat the impact on Iran of the world depression which was rife.<sup>51</sup>

The same worldwide economic depression was largely the cause of the reduction in income to the Iranian treasury from APOC royalty payments due to the sudden fall in profits from the diminished marketing of petroleum. For over two years prior to this, negotiations between the Persian government and the Anglo-Persian Oil Company had achieved no settlement on all the outstanding issues relating to the D'Arcy Concession and the Armitage-Smith Agreement.<sup>52</sup> As early as August 12, 1928, Teymourtash had addressed a letter to Sir John Cadman, then president of the Oil Company, in which he stated that the concession itself, which had been granted under a dynasty long since deposed, before the establishment of representative institutions in Persia, was of dubious validity.<sup>53</sup> But this is not to say that Teymourtash had categorically come out in favour of cancelling the concession. There is sufficient proof to indicate his views on this particular subject by referring to a letter written by him in 1926 to Isa Khan Feiz, who was the Iranian official representing Iran's interests with the APOC in London.<sup>54</sup> It attests to the fact that Teymourtash had been the first Persian statesman to unequivocally demand (among other conditions pertaining to the employment and training of Persians by the Company): the Persian government's ownership of its oil; that the APOC was to work the oil deposits provided it allowed Persia 25% of the shares in the Company; that the pipeline monopoly be abolished; and that there should be a royalty paid for each ton of oil extracted.<sup>55</sup>

Matters had come to a head in 1931 as a result of the world economic crisis. Sir John Cadman made it known to the Court Minister as early as August 7 of that year, that the revision of the concession could not be considered as it was "in excess of anything which the Company could accept."<sup>56</sup>

At the end of 1931 the long drawn-out negotiations between Cadman and Teymourtash in Geneva, Paris, and London yielded few positive results, although a draft agreement had temporarily been agreed upon and sent to Teheran for consideration.<sup>57</sup> These terms proved unacceptable to the Iranian government and following Reza Shah's formal cancellation of the concession in November of 1932,<sup>58</sup> the government of Great Britain itself intervened in the dispute and submitted the case before the Council of the League of Nations in December.<sup>59</sup>

In January of 1932 Teymourtash visited the U.S.S.R. The speech he delivered during his stay in the Kremlin contained nothing out of the ordinary which would have compromised both his political sentiments and his position with regard to the ongoing oil controversy.<sup>60</sup> It was clear from Soviet press reports that the Soviet government had been following the Anglo-Iranian crisis with great interest; and as could be expected, from the very outset of the dispute, had extended its moral support to the Iranian side.<sup>61</sup>

On the other hand, precisely what passed between Teymourtash and the Soviet leaders behind-the-scenes cannot possibly be gauged. Be that as it may, rumours suddenly began to spread, no doubt circulated by his enemies and ill-wishers both in Iran and Great Britain, to the effect that Teymourtash had misplaced a suitcase in Moscow, containing very important secret documents which had been seized by the Soviet authorities.<sup>62</sup>

Such concrete evidence as there is only reveals that while in Moscow Teymourtash had agreed to initial an agreement which had for some time been the subject of discussions between the two governments, acknowledging this time – no doubt in cognizance of the Shah's suspicions – that he was not in a position to actually sign it, as he lacked the requisite full powers. The agreement, similar to the Soviet-Turkish protocol of December 1929, would have provided for a five-year extension of the 1927 Treaty of Neutrality and Non-Agression.<sup>63</sup>

It has been alleged that upon his return from Moscow Teymourtash proceeded to draft an agreement with a view to enlarging the concession rights of the Soviet government in the mixed Soviet-Persian Oil Company, called "Kevir-Kurian." The bill was adopted at a Persian Cabinet meeting on August 27, 1932, after it had been vigorously opposed by a number of ministers.<sup>64</sup>

This project, of which no first-hand evidence has been put forward, was thought to envision greater Soviet participation in the development of Persia's oil resources, and it consequently inspired Persian Anglophiles with fears of an increased Soviet presence. If there is any reason to believe that Teymourtash ever submitted this plan to the government, it becomes difficult to comprehend why he would have done so. Was it to further Soviet interests, or was it to play on the fears of the British by using the trump of bringing the Soviet through the back door and thus strengthen the Persian bargaining position vis-a-vis the British in the APOC dispute? It is doubtful that the Court Minister entertained such designs, for by enlarging Soviet concession rights in the Kevir-Kurian, which was located in the Semnan district east of Teheran, he would certainly not have benefited Moscow so far as the exploitation of oil was concerned, as it had earlier been established that oil deposits in the Semnan district were negligible. Indeed, Teymourtash himself had engaged the services of a French company for prospecting purposes, and it was known that drilling in the area had not produced the expected results.<sup>65</sup>

Whatever one is led to think of the proposed plan, the joint company of Kevir-Kurian did exist. It had been confirmed by Teymourtash in 1924 (when he was Minister of Public Works), and for several years thereafter formed a bone of contention between the Persian government and the Anglo-Persian Oil Company which contested this confirmation on the ground that the Semnan district was included in the D'Arcy concession.<sup>66</sup> It was known for a fact that the Soviet government held 65 percent of the Company's stock,<sup>67</sup> but it is highly improbable that the Soviets at that time would have wanted to invest further in what manifestly appeared to be so unprofitable a venture. In 1944, when the Soviet government actually did begin to seek oil concessions in Iran by despatching Deputy Foreign Minister Kavtaradze to Teheran, the subject of Kevir-Kurian temporarily reemerged. The Soviet envoy, however, was scarcely interested in Semnan oil; he made it quite plain to the Iranian govern-

ment that the object of his mission was to secure a concession in the northern provinces.<sup>68</sup>

Faced with the difficulties arising out of the APOC dispute, the Anglophile elements in Persia, fearing the Court Minister as one to be reckoned with in future, and opposed to the manner in which Teymourash conducted the nation's foreign policy, were prepared – not without substantial inducements – to put obstacles in his diplomatic path and to nourish the suspicions of the Shah. Prior to his formal dismissal from his duties, fresh rumours had begun to spread to the effect that Teymourash was striving to overthrow the monarchy and that he thereupon intended to become the first President of a Persian Republic.<sup>69</sup> The British press, too, contributed to this unbridled speculation by running a series of articles in sudden praise of the Court Minister, intentionally declaring him to be the likely heir to the throne.<sup>70</sup>

To be sure, by now the Shah did not need much convincing from quarters inimical to his Minister, but the allusions to the succession of his dynasty could not fail to affect the sensibilities and fears the ruler had harbored over the years. In consequence, Reza decided to act against Teymourash, but not before, as has already been noted, he had first cancelled the APOC concession.

It has been wrongly thought by some that the Shah arrested Teymourash because he had suspected his Minister of planning a secret deal with the Anglo-Persian Oil Company.<sup>71</sup> In January of 1933 Teymourash was somehow himself given to understand that he was being suspected of dealing secretly with the APOC. In an excerpt taken from his last writings, written in French, we read:

Qu'aux yeux de Sa Majesté, selon les informations reçues, ma faute serait de soutenir la Compagnie et les Anglais (ironie du sort. C'est la politique anglaise qui m'a fichu par terre et continue à préparer ma perte), je me voyais obligé de donner un démenti immédiat à ce mensonge lancé par la presse anglaise. Or, j'ai écrit une lettre à Sardar As'ad en disant que je n'ai jamais rien signé avec la Compagnie et que notre dernière séance avec Sir John Cadman et les autres étaient rompues.<sup>72</sup>

After spending some time under house arrest, in February 1933 Teymourash was interned in the Qasr-i Qajar prison to await trial. From here he was brought before a civil court on a charge of embezzlement and graft. If the Shah had suspected him of treason, he was certainly reluctant to acknowledge this or any other fact which might at this juncture have blatantly revealed his innermost fears for the throne. In any case, charges of treason would have had to be submitted before a military court, and the burden of proof – especially if it had to be fabricated – would admittedly have antagonized a foreign power. According to Persian sources, the trial was held in camera under the provisions of article 327 of the Code of Civil Procedure.<sup>73</sup> It is interesting to note that, while there was talk of treason in official circles, most of Teheran's newspapers had already been instructed to prepare the way for the indictment in another way: they spoke of Teymourash's interference with the affairs of the National Bank and of his involvement in irregular practices on the foreign exchange market.<sup>74</sup>

Such an accusation against Teymourash was, in the eyes of the Shah and of his Police, clearly an expedient pretext to commit him to prison. Its conve-

nience to the regime seemed all the more logical since corruption in the government was one manifestation of Persian life which had not been eradicated with the coming to power of Reza Shah. Indeed, at that very same time, Dr. Lindenblatt, the head of the National Bank, was also the subject of legal investigations in connection with embezzlement; and an intimate friend of Teymourdash, Diba, who was the Persian treasurer, was arraigned on a charge of selling places in the Majlis for two thousand tomans each.<sup>75</sup> In his report to the British Foreign Office, Sir Reginald Hoare, the British Minister, did not conceal his misgivings as to the charges leveled against the Persian Minister of Court:

The newspaper report that the Public Prosecutor proceeded on the 21st February to examine the books of the National Bank is hardly compatible with the fact, which everybody has known for a long time, that Teymourdash's dealings with the bank have been under thorough examination since he was placed under arrest, and indeed that, since the beginning of the National Bank scandal, great efforts have been made by the investigators to establish a case against him.<sup>76</sup>

Teymourdash himself wrote in early February 1933:

Mais pour la question de la Banque nationale, c'est tout-à-fait autre chose car dans mon pays, malheureusement, pour les questions d'argent, on croit plutôt à la culpabilité de l'accusé qu'à son innocence. Donc dans l'opinion publique persane et étrangère, je dois déjà être considéré comme un larron.<sup>77</sup>

Neither the circumstances attending his trial nor the verdict were such as should have been considered justifiable or in conformity with the treatment of one normally charged with graft and embezzlement. In the first place, neither of Teymourdash's two lawyers were allowed access to him during the trial, and his first lawyer was ordered to withdraw.<sup>78</sup> Secondly, it was reported that Teymourdash was visibly receiving ill-treatment in prison and that he generally appeared sick.<sup>79</sup> Finally, in Persia corruption of this nature would hardly have been expected to draw the sentence Teymourdash ultimately received: five years solitary confinement over and above a fine of 9,000,000 pounds sterling and 200,000 rials.<sup>80</sup>

A further explanation is perhaps in order. A curious tradition had always existed in Iran which, at upper levels, took the form of a government-sanctioned system of corruption known as cooptation.<sup>81</sup> While the cooptative use of pensions to placate prospective government opponents (a practice inherited from Qajar Persia) may well have been effectively curtailed during the reign of Reza Shah, bribery in government circles was unfortunately still widespread – most Ministers were not loath to refuse substantial recompense for services rendered.

It would not have been difficult, then, to charge a highly-placed person of bribery, given the fact that it had not been considered unnatural to suspect courtiers and ministers to be susceptible to it. Paradoxically, Teymourdash was purported to have earlier rebuked his sovereign for the manner in which the monarch's political opponents and offenders were being charged; he was said to have advised Reza to accuse such individuals of bribery or embezzlement for fear that political charges might provoke critical reactions abroad.<sup>82</sup> This ironical analogy with Teymourdash's own fate had now become only too clear.

In the spring of 1933, with Teymourdash in prison, it was expected that Sir John Cadman would arrive in Teheran for the purpose of settling all outstanding differences in the oil dispute. The British had theretofore insisted that if Iran were to receive larger revenues, the D'Arcy Concession would have to be extended over a longer period of time. Sir John Cadman may have entertained some doubts about his ability to negotiate an acceptable agreement with the representatives of the Persian government, for he began to receive considerable encouragement from his own government. Shortly before his departure for Teheran, Lord Greenway addressed a letter to him in which he stated:

You have a very tough job before you, and I am afraid it may be long drawn-out – the Oriental being a slave to procrastination but, with the Government behind you, you will be in a strong position – much stronger than when you were dealing with T.T. (Teymourdash) – and I have no doubt that you will be able to pull off a new agreement that will be in every way satisfactory to the Anglo-Persian Oil Company.<sup>83</sup>

In mid-April of 1933 Cadman requested an audience with the ruler himself. Although the exact substance of these private discussions will never be known to us,<sup>84</sup> it can be safely assumed that on the strength of these talks with the ruler a new agreement was finally reached, very much like the original British counterproposals. It was subsequently signed on April 29 by Hasan Taqizadeh, the Persian Minister of Finance, and ratified by the Majlis on May 28.<sup>85</sup>

Shortly after the agreement had been concluded, Cadman was reported to have remarked: “The Shah, and only the Shah, made the agreement possible.”<sup>86</sup> Even Taqizadeh, in a speech before the Majlis in 1949, declared:

No one had any authority in this country at that time; it was neither possible nor wise for anyone to resist the will of the absolute ruler of the day . . . . If there were any faults or errors, they were not to be blamed on the unfortunate instruments, but on the master himself, who made a mistake and then could not go back on it. He himself did not want the concession to be extended . . . . But in the end he allowed himself to be persuaded.<sup>87</sup>

It definitely cannot be denied that without the former Court Minister as an obstacle in their path, the actual task of convincing the Shah was made significantly easier for the British. Although it seemed a strange coincidence that an agreement was reached immediately following Teymourdash's ouster, there is no proof conclusive enough to indicate that the Shah had personally accepted a bribe from the British; but, suffice it to say that inducements in the form of threats to the ruler's position on the throne are not to be ruled out.<sup>88</sup>

In prison Teymourdash was kept in strict solitary confinement. For weeks before his death members of his family had been forbidden to visit him, and all the furniture from his cell had been removed. He died, it was generally thought, by slow poisoning, on the evening of 3 October 1933.<sup>89</sup> On October 7, however, the Persian press only reported that the former Court Minister had died in prison of heart failure and pneumonia on the 4th.<sup>90</sup>

Surprisingly enough, the British Minister, Mr. Mallet, who had cause to believe that Teymourdash had always been a confirmed Anglophobe, was visibly

taken aback by the manner in which Teymourdash had ended his life in prison. In his despatch we read:

Thus the man whose brilliant talents had placed him on a pinnacle of power far above all the Shah's subjects, was left by his ungrateful master without even a bed to die upon.<sup>91</sup>

The British had long since suspected Reza Shah to be suffering from stomach cancer, and therefore, it was strongly believed that the murder in prison of the former Court Minister had been imminent, as it was unlikely the ruler would have wanted Teymourdash to survive him.<sup>92</sup> Between the 29th of September and the 5th of October, Leo Karakhan, assistant Soviet commissar for foreign affairs, visited the Iranian capital and held discussions with the Shah, but the purpose of this visit was not an intercession on behalf of Teymourdash, rather it was primarily to restore to normalcy the strained economic relations between the two countries.<sup>93</sup> Characteristically, however, Teheran was shortly afterwards astir with rumours, alleging that Karakhan had agreed to inspect the prison where his old friend Teymourdash had been incarcerated, provided he be spared the sight of actually seeing him, and that Teymourdash was thereafter murdered, so that Karakhan might indeed be prevented from seeing him.<sup>94</sup>

For those who would wish to restore Teymourdash to his rightful place in Iranian history and for others concerned with this particular period, the question which remains uppermost for any academic inquiry is how and why it came to pass that Teymourdash fell from power as ignominiously as he did. Had he instigated a plot against the Shah's life? Had there been any attempt by Teymourdash to establish a republic? From the information that is so far available one can only offer a negative answer to these questions, although one may be easily tempted to see Teymourdash guilty of more than what he was ultimately charged with, guilty, that is, of a serious political crime. But above everything else it is obvious that the major motive force in his downfall was the Shah himself. There are two dimensions which seemingly guided the ruler's thinking in this respect: one subjective, the other objective.

The subjective dimension to the Shah's thinking resided in his abiding conviction that he was to be viewed as the single most dominant figure in Iran upon his accession to the throne. All phenomena in the life of the nation such as social reforms and the industrialization schemes were to be in the end accounted only to him. This inherent identification with the evolution of his nation left no room for any other man or group to command the formulation of day-to-day policy and thereby to constitute a threat to the very succession of Reza's dynasty. The fact that the ruler was physically ailing could only have sharpened his fear of any real or imaginary dangers that lurked behind him. This may explain why he destroyed the political parties which Teymourdash had helped to establish. It will equally explain why he destroyed the governing triumvirate (Teymourdash, Firuz, Davar) which had supported his rise to the throne in the first place. It will be observed, too, that in less than a year after the death of Teymourdash, Sardar As'ad, who served as Minister of War, and whose rise to prominence in the army had been regarded as undermining the ruler's personal control over that body, was also discarded.

The second criterion in Reza's thinking is that dimension which had come to be born of objective realities, organically evolving from the extraneous events which had strengthened the monarch's hand to proceed against a man as powerful as Teymourdash. In this context we find the following: opposition of the religious leaders to the secularizing effects of the social programs which found an outlet in the criticism of the Court Minister, thus offering the ruler a convenient scapegoat; the oil crisis in which Teymourdash played an intransigent role and showed himself to be far more independent of the British Oil Company than the Shah; Teymourdash's amenability to the Soviet leaders as a means to offset British influence which was known by the Shah to be disagreeable to the British government and to the Persian Anglophiles in a system which was still dependent on British capital; and, above all, British intrigue which was, to a large extent, a reaction to the policy orientation pursued by Teymourdash. While it would be going too far to say that the latter was the most likely objective determinant of the Shah's action, it is plausible to conclude that it represented more than just a contributing factor to the elimination of Teymourdash from the political scene.

INSTITUT DE HAUTES ETUDES INTERNATIONALES  
GENEVA

#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Compare, Mohammed Essad Bey, *Reza Shah*. Hutchinson and Co: London 1938; with, Mohammed Asar Foruqi, *The Silver Lion*. Upper India Publishing House, Lucknow 1939; and the more comprehensive but by no means exhaustive, N. Donald Wilber, *Reza Shah Pahlavi: The Resurrection and Reconstruction of Iran*. Exposition Press. New York, 1975.

<sup>2</sup> Archival material relating to Teymourdash from the Iranian Ministry of Court, the Police and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is still not available.

<sup>3</sup> Essad-Bey, *op. cit.* p. 238. Sardar Mu'zzam Khorassani, as Teymourdash was also known, enrolled as a cadet in the Imperial Russian Nikolayevski Cavalry School.

<sup>4</sup> Wipert von Blücher, *Zeitenwende in Iran, Erlebnisse und Beobachtungen*. Biberach an der Riss: Koehler und Voigtländer 1949, p. 149.

<sup>5</sup> The Persian Parliament and Constitution of 1906 was the outcome of the impact on Persia of the Russian Revolution of 1905 and the democratic ferment of the Persian middle class.

<sup>6</sup> This information is based on interviews given to the writer by members of the Teymourdash family both in Iran and abroad.

<sup>7</sup> The coup d'état which took place on February 1921 was led by Reza Khan and the pro-British journalist, Sayyid Zia-ed-Din; it is not without significance that the latter belonged to Teymourdash's circle of intellectuals. Essad-Bey actually points out that this "mission first had been discussed in Teymourdash's house," *op. cit.* p. 239. Further proof that Reza Khan was not the sole author of the coup d'état is attested by the posted proclamation of 22 February 1921. Cited in Wilber, *op. cit.*, p. 65. Reza Shah, of course, later took full credit for the coup and his accession to power.

<sup>8</sup> Wilber, *op. cit.* p. 103. As Minister of Public Works in 1924 Teymourdash presented a bill in the Majlis which was intended to levy a tax on tea and sugar to pay for the construction of a Trans-Iranian railroad. The plan was eventually expedited and fulfilled under Reza Shah in 1937.

<sup>9</sup> Essad-Bey, *op. cit.* pp. 239–240.

<sup>10</sup> Rouholla Ramazani, *The Foreign Policy of Iran 1500–1941*. Charlottesville University of Virginia Press. 1966. p. 185.

<sup>11</sup> *ibid.* p. 186.



<sup>12</sup> Wilber, op. cit. p. 113.

<sup>13</sup> When Teymourdash became Court Minister, a powerful triumvirate emerged in support of the new Shah. It comprised of Teymourdash who, similar to a Grand Vizier, was responsible for much of domestic policy and the conduct of Persian foreign affairs; the Finance Minister, Firouz Mirza (subsequently accused and executed for accepting bribes); and Davar, the Minister of Justice who later committed suicide. Semyon L'vovitch Agaev, *Iran: Vneshniaia Politika i problemy Nezavisimosti 1925–1941*. Izdatel'stvo "Nauka" Institut Vostokovedenia, Moskva. 1971. p. 153. The German Minister in Teheran at this time later wrote in his memoirs: "Teymourdash was not only the eyes, but the very ears and mouth of his Shah." See, Blücher op. cit. p. 225. For an interesting discussion of the fundamental socio-economic transformations in Iran during the inter-war period, see: Amin Banani, *The Modernization of Iran: 1921–1941*. Stanford University Press, Stanford, Ca., 1961. See also: Arnold Toynbee, *Survey of International Affairs for 1928*: Royal Institute of International Affairs, London 1929.

<sup>14</sup> Wilber, op. cit. p. 122.

<sup>15</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>16</sup> FO 371/E 906/239/34 Nr. 279, January 1936. p. 7.

<sup>17</sup> The person in charge of the Foreign Ministry was primarily responsible for all official correspondence with foreign representatives and was looked upon as the Court Minister's clerk. Agaev, op. cit. p. 45.

<sup>18</sup> The "Times," 9 January 1933.

<sup>19</sup> Essad-Bey, op. cit. p. 240.

<sup>20</sup> The Rise and Fall of Teymourdash, *Journal of the Royal Central Asian Society*, vol. 21, ch. 1, 1934, p. 93.

<sup>21</sup> N. G. Pal'gunov, *Tristsat' let: Vospominania Zhurnalisia i diplomata*. Moskva 1964. p. 51–52.

<sup>22</sup> Blücher, op. cit. p. 199.

<sup>23</sup> George Agabekov, For the English version see: *OGPU. The Russian Secret Terror*. Translated by W. Bunn Henry. Brentano: New York 1931.

<sup>24</sup> The Bahrein Islands had once been occupied by Persians. Iran began to claim sovereignty over them by means of a series of notes addressed to the British government on 22 November 1927. The British had earlier entered into treaty arrangements with the Shaykh of Bahrein. For a full account of this problem see: Mostafa Mesbah Zadeh. *La Politique de L'Iran Dans La S.D.N.* Pedone. Paris. 1936.

<sup>26</sup> Ministerstvo Innostranikh Del: Dokumenty Vneshnei Politiki Sovetskogo Soyuza. 1927. vol. 10, Nr. 1. Moskva 1965 p. 9.

<sup>27</sup> Confidential Report from Mr. Hoare to Sir Austin Chamberlain. FO.371/11494/E 6324/644/34.

<sup>28</sup> FO 371/11494/E4500/644/34.

<sup>29</sup> Nicolson to Sir Austin Chamberlain. 16 August 1926. FO 371/E4821/644/34.

<sup>30</sup> FO 371/E6324/644/34. 15 November 1926.

<sup>31</sup> The 1927 treaties and agreements were eventually signed in Moscow and their conclusion marked the pinnacle of Teymourdash's career. For Chicherin's comment on this event and the full text of the agreements and exchange of letters, see: Dokumenty Vneshnei Politiki, vol. 10, Nr. 228. pp. 434–435.

<sup>32</sup> The capitulatory clauses were privileges and extra-territorial rights extended to foreign powers and their nationals, among whom Britain had been the foremost. They were abolished by the Persian government on 10 May 1928. *Documents on International Affairs*. ed. John W. Wheeler Bennett. Oxford Univ. Press, London, 1929, p. 200–205. The Soviet leadership had unilaterally surrendered similar Russian capitulatory rights in Persia immediately after the October revolution. For the full text see: J. Reeves Childs. *Perso-Russian Treaties and Notes*. Stanford: Hoover Library (microfilm) undated; cited by Harish Kapur, *Soviet Russia and Asia*. Geneva 1965. p. 154.

<sup>33</sup> *Dokumenty Vneshnei Politiki. Sovetskogo Soyuza*. Report from Davtyan to Narkomindel, of 30 May 1928: vol 11, Nr. 192, p. 347.

<sup>34</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>35</sup> *ibid.* Nr. 167, pp. 317–318.

<sup>36</sup> The British airline in question was "Imperial Airways." Its route extended from London to Karachi, but as it traversed Persian territory its bases there enhanced Britain's strategic domination of the Persian Gulf, and it thereby heightened Soviet fears of an attack on its territory from

southern Persia. For Persia's air transit agreement see Chamberlain's speech of 14 May 1928, in: *The Parliamentary Debates*. The House of Commons. 1925–1941. vol. 217, London: p. 650–651.

<sup>37</sup> Deutsches Auswärtiges Amt, Nr. 3 Pol. 2. *Orient* vol. 1. Nr. 5012 September 19, 1928.

<sup>38</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>39</sup> For the Russian account see: George Agabekov, *Zapiski Chekista*, Izdatel'stvo "Strela," Berlin 1930. pp. 120–121.

<sup>40</sup> *ibid.* p. 114. Soviet covert activity was aimed less against the Shah and the Persian government per se as it was against British interests and various White Russian and Dashnak (Armenian nationalist) anti-Soviet groupings in the country.

<sup>41</sup> The fact that the British Foreign office requested Agabekov, who was of Armenian extraction, to make further revelations to be published in an Armenian (Dashnak) newspaper, the "Husaber" in Cairo, is revealing. See: F.O. 371/E6336/5842/34. While not detracting from the validity of Agabekov's statements regarding Soviet espionage in his formal publications as a whole, the printing of some of this material in newspapers and anti-Soviet journals abroad, with the active encouragement of the British government, appeared in certain instances to have rendered the information somewhat distorted.

<sup>42</sup> National Archives. Legation of the U.S. Nr. 284 Doc. 891. OOB/37. Jan. 12, 1931.

<sup>43</sup> The minutes of the Eastern Department of the British Foreign Office recorded that Agabekov's revelations have a solid basis of truth." FO. 371/E6336/5842/34. The memoirs created quite a stir in Persian official circles, too.

<sup>44</sup> Indeed, Reza Shah was seldom seen by Persians and foreigners alike. A prominent member of the Iranian military admitted this fact in his memoirs. See: General Hassan Arfa, *Under Five Shahs*. John Murray, Edinburgh 1964. p. 279.

<sup>45</sup> Wilber, *op. cit.* pp. 243–245.

<sup>46</sup> Essad-Bey, *op. cit.* p. 241.

<sup>47</sup> Pal'gunov, *op. cit.* p. 57.

<sup>48</sup> National Archives. Department of State. Legation of the U.S. Doc. 891. OOB/49. April 1931.

<sup>49</sup> Wilber, *op. cit.* p. 142.

<sup>50</sup> Arfa, *op. cit.* p. 235.

<sup>51</sup> It has rightly been argued that the Iranian trade monopoly was specifically instituted in response to the centralized Soviet trading system and its practices. Soviet journalists were told by Persian merchants that the Iranian monopoly, "Teymourash's brain-child" was designed as an economic weapon to free Persian trade from the constraints of the Soviet market, implicitly suggesting that Teymourash was seeking to draw Persia closer to Europe. Pal'gunov, *op. cit.* pp. 47–48.

<sup>52</sup> A detailed discussion of the points at issue during the dispute between Persia and Britain over the APOC is beyond the scope of this article. For detailed reference see: Benjamin Shwadran, *The Middle East, Oil and the Great Powers*. Frederick A. Praeger, New York 1955, pp. 41–56. or, Ellwel-Sutton, *Persian Oil. A Study in Power Politics*. London 1955.

<sup>53</sup> Ellwel-Sutton, *op. cit.* p. 70.

<sup>54</sup> The substance of this letter was later formally presented to the Majlis in 1949 at the time of the debate on APOC's supplemental agreement. *ibid.*

<sup>55</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>56</sup> League of Nations, *Official Journal*, 14th year 1933; Pleadings 191: cited by Shwadran, *op. cit.* p. 42.

<sup>57</sup> Arnold Toynbee, *Survey . . . 1934*. London 1935. p. 237.

<sup>58</sup> League of Nations, *Official Journal*, 14th year 1933: 289–295. Pleadings 190–192.

<sup>59</sup> The British government held the major share of the stocks in the Company.

<sup>60</sup> See: D.V.P. Sovetskogo Soyuza, vol. 15 Nr. 21 pp. 29–30.

<sup>61</sup> *ibid.* Nr. 485 pp. 687–688.

<sup>62</sup> General Arfa, *op. cit.* p. 236. There was talk, too, of the excessively friendly reception given to Teymourash by the Soviet leaders.

<sup>63</sup> Dokumenty Vneshnei Politiki vol. 15 p. 49 and 62. The protocol initialed by Teymourash was subsequently neither signed nor ratified by the Iranian government.

<sup>64</sup> Sayed Mehdi Farrokh. *Katarat-i tiasi Farrokh. Mostaam Assuldaneh Shamil*. Tari-e yan jah Salah Moasir. Teheran 1968. pp. 292–294.

- <sup>65</sup> Report on Seven Year Development Plan Nr. 4 p. 240. Cited in Shwadran p. 95.
- <sup>66</sup> FO: 371/E4498/535/34.
- <sup>67</sup> *ibid.* Teymourdash and Reza Shah were also shareholders.
- <sup>68</sup> Shwadran, *op. cit.* p. 95. Specifically, the Soviets were more interested in the old Khostaria concession held in Tsarist times which the Soviet government had relinquished to the Persian government under the 1921 Treaty of Friendship.
- <sup>69</sup> *Journal of the Royal Central Asian Society*. vol. 21, Nr. 1 1934, p. 93.
- <sup>70</sup> Sayed Mehdi Farrokh, *op. cit.* p. 291.
- <sup>71</sup> Blücher, *op. cit.* p. 255. See also: Ahmad Ghoreichi, *Soviet Foreign Policy in Iran 1917–1960*. Unpublished PH.D. dissertation. University of Colorado 1965, p. 138.
- <sup>72</sup> These letters were concealed by his immediate family and only published during the period from 1943 to 1949 in a Teheran paper called *Rastakhiz* (Resurrection) by Madame Iran Teymourdash. The extract of the letter cited above was dated January 1933; moreover, Sardar As'ad (Bakhtiari), then Minister of War, to whom reference is made in this letter, had replaced Firuz Mirza in the short-lived governing triumvirate. He subsequently died in prison in March 1934. For an account of the circumstances of his death, see: Abbas Iskandari, *Kitab-i arzu, ya tarikh-i mufasal-i mashru'iyat-i Iran*, Teheran, 1322, vol. 1, chapter 28. (The book of aspiration, or the detailed history of the Iranian Constitution 1943.)
- <sup>73</sup> *Shafaq-i Surkh*, 19 March 1933.
- <sup>74</sup> *Tajaddud-i Iran* of February 20, 21, 1933. and *Iran* of February 1933. Teymourdash was suspected of making profits in foreign exchange with the assistance of Dr. Lindenblatt, the German Director of the National Bank.
- <sup>75</sup> FO 371/E 879/47/34.
- <sup>76</sup> FO 371/E 1358/47/34. February 1933.
- <sup>77</sup> This alleged letter is dated 7 February 1933, and appeared in "*Rastakhiz*."
- <sup>78</sup> *The Tajaddud*, 25 February 1933.
- <sup>79</sup> Ambassador Hoare to the British Foreign Office. Nr. 128 FO 371/E 1877/47/34.
- <sup>80</sup> *ibid.* See also: National Archives, Legation of the U.S. Despatch Nr. 1478. 30 June 1933.
- <sup>81</sup> Various forms of the system are manifest even today. See Marvin Zonis, *The Political Elite of Iran*. Princeton University Press. 1971. pp. 23–24.
- <sup>82</sup> Wilber, *op. cit.* p. 148.
- <sup>83</sup> Second Baron Cadman. *Ambassador for Oil, The Life of John, First Baron Cadman*. Herbert Jenkins, London 1960. p. 123. The relevant letter in this book has been reproduced in full by Sir John Cadman's son.
- <sup>84</sup> John Cadman reported that the Shah had been satisfied with the British Company, but that his "only misgivings were on the financial terms offered." *ibid.* p. 126.
- <sup>85</sup> Elwell-Sutton *op. cit.* p. 79. The author quotes from the speech of Sir Gladwin Jebb, delivered to the Security Council on 1 October 1951, that the concession had been negotiated personally with the Shah. *ibid.*
- <sup>86</sup> National Archives of U.S. Department of State, Legation of the U.S. Nr. 1426, May 4, 1933.
- <sup>87</sup> Elwell-Sutton, *op. cit.* p. 73.
- <sup>88</sup> Evidence of an instance where a Persian monarch allowed himself to be bribed by British agents occurred in 1919 in connection with the signing of the Anglo-Persian treaty, whereby the British persuaded Ahmad Qajar to dismiss Premier Ala es-Sultane Dowleh and to appoint Vossugh ed-Dowleh; it was achieved by paying the Shah a monthly subsidy of 15,000 tomans. See *Documents on British Foreign Policy, 1919–1939*, E. L. Woodward and Rohan Butler (eds.) 1st. series (IV) London 1952, pp. 1125–1126.
- <sup>89</sup> FO 371/E6345/47/34. Mr. Mallet to Sir John Simon. 24 October 1933.
- <sup>90</sup> Wilber, *op. cit.* p. 156.
- <sup>91</sup> FO 371/E6345/47/34. 24 October 1933.
- <sup>92</sup> *ibid.*
- <sup>93</sup> For the text of the discussions between Reza and Karakhan, see: Documenty Vneshnei Politiki Sovetskogo Soyuz. vol. 16, Nr. 308, September 30, 1933. There were great difficulties in Soviet-Iranian trade along the frontier.
- <sup>94</sup> Wilber, *op. cit.* p. 156.