ABSTRACT

This thesis is a study of the attempts made in the last four decades of Naser ad-Din shah's reign to reform the government and the administration in Persia. It deals with this subject in the following manner:

First, the thesis examines the factors that by 1858 made reform appear a pressing necessity to a number of leading Persians. These factors were in the first instance external in origin and rooted in the threat that Britain and especially Russia were believed to pose to Persia's independence and territorial integrity. In time these external factors were reinforced by domestic considerations: by the feeling among Persians that their country was backward in comparison to European states, and by the insecurity, misgovernment, injustice and financial difficulties of the state, which often directly affected those officials who were among the first to call for reform.

Secondly, this study examines the proposals and ideas for reform that began to be expressed in correspondence and essays by Persians in the period after 1858. These ideas were chiefly of European origin, and there were individual writers whose espousal of European ideas and rejection of Persian and Islamic traditions was practically unqualified. But those who were involved in government and were concerned with the practical possibilities of reform were forced to take cognizance of local conditions. European ideas were thus frequently modified to suit Persian conditions, to take account of the sensitivities of the shah and other members of the

bureaucracy and, at a later stage, to allow for the Islamic loyalties of the 'ulama and the mass of the population.

Thirdly, this study looks at the specific measures introduced in the effort to reform the administration and to strengthen the state. These measures often combined traditional with European concepts of government; they sought both to correct abuses and to change the system of rule. Sometimes, they found expression in new bodies and institutions; at other times, the measures were only partially and temporarily put into practice; most often they did not go much beyond the paper stage. An effort has been made, wherever possible, to place the reform measures in the political context in which they were introduced and to describe the manner in which they were carried out in practice.

Finally, this study examines the reasons for the limited success or outright failure of reforms under Naser ad-Din shah. A complex of factors influenced the course of reform in Persia: the role of the powers in the country; the position of the shah and his relations with his ministers; the rivalries and personal interests of the ministers themselves; and the fact that the reforms ultimately challenged powerful entrenched interests and the existing system of rule, that they touched on deeply held attitudes and religious beliefs, and that therefore they were for many decades espoused by only a small minority of those in the government and in the country at large.

In considering such changes as took place or were attempted, this study has been concerned chiefly with those reforms that touched most directly on the central institutions of the state, such as the cabinet and the council of state,

because it was these bodies that the reformers themselves believed held the key to reform of the other branches of government and at which they directed their attention. The thesis has concentrated more on developments in Tehran than in the provinces because reform only rarely affected the provinces.

The theme of the thesis is reform and the bureaucracy because it was from within the higher ranks of the bureaucracy that initiatives for reform first came and individual officials who for many years constituted the chief advocates of change. It was only in the last years of Naser ad-Din Shah's reign that the cause of reform was taken up by groups outside the bureaucracy, and even then the view that reform must come from the top remained pronounced. This study thus focusses on the upper echelons of the bureaucracy and more especially on those few officials among them who were most consistently concerned with reform.

These considerations, as well as the desire to avoid duplicating work already done by others, explains the exclusion of certain subjects from this study. Persia's relations with the powers are dealt with only insofar as they influenced internal politics. No attempt has been made to discuss in detail the role of the 'ulama or that body of thought that was concerned with the preservation of traditional religious values. Jamal ad-Din Afghani is touched on only in passing: his life and work have been treated in detail in a number of recent studies, and although he no doubt exerted a certain influence in Persia, the exact nature of this influence has still to be determined and was probably not as great as has sometimes been suggested.

On the other hand, I have sought wherever possible to provide material not available elsewhere pertaining to the history of reform in this period. In the field of ideas, for example, although the influence of the newspaper Qanun has generally been acknowledged, this is the first time, to my knowledge, that its contents have been subjected to detailed analysis. A large part of the Malkam Khan correspondence which sheds light on the ideas and activities of a number of key figures dealt with in this thesis has not been studied before. The writings of Malkam Khan, Mostashar od-Dowleh and others, although treated elsewhere, receive in this study a somewhat different emphasis.

I have also sought to provide, wherever possible, detailed description and analysis of reform measures and decrees introduced during the period under study. There is no equivalent, for 19th century Persia, of the codifications of Ottoman decrees on which George Young based his Corps de Droit Ottoman. Decrees and measures have to be assembled from a variety of sources. Those discussed in this study by no means form a complete list; many others are mentioned in the documents and histories which have not yet been traced. But a start has been made.

In looking at the operation of reform measures in practice and at the function of Qajar institutions such as the council of state and ministerial cabinets, it has been necessary to put together an account piece by piece from bits of information scattered in books, letters and other documents. Since we still lack even a detailed general history of the Qajar period, in seeking to fit these accounts into their political context it was also necessary to attempt to

reconstruct events in specific periods, often from many disperate sources. The thesis attempts to make some contribution in this direction.

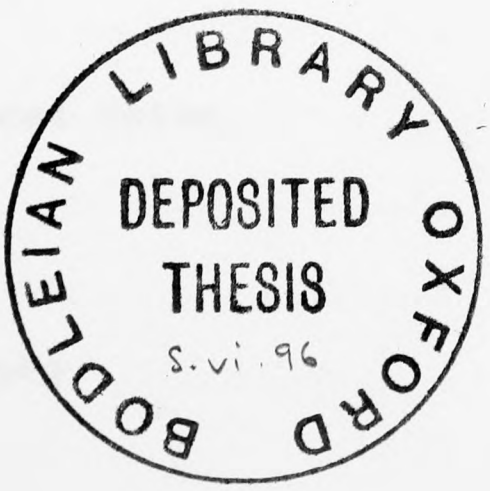
REFORM AND THE QAJAR BUREAUCRACY: 1858 - 1896

A thesis submitted for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

At the University of Oxford

by

Shaul Bakhash



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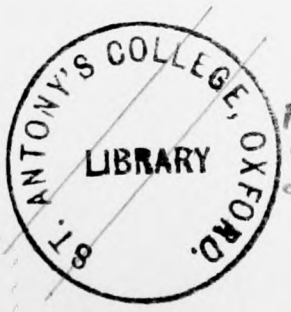

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A NOTE ON SOURCES

The Persian sources available for the period and subject matter dealt with in this thesis can be broadly divided into four categories: a) government records and other collections of official and semi-official documents and correspondence; b) semi-official administrative handbooks and chronicle histories; c) memoirs, diaries and private correspondence; and d) contemporary writing, such as books, essays and newspapers.

a) There are no State archives in Persia. The ministry of foreign affairs, however, is in possession of an amount of correspondence from Persian representatives abroad during the reign of Naser ed-Din shah. Much of this material is kept, still unsorted, in boxes and miscellaneous files and is not available to the public. I was, however, permitted access to some 124 bound volumes of correspondence, relating roughly to the period 1856-1896.

The bulk of this correspondence deals, as might be expected, with diplomatic and consular matters not directly relevant to this study. The utilization of the correspondence is also rendered difficult by a somewhat erratic classification scheme. Some of the material is classified under place of origin; the rest by subject. Since the despatches often deal with several subjects at once, this does not make the location of relevant material simple. In no instance are the papers in chronological order. They have been bound in such a manner that the date, place of origin and name of the sender and of the addressee are often hidden from view. Such information can only be extracted by a careful comparison of

handwriting and from internal evidence.

This correspondence has nevertheless been the source of much useful information. It sheds light on the influence of European ideas and institutions on Persian officials. It gives some insight into their attitudes and ideas, the scope of their contacts and their relations with other members of the bureaucracy. It provides a record of the recommendations for reform they made to their government. It gives occasional information on Persian merchant communities abroad. Indirectly, it tells something about the fashioning of Persian foreign policy. It contains information on those institutions, such as the mint, the Imperial Bank and the army, in which foreign governments, advisors and investors where involved.

The foreign ministry archives also contain several volumes of correspondence from the <u>kargozars</u>, or agents, that the ministry kept in the main provincial centres to look after matters, especially relating to trade and judicial cases, involving foreigners. The reports of these agents sometimes contain information on conditions in the provinces. But the disordered state of the files limits the use to which they can at present be put.

The ministry of foreign affairs is also in possession of several bound volumes consisting of reports and correspondence addressed to Naser ad-Din shah, transferred to it from the royal archives (<u>buyutat-e saltanati</u>). It was unfortunately not possible to secure permission to examine these, but they appear to contain valuable papers.

A certain amount of official documents and correspondence exists in private collections. There is a collection in the possession of Mahmud Farhad-Mo'tamed, relating

primarily to Mirza Hosaya Khan Moshir ed-Dowleh's prime ministership and his later administration of the army. I was able to gain access to a part of this collection, comprising letters exchanged between Moshir ed-Dowleh and Naser ed-Din shah over a period of years. A small collection of Moshir ed-Dowleh's letters to the shah, often bearing the shah's comments in the margin, has recently been acquired by the Majlis Library and was also utilized. There is much official correspondence in the Malkam Khan collection at the Bibliothèque National. This collection is discussed in more detail below.

Some private collections of official documents and correspondence have recently begun to appear in print. A very full collection of documents relating to the mission of Farrokh Khan to Europe and the negotiations leading up to the signing of the Anglo-Persian treaty of 1857, ending the Herat war, have recently been published in two volumes, edited by Karim Lafshanian and Qodratollah Rowshani under the title Majmu'eh-ye Asnad va Madarek. Ebrahim Safa'i has published several volumes of letters and documents from his personal collection; and material relating to the Qajar period has also appeared in Jahangir Qa'em Maqami's Yeksad o Panjah Sanad-e Tarikhi az Jalayerian ta Pahlavi. Single documents have appeared frequently in journals such as Yaghma, Armaghan, Barrasi-ha-ye Tarikhi, Vahid and Rahnama-ye Ketab.

The Farrokh Khan papers apart, these published documents have the deficiency of being for the most part collections of odd letters and documents relating to different individuals, on different subjects and dating from different periods. They do not yet provide a foundation on which to build

a coherent picture of any one subject, but very often a single letter will illuminate a problem on which information is available from other sources; or several unconnected letters together will shed some light on, say, the relations between the shah and one of his officials.

A number of historical works written in recent years constitute important primary source material because they reproduce the texts of numerous original documents. Two such works deserve mention: Farhad-Mo'tamed's Sepahsalar-e A'zam, in which the author reprints many original documents from his private collection, and Ebrahim Taymuri's 'Asr-e Bi Khabari, which contains the texts of documents from the royal archives to which the author was given access many years ago.

b) There are several lengthy Qajar chronicle histories, of which the best known are Nasekh ot-Tavarikh and Rowzat as-Safa, dealing with the first half of the nineteenth century. There is nothing of comparable weight and importance for the second half of the century. For a chronicle of events for the period after 1860 it is necessary to consult two works by Naser ed-Din shah's minister of press (vazir-e enteba'at), Mohammad Hasan Khan E'temad os-Saltaneh: Mer'at el-Boldan and Montazem-e Naseri. Each of these contains a brief and sketchy account, on a year-by-year basis, of major events. E'temad os-Saltaneh also included at the end of each of the volumes of these two works and some of his other books a chronicle of events in the year of publication. The two works also contain the texts of many of the farmans and governmental decrees on administration, justice and military affairs issued during the reign of Naser ed-Din shah; these documents proved of particular importance to this study.

These chronicles do not go beyond the year 1883, and it has unfortunately not been possible as yet to fill from other sources the gap in our knowledge of the details of many administrative decrees and farmāns issued in the reign of Naser ed-Din shah after this date.

Ser'at el-Boldān and Montazam-e Naseri are partly histories partly administrative handbooks. They contain long lists of appointments made at the beginning of each year to various governmental and provincial posts. (It is largely on a painstaking sifting of these lists that Mehdi Bamdad compiled recently his biographical dictionary of Qajar personalities, Sharh-e Hal-e Rejal-e Iran). At the end of each of the volumes of these two works, and in some of his other books, E'temad os-Saltaneh also provides a list of office-holders, of the departments of each ministry and of the names of councils and other administrative bodies in existence in the year of publication.

E'temad os-Saltaneh appears also to have begun to produce annual year-books (salnamehs) in which similar information on the organization of the administration was provided. One of these, relating to the year 1290/1873-4, is in my possession. To these must be added E'temad os-Saltaneh's al-Ma'aser va'l-Asar, which was meant to be a record of the achievements of the reign of Naser ed-Din shah. It provides lists of names of the holders of each office under Naser ed-Din up to the year of publication (1889); innovations introduced in this period; brief biographies of the more famous men of letters etc. The administrative lists provided by this author, carefully compared, can provide useful information on the individuals staffing governmental departments, the

organizational structure of ministries and the continued existence, or disappearance, of particular administrative bodies.

c) The personal memoirs and diaries that have come down to us are very limited in number, a consequence perhaps of a reluctance on the part of high Qajar officials to commit their views to paper, even in the privacy of their own homes. The two most important of such documents at present available were published only recently, after a lapse of nearly three-quarters of a century.

Amin od-Dowleh's memoirs, Khaterat-e Siyasi, are more a commentary on, than a history of, the major political developments of the time by one of the leading participants in these events. The book frequently provides accounts of discussions at ministerial conference and meetings in the shah's presence not available elsewhere, although these accounts are not very detailed.

Unlike Amin od-Dowleh, E'temad os-Saltaneh was not often a participant in policy meetings and councils. But for many years he was almost daily at the court and in attendence on the shah. His diaries, published as Ruznameh-ye Khaterat contain, with some gaps, daily entries over a twenty-year period from 1875-1895. From these emerges a rich picture of the character of Naser ad-Din shah, life at the court, the daily routine of government and the political manoeuvring among rival officials.

Further light on court life is shed by Mo'ayyer al-Mamalek's memoir on the shah's private life, Yaddasht-ha-i az Zendegani-ye Khususi-ye Naser ad-Din Shah. The memoirs of Naser ad-Din shah's brother, 'Abbas Mirza Molk Ara (Sharh-e Hal) and the history/memoir by the shah's eldest son, Zell os-

Soltan (Tarikh-e Sargozasht-e Mas'udi) are also useful. In all these works, allowances must be made for the strong personal predilections of the authors.

Naser ad-Din shah's own diaries, kept in the royal archives, have not as yet been opened for research. I was permitted to skim through a number of these volumes. They appear, like Naser ad-Din's travel books, to contain chiefly information of secondary interest, but a more considered judgement on their historical value must await closer examination.

A number of books that are not quite personal memoirs but not exactly secondary works either deserve mention. E'temad os-Saltaneh's Sadr ot-Tavarikh which I consulted in manuscript but which has since been published,* contains biographies of major prime ministers from the beginning of the nineteenth century to nearly the end of Naser ad-Din shah's reign. For the prime ministers who served during his own lifetime, the author was often writing from personal knowledge. E'temad os-Saltaneh's Shalsheh provides more fictionalized biographies of these same figures. The discrepancies in the treatment of individual prime ministers in these two books lends credence to the contention of some present-day scholars that at least part of Sadr ot-Tavarikh was written by E'temad os-Saltaneh's secretary, Mirza Mohammad Hosayn Foroughi.

Nazem ol-Eslam Kermani's Tarikh-e Bidari-ye Iranian deals chiefly with events of the early constitutional period

* Sadr ot-Tavarikh, ed. Mohammad Moshiri (Tehran, solar 1349/1970-1). For this printed edition, Moshiri drew on two different manuscripts, basing the first half of the book on one Ms. and the second half on another. There is no attempt to compare the two texts; since differences do exist, I have based my footnote citations on the Ms. I personally examined.

in which the author was a direct participant. But it also provides original documents and brief profiles of figures from the reign of Naser ad-Din shah. Two autobiographies of more recent origin, Hedayat's Khaterat va Khaterat and 'Abdollah Mostowfi's Sharh-e Zendegani-ye Man, record the observations of individuals who grew to manhood in the late Qajar period. But both came from important bureaucratic families and give first-hand accounts of events related by fathers and other relatives. Mostowfi's autobiography will long remain a source book for the social history of the Qajar period and for the workings of the financial administration in which his family were for many generations involved.

Only two major collections of private correspondence have so far come to light. Mirza Fath 'Ali Akhundzadeh's correspondence with leading Qajar reformers and other officials has been published in Baku under the title of Alefba-ye Jadid va Maktubat. The Malkam Khan collection at the Bibliothèque National is of substantial importance. A detailed description of this material is given in footnote 1, page 204.

d) Of the writings which form the basis for the intellectual history of the period, Malkam Khan's essays have been partially collected in Majmu'eh-ye Asar, edited by Mohammed-Mohit Tabataba'i and in Maliyyat, edited by Hashem Rabi'-zadeh. Parts of Malkam's other essays are reproduced in Adamiyyat's Fekr-e Azadi and some can be found in the archives of the Iranian ministry of foreign affairs.

Akhundzadeh's writings, like his letters, have been edited by M. Hamidzadeh, H. Araslı and others and published in several volumes in Baku. Few of Mirza Aqa Khan Kermani's

writings exist in print, although Adamiyyat has recently produced a book on his life and thought. Mostashar od-Dowleh's Yek Kalameh, Maraghe'i's Siyahatnameh-ye Ebrahim Beg and the writings of Talebof have all appeared in numerous editions.

Three newspapers published in the period were utilised. The official gazette, Ruznameh-ye Iran, has been consulted for part of the period with which this thesis deals; but much of the relevant material appears also in E'temad os-Saltaneh's histories. All but a few numbers of Qanun and some years of Akhtar were also consulted.

More recent works in Persian relating to the period and subject matter of this study are not numerous. In addition to those books mentioned in other contexts above, Fereydun Adamiyyat's studies on the intellectual history of the second half of the nineteenth century have proved the most useful. These include the general survey, Fekr-e Azadi and individual studies on Akhundzadeh, Kermani and Talebof. Sa'id Nafisi's Tarikh-e Ejtema'i va Siyasi-ye Iran dar Dowreh-ye Mo'aser presents a general survey of the Qajar period. Shamim's Iran dar Dowreh-ye Saltanat-e Qajar, another general survey, contains an interesting attempt to analyze the structure of Qajar society and government. Mohammad Esma'il Rezvani has unearthed many newspapers and leaflets relating to the constitutional period (see, for example, his Enqelab-e Mashrutiyyat), but these generally fall outside the scope of this study. Hosayn Sa'adat-Nuri, in addition to his book, Zell os-Soltan, has done a number of briefer but careful biographical sketches of Qajar figures. Esma'il Ra'in has introduced much new information and documents in his study of freemasonry in Persia, but his accounts sometimes lack accuracy.

The best work in recent Persian historiography has gone into the unearthing and printing of documents and letters, the editing of travel books and memoirs and the reprinting of older texts.

I have made extensive use of the records relating to Persia in the Public Records Office. These are valuable where diplomatic relations impinge on internal politics. But for purposes of more detailed political and administrative history, the relative value of the records tends to differ from period to period. The reporting on internal developments and institutions is more copious and of higher quality in the later 1880's and early 1890's than for the 1870's and early 1880's. The archives of the British Legation in Tehran (FO 248) often provide information not reported, or not fully reported, in despatches to the Foreign Office.

It has been possible to extract a great deal of information on Qajar rule both in Tehran and the provinces, from these despatches. The records are useful in adding to our understanding of the attitudes of a number of figures central to this study. The "Biographical Notices" compiled by the legation from time to time provide information on the composition of the bureaucracy and the background of leading government officials, religious leaders and merchants for the period. Reports on specific institutions, such as the army, the customs, the ministry of finance, and the mint have also been utilized.

Among published European sources, travel books do not constitute an important source of information for this study. Persia and the Persian Question by Curzon, Trois Ans à la Cours de Perse by the shah's physician, Feuvrier, and Persia and the

Persians by the American ambassador, Benjamin, contain the greatest amount of information on the court and government.

Recent secondary works on the reign of Nāṣer ad-Dīn shah fall broadly into three categories. First, there are those works which deal with diplomatic history, such as Kazemzadeh's Russia and Britain in Persia 1864-1914, the book, Persia and the Defense of India and various articles by Louise Rose Greaves, and the less reliable Persian-German Diplomatic Relations 1873-1912 by [illegible] artin.

A second category of works consists of those dealing, very generally, with the position of Islam in Qajar society and its relation to other ideological movements of the period. The role of the 'ulamā under the Qajars has been treated in Algar's Religion and State in Iran 1785-1906, Professor A.K.S. Lambton's "The Persian 'Ulama and Constitutional Reform," and in less detail in Nikkie Keddie's "The Roots of the Ulama's Power in Modern Iran." [illegible]rs. Keddie has in a number of articles examined the relationship between religion and reform, between the 'ulamā and the reformers, in the last quarter of the 19th century. There have also been several studies, notably those by Mrs. Keddie, Ledourie and Hoda Iskdaman on Jamāl ad-Dīn Afghānī.

A third category of recent writing has dealt with internal politics and administration. Detailed studies of particular events in the reign of Nāṣer ad-Dīn shah are rare and are limited in fact to two essays, one by Professor Lambton, the other by Mrs. Keddie, on the tobacco protest movement. Professor Lambton in a number of articles, of which a list appears in the bibliography, has examined the structure of Qajar government and society and has discussed the main features

of developments during the century. These papers have done a great deal to illuminate our understanding of the Qajars; the footnote citations and other parts of the thesis will indicate how greatly indebted this study is to her work.

TRANSLITERATION: NOTES

The transliteration system employed is, insofar as is possible, phonetic. I have, however, retained the more commonly accepted spellings for certain place names and for terms such as *shari'a*, *mujtahid* and *imam*. For technical reasons, both the hamzeh (ʾ) and the 'ayin (ع) have been indicated by a (').

To simplify identification, I have often given the title by which a particular Persian official is best known along with his name at the first citation, even if the title was acquired later in life. Biographical notes on the more important individuals cited in this study can be found at the back of the thesis.

A glossary of Persian terms employed in the thesis has also been provided.

ABBREVIATIONS

Ahmad: 'Abdol Rahim Talebof, Ketab-e Ahmad.

Asar: Malkam Khan, Majmu'eh-ye Asar.

'Asr: Ebrahim Saymuri, 'Asr-e bi Khaberi ya Tarikh-e Emtiyazat dar Iran.

Azadi: Fereydun Adamiyyat, Ebr-e Azadi ya Lozumnameh-ye Nehzat-e Mashrutiyyat-e Iran.

Beg: Zayn ol-'Abedin Maraghch'i, Siyahatnameh-ye Ebrahim Beg.

Bidari: Nazem ol-Eslam Kermani, Tarikh-e Bidari-ye Iranian.

FO: Great Britain, Public Record Office, Foreign Office archives.

IMFA: Iran, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, various files.

Khaterat: Mirza 'Ali Khan Amin od-Dowleh, Khaterat-e Siyasi.

Maktubat: Akhundof (Akhundzadeh): Alefba-ye Jadid va Maktubat.

Mer'at: Mohammad Hasan Khan E'temad os-Saltaneh, Mer'at ol-Boldan.

MES: Middle Eastern Studies (London).

MFM: Farhad-e Mo'tamed collection, Moshir od-Dowleh correspondence.

MJL: Majlis Library (Tehran) collection, Moshir od-Dowleh correspondence.

Montazam: Mohammad Hassan Khan E'temad os-Saltaneh, Tarikh-e Montazam-e Naseri.

Ruznameh: Mohammad Hassan Khan E'temad os-Saltaneh, Ruznameh-ye Khaterat.

Sadr: Mohammad Hasan Khan E'temad os-Saltaneh, Sadr ot-Tavarikh, Ms. No. 608, Law Faculty Library, Tehran University.

Sepahsalar: Mahmud Farhad-e Mo'tamed, Sepahsalar-e A'zam.

S.P.: Bibliothèque National (Paris), Supplément Persan, Malkom Khan collection.

Zendegani: 'Abdollah Mostowfi, Sharh-e Zendegani-ye Man ya Tarikh-e Ejtema'i va Edari-ye Dowreh-ye Qajariyyeh.

CHAPTER I

THE EARLY QAJAR REFORMERS AND THEIR IDEAS

The resumption of Persia's contacts with Europe at the beginning of the nineteenth century and the military defeats suffered at Russian hands in 1812 and 1828 led to various attempts in the first half of the nineteenth century to strengthen the state so as to meet the threat posed to Persia by the European powers.[1] As in the Ottoman empire, the military field was one of the first in which change and adaptation to European models was attempted. First French, then British military missions came to Persia to help train, reorganize and rearm the Persian troops. After the first Russo-Persian war, the crown prince, 'Abbas Mirza intensified efforts to modernize the army with European assistance.

But the army could not be reformed in isolation and without introducing changes in the administrative and financial spheres. As Malcolm had acutely observed early in the nineteenth century, "a total change must take place before the new system of defence can do more than paralyze the old."[2] The changeover

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1 The impact of the West on Persia in the first half of the 19th century, and the intellectual history of this period have yet to be studied in detail. Useful summaries of published material on early military reform, the despatch of students to Europe, the introduction of the printing press and newspapers can be found in F. Adamiyyat, Fekr-e Azadi va Moqaddameh-ye Nehzat-e Mashrutiyyat-e Iran (Tehran, solar 1340/1961-2), pp. 21-92 and H. Farman-Farmayan, "The Forces of Modernization in Nineteenth Century Iran," in The Beginnings of Modernization in the Middle East: The Nineteenth Century, ed. W. Polk and M. Chambers (Chicago and London, 1968), pp. 119-151.

2 John Malcolm, History of Persia (London, 1829), ii, 360.

from an army of tribal levies to a standing army required much larger financial resources. This in turn meant that new taxes or more efficient collection of existing ones, a tightening up of the accounting system, and greater control over the bureaucracy to ensure that taxes collected reached the centre would be necessary. A standing army also implied a more regular system of conscription, thus further extending the arm of the central government into the provinces and increasing the possibilities of corruption and oppression.[1]

Government representatives, students and other Persians who went abroad constituted a second important channel of new influences. 1809, Hajji Mirza Abol Hasan Khan went abroad on a brief mission as Persia's first ambassador to Europe. Other special missions, sent abroad on particular occasions, followed: for example to apologize for the murder of the Russian minister, Griboyedov (1829), to discuss the question of Herat during the first Afghan war (1839), to attend the funeral of the Czar Nicholas (1855), and to negotiate the treaty of Paris after the second Afghan war (1856-7). Permanent missions were gradually established in London, St. Petersburg, Paris and Istanbul.

Students began to go to Europe in small numbers from the early part of the century. Two Persians were sent for study abroad in 1811, five more in 1815 and another five in 1845. Others went during the period (1851-53) when Mirza Taqi Khan Amir Kabir was prime minister. There had been Persian trading communities in the Caucasus, the Ottoman empire and India before the nineteenth century; but more merchants began to travel to

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1 'Abdollah Mostowfi, Sharh-e Zendegani-ye Man ya Tarikh-e Ejtema'i va Edari-ye Dowreh-ye Qajariyyeh (Tehran, n.d.), I, 101-3.

these areas and, to a smaller extent, to Europe as the reopening of diplomatic contacts led to an expansion of trade.

This trickle of Persians to Europe and the Ottoman empire not only produced a group of officials and other individuals who had a basis for comparing the achievement of their country with that of more advanced states; it also led to a genre of writing--the travel memoir--which was to acquaint an increasing number of Persians with the political institutions, judicial systems and the industrial achievements of Europe.

A third channel of new influences consisted in the introduction in the early decades of the nineteenth century of the printing press and the telegraph. The first Persian language printing press was established in Tabriz in 1812 and a second in Tehran in 1824. The introduction of the lithographic process followed, in Tabriz in 1835 and in Tehran in 1844. The first newspaper, Rūznāmeh-ye Vaqāye'-e Ettefāqiyyeh, appeared in Tabriz in 1835. It was published by Mirza Mohammed Ṣāleḥ Shīrāzī, one of the five students sent to Europe in 1815. This paper did not survive for very long, but an official gazette began to be published on a more regular basis in 1848. In 1851, the Dār ol-Fonūn, the first of the modern schools, was officially inaugurated. A short, experimental telegraph line from Tehran to Soltaniyyeh was set up in 1859. In 1864, under an agreement with the Indo-European Telegraph Company, a line was constructed from the frontier near Baghdad to Tehran and then on to Bushehr. Over the next few years, most of the major cities in the country were connected. The telegraph and the official gazette provided the means, however slight, for the greater dissemination of information within the country. They also provided the government with the means to exercise a greater degree of central

control.

The policy of centralization was pursued energetically by Naser ed-Din shah's first prime minister, Mirza Taqi Khan Amir Kabir. It was he who had established the official gazette in 1848; the Dar ol-Fonun was also largely his creation. During his brief period as sadr-e a'zam, he sought to tighten Tehran's control over the bureaucracy and the provincial governments by a reorganization of the finances and by measures whereby provincial governors might be called to account for their activities. He attempted to exercise similar control over the 'ulama by extending the jurisdiction of the 'urfi courts at the expense of the shar'i courts and by limiting the rights of sanctuary in shrines and other places of worship. Although perhaps more the traditional and less the modernist reformer than has generally been assumed, his centralizing activities served as a model for at least some of the later reformers.[1]

The process of change, or at least the attempt to introduce change, continued in the second half of the nineteenth century, but with this difference: there was now a heightened sense of crisis and a more organized, more consciously-directed push for reform. Partly, this was the result of the cumulative effect of developments in the first half of the century. More to the point, in the same way that the defeat of the Persian army in the first Russo-Persian war had widespread internal repercussions, so too Persia's defeat at British hands in the second Afghan war in 1857 acted as a powerful catalyst on

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1 On Amir Kabir see Azadi, pp. 44-55; and Hamid Algar, Religion and State in Iran 1785-1906: The Role of the Ulama in the Qajar Period (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1969), pp. 122-36.

Persian minds. As A.K.S. Lambton has written, it strengthened the feeling, which was beginning to gain ground in some circles, "that the main reason for the superior power of western European nations was their form of government . . . and for the first time thought began to be given not merely to the reform of abuses but to a reform of the actual system of government."[1]

The impact of the defeat on Persian official and non-official thinking can be seen in a series of administrative measures undertaken soon after the ending of hostilities. In 1858 Naser ad-Din shah dismissed Mirza Aqa Khan Nuri, his sadr-e a'zam since 1851, and appointed instead a six-man council of ministers; this appears to have been modelled on the Russian ministerial council rather than on European or British-style cabinets. A year later, he established two advisory councils, the eleven-man majlis-e showra-ye dowlati, composed of ministers and important personages, and the maslahat khaneh, a larger council of middle-rank bureaucrats and other individuals, to act in a consultative capacity.[2]

These bodies were intended partly as a means of giving a larger number of persons a voice in the affairs of the country. A number of decrees relating to the army, the judiciary and the organization of the ministries and provincial governments as a whole were also issued in these and subsequent years. As in the case of the consultative bodies, these measures were in part attempts at strengthening the government, in this instance by correcting abuses, improving the administration of various departments, and introducing a measure of

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1 A.K.S. Lambton, "Persia: The Breakdown of Society", in The Cambridge History of Islam, ed. P.M. Holt et al. (Cambridge, 1970), 1, 455.

2 For a discussion of these councils, see further pp. 89-92.

centralization.[1]

Another event of importance in the aftermath of Persia's military defeat was the appearance, in 1858-9, of the first of Malkam Khan's essays, the Ketabcheh-ye Ghaybi. The essay was dedicated to Ja'far Khan Moshir od-Dowleh, one of the Persians sent for study abroad in 1815, now a leading official and the man Naser ad-Din shah picked to head the new consultative council, the majlis-e showra-ye dowlati. Drawing on the lessons of Persia's recent military defeat, Malkam in his essay called for the establishment of the rule of law, the separation of the executive, legislative and judicial branches of the government, the appointment of separate bodies to exercise each of these functions, and the complete reorganization of the ministries and other departments. The Ketabcheh-ye Ghaybi, demanding a major transformation of the existing system of government, marks the beginning of a new phase in the attempt to reform and strengthen Persia.

Mirza Malkam Khan, its author, was born in Julfa, Isfahan, in 1249/1833-4.[2] His father, Mirza Ya'qub Khan, was educated and knew Russian and French. He had come with his family from Julfa to Tehran, was converted to Islam and became

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1 These decrees are discussed on pp. 79-82; 100.

2 There is as yet no satisfactory full-length biography of Malkam Khan. The most reliable account of his life is still to be found in the Introduction by Mohammad Mohit-Tabataba'i in Malkam Khan, Majmu'eh-ye Asar (Tehran, solar 1327/1948-9). See also Azadi, pp. 94-112; Khan Malek Sasani, Siyasatgaran-e Dowreh-ye Qajar (Tehran, solar 1338/1960), pp. 127-147; Nazem ol-Eslam Kermani, Tarikh-e Bidari-ye Iranian, (new edition, Tehran, solar 1346/1967-8), Introductory volume, pp. 149-153; and Esma'il Ra'in, Mirza Malkam Khan (Tehran, solar 1350/1971-2).

a translator to the Russian legation. In 1843-4 he sent Malkam, then aged ten, to France. The boy studied first at Armenian schools and then at the Polytechnique, where he became acquainted with the writings of the 18th century French political theorists and also the work of Auguste Comte.[1]

Malkam returned to Persia in 1851-2.[2] He became a translator to the Austrian instructors, and may have taught, at the recently inaugurated Dar ol-Fonun. He caught Naser ed-Din shah's eye, possibly because of the novelty of simple scientific experiments he could perform, and was appointed an official government translator, acting in this capacity both to the shah and the sadr-e a'zam, Mirza Aqa Khan Nuri. The prime minister, with whom Malkam's father was on close terms, is said to have occasionally consulted Malkam on diplomatic matters.[3]

In 1856-7, probably once again at the behest of the prime minister, he was assigned to the mission that Farrokh Khan led to Europe to negotiate the treaty of Paris, ending the Herat war.[4] Although still a young man, Malkam appears to have played a relatively important role during this mission. Along with Farrokh's uncle, he served as a counsellor to the chief of mission. He preceded Farrokh to Istanbul where he assisted the Persian chargé d'affaires in the initial negotiations with the British ambassador.[5] In Europe, he acted as

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1 Azadi, p. 98. According to Adamiyyat, Malkam studied natural sciences at the Polytechnique.

2 The date of Malkam's return is variously stated in Azadi, p. 94, Siyasatgaran, p. 127 and Asar, Introduction.

3 Asar, Introduction.

4 Ibid. and Siyasatgaran, p. 39.

5 Farrokh Khan Amin ed-Dowleh, Majmu'eh-ye Asnad va Madarek, ed. Karim Esfahanian and Qodratollah Rowshani, (Tehran, solar 1346/1967-8), 1, 55, 59, 64, 66.

Farrokh's chief translator;[1] and apart from the resident Persian diplomatic representatives in Istanbul and Paris, he was the only member of the mission privy to the confidential aspects of the negotiations.[2] One result of the stay in Paris was that Malkam and the other members of the Persian mission were initiated into freemasonry at the headquarters of the Grand Orient.[3]

Throughout the mission, Malkam enjoyed the strong and even fatherly support of the sadr-e a'zam, Mirza Aqa Khan Nuri.[4] But he seems to have aroused the jealousy of Farrokh Khan by the prominent role he attempted to assume in the negotiations.[5] He also angered Farrokh by continuously creating difficulties over his pay and perquisites.[6] Both he and his father appear to have engaged in a certain amount of intrigue at this time.

Although working for the Russian legations, Mirza Ya'qub was also receiving a salary from the Persian government[7] and did translation work for the Persian foreign ministry. The Ottoman government believed that during the Crimean war he had been urging the sadr-e a'zam to alley himself with the Russians and declare war against the Porte.[8] Malkam, still at

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1 Hosayn b. 'Abdollah Sarabi, Mahbub ol-Vosaya', ed. Karim Esfahanian and Qodratollah Rowshani (Tehran, solar 1344/1966-7), p. 312.

2 Farrokh Khan, Asnad va Madarek, 1, 240.

3 Alger, "An Introduction to the History of Freemasonry in Iran", Middle Eastern Studies, Vol. 6, No. 3 (1970), p. 281.

4 See Mirza Aqa Khan's instructions to Farrokh in Asnad va Madarek, 1, 60 and 134-5 and letters to Malkam in ibid., 1, 275 and 325-6.

5 Ibid., 1, 59-60 and 89.

6 Ibid., 1, 332 and 11, 175-6.

7 Ibid., 1, 175-76.

8 Letter from Hosayn to foreign ministry, No. 126/4, 9 Sha'ban 1278/30 January 1862, IMFA 85/6128. The same despatch reveals

loggerheads with Farrokh Khan, asked to be recalled home when the head of mission stopped at Istanbul on his way back from Paris for talks with Ottoman officials. Once in Tehran, Malkam appears to have fed Mirza Aqa Khan's fears that Farrokh had emerged as a serious rival to him for the office of prime minister. According to Mahhzan ol-Vaqaye', the record of Farrokh Khan's mission, the sadr-e a'zam instructed Farrokh to remain in Istanbul and to continue fruitless negotiations there on outstanding problems between Persia and Turkey precisely because he feared Farrokh's presence in Tehran.[1]

On his return to Persia, Malkam undertook two parallel activities. He began to produce the first of his 'reform' essays; and he established the body he called the faramushkhaneh.[2] These two activities were inter-related. The essays were directed at, and circulated among, a small group of leading officials, courtiers, princes, litterateurs and other personages in whom Malkam hoped to instil his ideas. The faramushkhaneh appears to have been the expression of this same purpose in institutional form: it was to serve as a centre where the same type of individuals could meet to discuss reform ideas with greater frankness behind closed doors.

Malkam's proposals for the reform of the administration

Ottoman suspicions that Ya'qub was in 1862 again urging Persian territorial expansion at Ottoman expense. In reply to 'Ali Pasha's enquiry as to whether Ya'qub was working for the Russian or Persian governments and the degree to which his views represented the official Persian position, the Persian minister replied that Ya'qub, a Persian national, had exercised some influence before 1859 due to his relations with the sadr-e a'zam, Mirza Aqa Khan Nuri. But since the prime minister's fall, he had lost his influence and was no longer listened to.

1 Mahhzan ol-Vaqaye', pp. 426-7.

2 On the faramushkhaneh see further pp. 22-31.

were spelt out in the Ketabcheh-ye Ghaybi, his first essay, and in Tanzim-e Lashkar va Majlis-e Edareh which he produced soon after. In these two essays, Malkam urged the formation of two councils: a kind of legislative council (majlis-e tanzimat) charged with preparing laws and acting as a watchdog over their implementation and a council of ministers (majlis-e vozara) charged with the executive tasks of government. These two councils were to embody the principle of separation of the legislative and executive powers of the state.

The majlis-e tanzimat, possibly modelled after the Ottoman majlis-e vala-ye ahkam-e 'adliyyeh, was to be composed of 15-20 councillors, a few princes and the members of the council of ministers.[1] The members were all to enjoy equal weight and rank although one of them was to be appointed as chairman to run the meetings. Decisions were to be taken by majority vote, and by secret ballot if necessary. Members were to be free in the expression of their opinion, and business was to be conducted on the basis of a previously agreed agenda.[2]

The members of the majlis-e tanzimat were required to collect together within a year all government decrees and precepts from the shari'a relevant to the administration of the country, to add to these whatever new laws were thought necessary, and to divide all these into five codes: a bill of

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1 In Ketabcheh-ye Ghaybi Malkam provides for a membership in the majlis-e tanzimat of 15 councillors (moshirs), three princes and the eight ministers of the cabinet. But he seems to imply that the vote of the councillors alone will matter; for he makes the attendance of the councillors compulsory and that of the ministers voluntary, and he states that resolutions will require the approval of ten councillors (making no mention of ministers) in order to pass (Asar, p. 27). In Tanzimat-e Lashkar, however, he describes a council of 20 members and specifies that decisions will be taken by majority vote, the chairman casting the deciding ballot in case of tie (Asar, pp. 109-111).

2 Ibid., pp. 111 and 27.

rights (huquq-nameh), a criminal code (jaza'-nameh), a military code (nezam-nameh) for the army, an administrative code (edareh-nameh) and a code to regulate the affairs of the central government (divan-nameh).[1] Each law was to be written in clear Persian, to be given a name and number, to be registered in the law books and to be circulated in the official gazette.[2]

The majlis-e vozara was to consist of eight ministers (justice, foreign affairs, interior, war, education, commerce and public works, finance and court. The ministers were to enjoy equal standing, were forbidden to interfere in the affairs of one another, and were permitted to draw up, within certain specified limits, internal regulations for their ministries.[3] Malkam's proposals laid down the administrative organization of each ministry, the individual posts in each and the duties of each official. Ministers were forbidden to increase or decrease the number of their employees or to raise or lower salaries without permission. Admission to the civil service was to be based on educational and professional qualifications, and promotion was to come only after specified years of service and the fulfillment of further qualifications.[4]

Malkam's proposals also provided for the organization and the administrative divisions of provincial governments. There was to be an administrative council in each province, composed of the governor, provincial officials and two local men of standing. The membership was to be changed every three years. The council's duties were to consist of dividing the tax assessment among the inhabitants, fixing prices, ensuring

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1 Ibid., p. 30.
2 Ibid., p. 25.
3 Ibid., pp. 28-9.
4 Ibid., pp. 31-2.

the correct implementation of laws, and looking after public works. The council, with the permission of the majlis-e tanzimat, could levy city taxes.[1]

Provision was also made for a graduated system of courts of justice both in the capital and the provinces;[2] a system of schools operative throughout the country;[3] a large army consisting of infantry, gendarme, cavalry and artillery units;[4] and the separation of the royal court from the government and the establishment of a separate ministry for this purpose.[5] Malkam called for an annual budget clearly specifying revenues and expenditures and a sound system for auditing the accounts, a measure to which he attached particular importance;[6] for the establishment of a state bank and a state controlled mint;[7] and for the hiring of foreign advisors to assist in constructing roads and establishing a postal service.[8]

His proposals also included a modified bill of rights, ensuring each subject equality before the law, equality of opportunity in the civil service, freedom from arbitrary arrest and forced entry, and freedom of belief.[9] To this he later added security of life and security against seizure of property without due recourse to law.[10]

In Ketabcheh-ye Ghaybi Malkam had conferred on the

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1 Ibid., pp. 35-36 and 47-48.
2 Ibid., pp. 37-8.
3 Ibid., pp. 45-6.
4 Ibid., pp. 36-7 and 38-9.
5 Ibid., pp. 47a.
6 Ibid., pp. 41-2 and 41a.
7 Ibid., pp. 49-50.
8 Ibid., 48-9.
9 Ibid., p. 26.
10 Ibid., pp. 140 and 134.

majlis-e tanzimat the responsibility both of making laws and supervising their proper implementation. In a slightly later essay, Daftar-e Qanun, however, he suggested that this supervision, should ideally be exercised by a divan-e qaza, a kind of administrative court, headed by an official called the vakil-e qanun. This divan was apparently to function under the ministry of justice, and the vakil-e qanun was empowered to arrest and bring to justice any government official who violated the law. He was to be assisted in this task by an official known as the mir-qaza.[1] Malkam seems to have modelled this body partly on the French intendent system.

In making his proposals, Malkam was consistent in asserting the primacy of the shah's authority in all the affairs of government. The first sentence of Ketabcheh-ye Ghaybi reads: "The organization of the government of Persia shall be based on absolute monarchy."[2] He placed both legislative and executive power in the shah's hands, providing only that the shah would exercise these powers through the two proposed councils. The chairmanship of both bodies was vested in the shah, who also had the power to appoint and dismiss all members. The shah could initiate legislation, and no bill became law without his signature. All laws were required to express "the will of the shah and to comprehend the interests of the general public."[3]

He also took care, as he continued to do for some three decades, to speak well of the shah, whom he described as "the Peter the Great of Iran."[4] His essays are sprinkled with

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1 Ibid., pp. 152-3.
2 Ibid., p. 24.
3 Ibid., p. 25.
4 Ibid., p. 86.

comments such as, "None of the kings of old, or the rulers of the present era have made so great an effort for the progress of the state as the shah of Iran."[1] He insisted that his own reforms were intended to provide the shah with more effective machinery for the implementation of his wishes. In reply to critics of the majlis-e tanzimat who claimed otherwise, he asserted that

> the establishment of the majlis-e tanzimat is intended to increase the power of the shah and not to limit royal authority. What our ministers [i.e. his critics] have in mind is another majlis which is called a 'house of representatives,' a 'parliament' or a 'national assembly,' and has no relation to the majalis-e tanzimat.[2]

Malkam no doubt hoped by these statements to flatter and reassure the shah; but he was not necessarily being insincere in making them. He appears to have believed, as did many others in these early years of Naser ad-Din's reign, that the shah was genuinely interested in reform. Malkam also seems to have felt that little could be done in Persia unless the shah himself took the initiative;[3] and on the evidence of the essay, Kefig va Vazir, he thought that it was the ministers who would raise the strongest objections to reform. Looking for concrete results, he sought for the most part the course that was practicable in the circumstances.

"Constitutional monarchy (saltanat-e mo'tadel)," he wrote, "has no application to the condition of Iran. The thing that is necessary for us is to enquire into the condition of absolute monarchies (saltanat-ha-ye motlag)."[4] Rejecting the

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1 Ibid., p. 67.
2 Ibid., p. 112a.
3 Ibid., p. 109a.
4 Ibid., p. 15.

model of the more liberal European states, he looked rather to the modified absolutism of Austria, Russia and Turkey where (or so he believed) the ruler, while keeping both legislative and executive power in his own hands, did not confuse the two together.[1] He saw, perhaps, that an efficient bureaucracy acting as a check against the arbitrary power of both the ruler and individual officials had emerged in these countries. And he may have hoped that if a system of laws, administrative procedures and councils were introduced, a similar development would take place in Persia.

Central to Malkam's thought was his belief that the strength and power of European states derived from their system of administration, what he variously described as the nazm (order) or edareh (administration) of the central organs of government in these countries. "The principal, absolute and single barrier to progress in Iran," he wrote "lies in the shortcomings in the organization of the government."[2] And again: "The order of the army, the order of the finances, the guarantee of rights, political success, the expansion of trade . . . even the existence (ta'yish) of the Crown are all dependent on the ordering of the central administration."[3]

It was this emphasis on administration, this importance he attached to the reform of administrative institutions, that distinguished Malkam's thinking from that of most of his contemporaries. Like other reform-minded officials in the 1860's, Malkam believed that Persia was in mortal danger from British and particularly Russian expansionism.

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1 Ibid., pp. 15-16.
2 Ibid., p. 103.
3 Ibid., p. 94.

that Persia must modernize or lose her independence, and that to modernize she needed schools, industries, railroads, roads, steam navigation and an end to corruption, oppression and other forms of misgovernment. In fact, he was among the earliest of the reformers to express these ideas.

Like other reformers, perhaps even more than others, Malkom also attached great importance to law and to government based on the rule of law. The Ketabcheh-ye Ghaybi was in effect a kind of basic law for the Persian government. In other essays he tried his hand at laying down the framework of a criminal code,[1] a bill of rights,[2] and an administrative code for civil servants.[3] "As long as our government is not based on the rule of law," he wrote, "we shall remain as we are, no matter how much we try to alter our condition."[4]

But whereas a man like Mirza Yusef Khan Mostesher od-Dowleh, Malkom's contemporary and the author of the essay, Yek Kalameh,[5] conceived of the law as having a kind of independent existence, rising out of certain immutable principles and a good in itself, Malkom seems to have regarded the law more as an adjunct of good administration. To have effective government, it was self-evident to him that one needed laws. But laws in themselves, he argued, were nothing. Persia had had many to no avail. To adopt them was easy. Only sound administration ensured the effectiveness of laws. In his essay, Dafter-e Qanun, praising the benefits of laws he had

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1 Ibid., pp. 129-34.
2 Ibid., pp. 140-2.
3 Ibid , pp. 143-4.
4 Ibid., p. 108.
5 This essay is discussed on pp. 50-3.

proposed, he added that even

> if the benefit of these laws were a thousand times greater than this, it is impossible that they [government officials] should prove able to enforce [even] one of their clauses . . . Enforcing such laws is impossible in any government, except through that wondrous system that the states of Europe have invented for these laws of theirs.[1]

In seeking to introduce the 'wondrous system' of European administration to Persia, Malkam believed that Persians had no choice but to accept whole, and without reservation, the underlying principles of Western governmental institutions. "In matters of government," he wrote, "we cannot and must not invent anything of ourselves. Either we must take the knowledge and experience of Europe as our model, or we cannot take a single step [to rise] out of our barbaric state."[2]

He believed that the Europeans had perfected the science of government only in the course of a long process of historical development. Persia must either obtain this science directly from the Europeans or repeat the European experience in its entirety and travel once again--as he put it--the same 3,000 year road to modern civilization.

At the same time, Malkam believed that all parts of the European system of government were closely interconnected. For reform to succeed, therefore, it could not be partial, confined to specific branches of the Persian administration, such as the army. Malkam was critical of those officials who early in the nineteenth century undertook military reform in isolation. "They expected . . . to collect taxes as Genghis had collected them and wanted to drill the troops like Napoleon,"

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1 Ibid., p. 145.

2 Ibid., p. 150.

he wrote; "they had not yet heard of paper money and they wanted to have an arms factory."[1] He remarked that "in the administration of any state, the institutions are dependent on one another in such a manner that the ordering of one part is not possible without the ordering of the other parts."[2]

Malkam also believed that it was as useless for the laymen to try and 'understand' the workings of European systems of government as it was for the non-specialist to try to 'understand' the steam engine. Both had to be accepted on faith: "If we make the reform of the government of Iran conditional on the leaders of the Exalted State understanding and learning in detail all the arts and principles of the system of [European] states, then we must wait until the Day of Judgement for the reform of Persia."[3]

Malkam, in fact, often compared the European governmental system to a machine, a factory, the watch--the steam engine at the heart of the state that kept all the other wheels turning smoothly; and he suggested that one could adopt the arts of government in the same manner that one could import to Persia gun-powder factories or steamships. "In the same way that the telegraph can be brought from Europe and without any difficulty established in Tehran," he remarked, "so too it is possible to adopt their principles of organization and without delay establish them in Iran."[4]

This simile, and others like it, which Malkam used often can be somewhat misleading. Malkam was not suggesting that the process of introducing the European system of

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1 Ibid., p. 99.

2 Ibid., p. 98.

3 Malkam Khan, Kolliyyat, ed. Hashem Rabi'zadeh (Tehran, 1325/1946-7), 1 (only one volume published), 61.

4 Asar, p. 13.

administration was as simple as importing a factory. On the contrary, he emphasized that the arts of government were "a thousand times more precise than all the [other] arts and sciences;"[1] and he remarked that while some Persian ministers and leaders admitted the need for laws, they "have not at all understood how difficult and how great a matter discovering these laws is."[2]

Moreover, although he sometimes came very close to saying so, Malkam was not urging the wholesale importation of European institutions, without adaptation to Persian conditions. The councils and other bodies he proposed in his essays take cognizance of political conditions in Persia. It was the principles underlying European institutions--such as the separation of powers, the merit system, the idea of government based on the rule of law--which he regarded as 'immutable', utterly foreign to Persia's traditional system of government, and therefore to be adopted without any alteration.

This conviction also explains Malkam's lack of interest in Persia's past. While other reformers, as for example, Mirza Fath 'Ali Akhundzadeh, the Azerbeyjani playwright and essayist,[3] whom Malkam first met in 1863, were busy exalting Persia's ancient history, Malkam believed that the past was irrelevant. "Today," he wrote, "3000 farsakhs from Iran they build an iron fortress and come and raze Mohammarah in two hours. Today, in the face of the power of neighbouring states, neither Arabic words nor the bones of ancestors are of any use. Today, what we need is knowledge and discernment."[4]

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1 Ibid., p. 126.
2 Ibid., p. 130.
3 On Akhundzadeh, see further pp. 20-22; 53-56.
4 Ibid., p. 8.

Malkom in these early essays did not directly touch on the problem of relating to Islam the laws and institutions he was suggesting. It is true that he placed religious schools, the mollas and the 'ulama under the aegis of the ministry of education;[1] he made no provision for shar'i courts in his judiciary system;[2] and he suggested that Persia's new law codes would be drawn from customary ('urfi) laws, foreign laws codes as well as the shari'a.[3] He also referred to the 'ulama as the class that, more than any other, was favourable to reform. But on the whole, references to the 'ulama and to religion are conspicuous only by their absence.

One reason for this may be that in the early 1860's the problem of relating reform to religion did not appear pressing. Malkom, vulnerable to attack on religious grounds because of his Armenian background, may have preferred to avoid the question altogether. He may also have believed that many of the reforms he was proposing simply did not effect religion, one way or another. In one essay he asked:

> what makes you think that the principles of European organization (nezm) violate the shari'a of Islam? If I should arrange that the mostowfis of the divan swindle less of the state's money, what objections can the mujtahids have? In what way does the classification of government jobs violate the shari'a.[4]

Malkom's views on religion were set down more explicitly in a series of discussions he held with Fath 'Ali Akhundzadeh in Tiflis towards the end of March 1872. According to Akhundzadeh's notes on these conversations,[5] Malkom declared

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1 Ibid., p. 84.
2 Ibid., pp. 37-38.
3 Ibid., pp. 30 and 24.
4 Ibid., p. 14.
5 Mirza Fath 'Ali Akhundof (Akhundzadeh), Alefba-ye Jadid va

that mankind would achieve complete happiness and victory only when reason ('aql)--man's highest attribute and one bearing the impression of divinity (asari az asar-e elwiyyat)--was triumphant; and he blamed the ills of this world on religious prophets who had fettered reason and diminished its status. But he advised Akhundzadeh against continuing his immoderate attacks on religion, and suggested that a better way to shake men's faith was merely to point to the many false religions that had flourished on earth for thousands of years before the appearance of the true or revealed religions. Muslims (or Jews and Christians) would then conclude for themselves that God does not always provide mankind with a true religion to follow and that it has been men, not God, who have introduced religions to the world.

Malkam also declared that the chief purpose of religion was to instil ethical values (akhlaq) in man. Belief (e'teqad) and worship ('ebadat), the other two great pillars of religion, were only means to this over-riding end. To achieve it, it had been necessary to assume the existence of an all-powerful God in whom man believed and whom he worshiped in hope of reward and in fear of punishment. Belief and worship would lose their function if--but only if--it were possible to inculcate ethical values in man without recourse to the idea of God. In Europe, men no longer depended on religion for the acquisition of ethical values due to the spread of science.

> But in Asia, these sciences are not widespread. For this reason, on this continent, the preservation of these two conditions for the purpose of acquiring praiseworthy

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Maktubat, ed. Hamid Mohammadzadeh and Hamid Arasli (Baku, 1963), pp. 288-294.

> ethical values--which is the principal purpose of religion--is a necessity.[1]

It would appear from this that Malkam regarded religion in largely pragmatic terms: as a necessary means of encouraging moral behaviour in man. He felt that the spread of reason and science would gradually make religion superfluous, but he did not believe such a time had come in Persia. He told Akhundzadeh in this same interview that if religious belief were undermined before other changes had taken place then the means for inculcating ethical values in men would itself be lost. It was perhaps with this in mind that Malkam always refrained from attacking Islam and later in life tried to use it to further his aims.

It was through the agency of his <u>faramushkhaneh</u>, established in about 1860 as an adjunct to his pamphleteering activities, that Malkam attempted to spread both his political ideas and also the ethical values he told Akhundzadeh were being acquired in Europe through means other than religion. The <u>faramushkhaneh</u> was not a masonic order and had no connection with any European order of freemasonry. However, by his own account, Malkam took his inspiration partly from masonic lodges he had observed in Europe, and he appears to have imbibed some masonic ideas.[2] Without doubt he was also able to draw

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1 <u>Ibid</u>., p. 294. This document is cited also in Algar, "Malkum Khan, Akhundzade and the Proposed Reform of the Arabic Alphabet", <u>MES</u>, Vol. 5, No. 2 (1969), pp. 121-3 as further evidence of Malkam's policy of "gradualism in his planned subversion of Islamic (and other) religious belief." But this seems a somewhat sweeping conclusion to draw on the basis of presently available evidence.

2 See further, Algar, "History of Freemasonry in Iran", <u>MES</u>, vol. 6, No. 3 (1970), p. 281.

on traditions of Persian politico-religious organization.[1]

According to Gobineau, Malkam secured Naser ad-Din's permission to establish the faramushkhaneh by describing it as a means of securing loyalty to the shah of the prominent men of the kingdom.[2] It may also be true, as claimed by Persian sources, that the shah believed the faramushkhaneh sessions were devoted to the harmless scientific experiments he himself had found so entertaining.[3] Malkam's purpose was clearly to create a nucleus of like-minded and influential men in the country to forward his reform projects. This is the interpretation he gave to his aims to Blunt many years later:

> I saw the abuses of government, the decline of material prosperity in the country, and I was bitten by the idea of reform. I went to Europe and studied there the religious, social and political systems of the West. I learned the spirit of the various sects of Christendom, and the organization of secret societies and free-masonries, and I conceived a plan which should incorporate the political wisdom of Europe with the religious wisdom of Asia. I knew that it was useless to attempt a remodelling of Persia in European forms, and I was determined to clothe my material reformation in a garb which my people would understand, the garb of religion.[4]

Fired, he said, by this aim, "I, therefore, on my return, called together the chief persons of Tehran, my friends . . ." With that usual mixture of fact and fantasy in which he liked to engage, Malkam told Blunt he had started a 'religion of humanity' and that he soon had 30,000 adherents

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1 Lambton, "Secret Societies and the Persian Revolution of 1905-1906", St. Antony's Papers, iv (1958), pp. 43-48.

2 A. de Gobineau, Les Religions et les Philosophies dans l'Asie Central (Paris, 1865), p. 305.

3 Asar, Introduction; Sivasaigaran, p. 146.

4 W.S. Blunt, Secret History of the English Occupation of Egypt (London, 1907), p. 85.

in the country. This is certainly a wild exaggeration. Nevertheless Malkom did succeed in attracting to the *faramushkhaneh* many prominent officials, notables, litterateurs, students and graduates of the *Dar ol-Fonun* and even a Qajar prince, Jalal ad-Din Mirza, one of the sons of Fath 'Ali shah and a graduate of the *Dar ol-Fonun*, in whose house, in the Masjid Howz district of Tehran the secret sessions of the *faramushkhaneh* were held.[1]

Malkom appears to have conducted both political discussions and talks of a more general nature at the *faramushkhaneh*. He told Akhundzadeh, in the 1872 meeting cited above, that one of the subjects discussed at the *faramushkhaneh* sessions concerned what he described as the seven duties a man must fulfill in order to become the *adam-e kamel*, the complete human being. These duties required that a man promote the good and eschew evil, oppose tyranny, seek and spread knowledge, live in harmony among his fellow men and to do all in his power to encourage unity among his friends and countrymen.[2] This account bears certain similarities to the description Malkom gave to Blunt of his 'religion of humanity.'

The account in *'Ebrat-e Nāẓerīn va 'Ebrat-e Nāẓerīn* of Malkom's activities at these sessions, though highly hostile, also appears to contain an element of truth. He wrote that Malkom Khan "spoke eloquently of the benefits of equality;" and that he argued that the shah's absolute powers

> "are not in keeping with traditions of justice and are forbidden by common sense and the dictates of the *shari'a*; that, following the example of the majority of the kingdoms of Europe, the principles of

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1 *Asar*, Introduction; *Siyasatgaran*, p. 128; P. Sykes, *A History of Persia*, ii, 398.

2 *Maktubat*, pp. 294-5.

> a <u>jomhuriyyat</u> must be established and, through the specification of posts and the differentiation of ranks, each subject must share in the rights of the kingdom and the powers of the Crown.[1]

By 1861, Malkom was in serious difficulties because of his activities. On the one hand, his enemies and possibly also the Russian embassy took to the shah alarming stories of what went on in the <u>faramushkhaneh</u>, suggesting that its activities must lead to a decline in royal authority.[2] On the other hand, his essays had aroused a great deal of hostility, possibly because his ideas were finding favour with the shah. His first essay, the <u>Ketabcheh-ye Ghaybi</u>, had already induced a number of high officials, including the foreign minister, Mirza Sa'id Khan, and Farrokh Khan, the leader of the mission to Paris, to submit to the shah an anonymous letter attacking Malkom's proposals and casting aspersions on his character and designs.

The document, part of which is cast in the form of a conversation between three respectable persons speculating on Malkom's aims, variously describes Malkom as a well-meaning youth who had unwittingly become the tool of foreigners, and as an ambitious individual seeking to secure the office of prime minister for himself and to establish a separate Armenian state

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1 Quoted in <u>Siyasatgaran</u>, p. 166. Although Persian historians have taken this statement to mean that Malkom was speaking in favour of a republic, it should be noted that even in this rather hostile account, the term, <u>jomhuriyyat</u>, does not appear to be used in the sense of 'republic.' It is used, rather, to denote a limited absolutism, such as that prevailing "in the majority of the kingdoms of Europe," which is precisely what Malkom, in his essays, was proposing.

2 <u>Asar</u>, Introduction. Russian involvement in this particular case still needs to be authenticated from primary sources. Although opposition to the <u>faramushkhaneh</u> would fit in with Russia's general line of policy in Persia, the fact that Malkom's father was in the employ of the Russian legation and apparently much trusted must also be taken into consideration.

for his people.[1] Moreover, after the Persian defeat at Merv in 1861, where 60,000 Persian troops were routed, Malkom in his essays sharpened his criticisms, directing them at Hamzeh Mirza Heshmat ed-Dowleh and Mirza Mohammad Qavam ed-Dowleh, the two men responsible for the defeat. His criticism also implicated the commander of the army, Mohammad Khan Sepahsalar, a rival of Mirza Agha Khan Nuri's and a strong contender for the office of sadr-e a'zam.[2]

It appears, furthermore, that members of the farammshkhaneh were accused of being involved in some more specific plot against the government. The author of Ebrat-e Nazerin claims that Malkom "instigated" several prominent persons against Naser ed-Din Shah. Allowance must be made for the over-all hostility of this account to Malkom. Malkom himself, describing this period to Blunt (and no doubt also exaggerating), remarked, "At last the shah became alarmed at my power, which in truth had become superior to his own. He sought . . . to kill me, and my followers sought to kill him. For two months, we both lived in great fear of assassination, and then we came to an explanation."[3]

In any case, on 12 Rabi' II 1278/17 October 1861 the institution was officially banned and Malkom was exiled from the country.[4] Malkom went from Tehran to Baghdad, where he took up temporary residence. In Tehran, meanwhile, his father, Ya'qub, sought to engage the good offices of the British, and perhaps also the Turkish, embassies in order to secure a pardon for his son. On May 8, 1862, the British Ambassador, Alison,

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1 Quoted in ibid., Introduction.
2 Ibid., Introduction.
3 Blunt, op. cit., p. 84.
4 Asar, Introduction.

sent to London a translation and the original of an allegedly secret convention between the Russian and Herat governments, dated September 1859 that had been confidentially communicated to the British legation.

Alison wrote that a comparison conducted by "persons competent to judge" of the handwriting, seal, paper, ink and phraseology of the treaty with documents from Sultan Ahmad of Herat in the legation archives indicated a "perfect similarity" between the two sets of papers. He judged the treaty authentic.[1] A day later, Alison revealed in a despatch that the person who had given the legation the secret treaty was Ya'qub Khan, Malkam's father. "His avowed object," he wrote, "is to interest this mission in his son Melkom Khan who is at Baghdad exiled by this court."[2]

Ya'qub may also have been the source of another secret document that appeared at this time, a letter from the emperor Napoleon dated 12 April 1858, and issued on the return of Farrokh Khan from Paris after conclusion of the treaty ending the Afghan war. The letter was secured by the Turkish embassy, and a copy was passed on to the British.[3] Given Ya'qub's position at the Russian embassy and Malkam's on the Farrokh mission, it is not difficult to see how the older Malkam came

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1 Alison to Russell, No. 57, Secret, Tehran, 8 May 1862, FO 60/267.

2 Same to same, No. 61, Decypher, Tehran, 9 May 1862, FO 60/267. Ya'qub's presence in Tehran at this date indicates that recent accounts have erred in believing that it was Malkam's father who was exiled first and Malkam himself who remained in Tehran to carry on the activities of the faramushkhaneh. It was the other way round. It has also been said that though Malkam was the originator of the faramushkhaneh, nominal control was in the hands of his father. The fact that Malkam was the first to be banished indicates that, at least at the time, officials were not in doubt as to who was chiefly responsible for the secret society's activities.

3 Alison to Russell, No. 58, 8 May 1862, FO 60/267.

into possession of the papers.

Ya'qub's efforts on behalf of his son, however, proved abortive. He appears, in the meantime, to have been involved in some internal political intrigue and to have continued to keep alive the activities of the farāmushkhāneh despite his son's expulsion. On May 28, Alison wrote home that a group of malcontents had arranged to have delivered to the shah an anonymous letter sharply criticising the monarch's misrule and threatening dire consequences if the situation was not rapidly corrected. Suspecting Ya'qub Khan of being the author or at least cognizant of the letter, the shah summoned the Russian minister, Anitchkoff and told him he no longer felt that Ya'qub's presence in Tehran was consonant with his personal safety. The Russian minister raising no objection, Ya'qub was escorted under guard out of Tehran on May 30.[1]

The letter in question, a remarkable if allusive document, began by asserting that only that king deserves to be obeyed who devotes all his attention to the promotion of internal prosperity, the well-being of his subjects and the reputation of his country abroad. But it stated that in Persia the opposite was the case. While men like Mostowfi ol-Mamalek and Mo'ayyer ol-Mamalek grew rich, built large palaces and maintained full stables, the troops were without horses, soldiers mutinied for lack of pay and civil servants were in distress. "One man is desperate, another rendered confident in his evil deeds, another plots treason, another meditates

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1 Same to same, No. 68, Secret, Tehran, 28 May 1862, FO 60/267. Summing up, Alison wrote of Ya'qub: "He was a most active, intelligent and unscrupulous agent of the Russian Mission at this Court, and from his wide-spread acquaintances and political connections in Persia he was intimately acquainted with the Policy and Intrigues of the Government."

flight, another is on the lookout for an insurrection." It concluded with a dire warning:

> Shah! By God, the time for thy being a man is fast passing, and the misery of the people has already passed all bounds. Take heed to thy ways; relieve the affliction of thy people; or hold thy subjects absolved, if they take measures to bring about what high and low desire. Yet, a few days are left thee. Put away thy intoxicating drinks, or we have that in hand, which, if made known, will make thee hide thy face for shame. Five hundred of these pamphlets have been written, and will be dispersed through every province."[1]

Alison, in his despatch, did not connect Ya'qub's expulsion from Iran with his *faramushkhaneh* activities. Rather, he suggested that the letter was related to an internal political struggle, centring on the person of the former *sadr-e a'zam*, Mirza Aqa Khan Nuri. According to Alison, the shah, dissatisfied with his ministers, had resolved to recall Mirza Aqa Khan to office and as a preliminary step appointed his eldest son, Nezam ol-Molk, to the government of Yazd. But before Nezam ol-Molk could proceed, the whole body of ministers made common cause against him and forced the shah to cancel the appointment a day or two after it had been made. If Alison's suppositions were accurate, then the letter was written by supporters of Mirza Aqa Khan and it does, in fact, take the shah to task for dismissing the former *sadr-e a'zam* and berates him for "these appointments made in the morning and unmade in the evening."[2]

However, the large number of arrests that took place at this time and an announcement that appeared in the official gazette on May 29, that is a few days after the shah had seen Anitchkoff and a day before Ya'qub left Tehran, indicates that the *faramushkhaneh* was also relevant to Ya'qub's expulsion.

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1 *Ibid.*, Enclosure 1.
2 *Ibid.*

The announcement, after remarking that it was the shah's wish that all his subjects go peacefully about their business, continues:

> Therefore, the Institution which was set on foot some time ago at Teheran without royal permission, having been prohibited by the government, the members ought to have abstained at once from all further proceedings respecting it: nevertheless they persevered in maintaining it. Such conduct was highly disapproved of by His Majesty . . .
> Now if some of the persons who were present at these Exhibitions of Jugglery and Charlatanry above alluded to, had not persisted in their depravity in abiding by the orders of its Founder for keeping it on foot, they would never have incurred the Royal displeasure, or have been brought to account for their actions, for although respectable and well-behaved persons are often present at Exhibitions and Shows, they disperse on the conclusion of the play and go about their daily business.[1]

The chief perpetrator of the enterprise, the announcement said, realized he could no longer stay in the country and asked the shah permission to leave, which was granted. Others who persisted in their activities had been arrested and imprisoned, while some had fled to foreign countries. The announcement concluded by assuring those persons who, though attending the <u>faramushkhaneh</u> sessions, remained guiltless of "perverse acts," that the shah had no intention of molesting them and that they should put their minds at ease on this score. Alison attributed this assurance to the shah's desire to calm the considerable disquiet caused by the wave of arrests and punishments, "as several ministers and persons of rank and station" were members of the

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1 Enclosure in Alison to Russell, No. 89, Camp near Tehran, 24 June 1862, FO 60/267.

organization.[1]

On leaving Persia, Ya'qub, still in Russian employ, appears to have gone to Central Asia where he sought by issuing leaflets and newspapers to arouse the tribes in the Bokhara area, apparently in an effort to undermine the Bokharan government in the interests of Russia. He was, however, arrested by the Bokharan authorities and released only after giving a pledge to desist from further activity.[2] He seems then to have made his way to Russia. He was to appear once again in St. Petersburg, and subsequently in Vienna, in late 1871 and early 1872, around the time his son joined the new government of Mirza Hosayn Khan Moshir od-Dowleh in Tehran, with a new batch of secret documents for the British embassy, this time seeking to secure British support for Moshir od-Dowleh's government.[3]

Malkom Khan, meantime, appears to have made himself unacceptable to the Ottoman authorities in Baghdad. In October 1861 the Persian minister in Istanbul, Mirza Hosayn Khan Moshir od-Dowleh, wrote his government that the Ottoman authorities had said of Malkom that "this person is corrupt and his presence in Arab Iraq will lead to disorder."[4] It is

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1 Ibid., Alison's despatch.

2 'Ebrat-e Nazerin va 'Ebrat-e Nazerin, cited in Siyasatgaran, p. 167. The author of 'Ebrat-e Nazerin claims that Ya'qub aimed at inciting the tribes against Persia. But that he was working to further Russian aims in Bokhara seems the more likely explanation. A mission by Ya'qub to Bokhara on behalf of the Russians is also mentioned in Alison to Granville, Draft, No. 173, Tehran, 5 December 1871, FO 248/269. Ya'qub, furthermore, even at this time, remained in the Persian government's pay.

3 See Granville to Alison, No. 55, Foreign Office, 27 September 1871, FO 248/266; and Buchanan's despatches from Vienna, enclosed in same to same, No. 15, Foreign Office, March 11 1872, FO 248/277.
For further on Ya'qūb see p. 76.

4 Āzādī, p. 96.

safe to assume that neither the Persian nor the Ottoman governments wished to have Malkam in Baghdad where a large Babi community had established itself after leaving Persia.[1] Malkam perhaps did not remain inactive there. It is probably in reference to such activity that he told Blunt: "I went to Constantinople thinking to get permission from the Sultan to reside in Baghdad and I in fact went there and gained new converts from among the resident Persian and Baghdad Shiah. But the Turks deceived me, and I had to leave my work unfinished."[2]

Malkam must therefore have been asked to leave Baghdad; for sometime between May and August 1862, he arrived in Istanbul. When Malkam reached the Ottoman capital, the Persian minister, Mirza Hosayn Khan Moshir od Dowleh, was away.[3] However, Malkam called on him as soon as the latter returned. The minister, who claimed to his government to have known Malkam only slightly and on an official basis when in

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1 The Babis were followers of Sayyed 'Ali Mohammad of Shiraz who in 1844 declared himself to be the Bab (gateway), or the long-awaited mahdi. He was arrested in 1847; and in 1848 the Babis declared their secession from Islam. The movement was put down with great severity between 1848 and 1850 and the Bab himself was executed in July 1850. In 1852, after an attempt to assassinate Naser ad-Din shah, the Babis suffered another wave of persecution. Many left the country to settle in Iraq and other parts of the Ottoman empire.

2 Blunt, op. cit., p. 84.

3 In his letter to the foreign minister from Istanbul 25 Safar 1280/11 August 1863, IMFA 11/6130, Moshir od-Dowleh, reviewing Malkam's case remarked that Malkam had arrived in Istanbul "during my absence." The Persian foreign ministry archives confirm this, showing that Moshir od-Dowleh was away from Istanbul and on a pilgrimage to either the holy shrines in Iraq or to Mecca at about the time Malkam arrived at the Ottoman capital. It is interesting to speculate whether Malkam and Mirza Hosayn Khan did not in fact meet in Iraq and at that meeting arranged for Malkam to come to Istanbul. One possible reading of another letter of Moshir od-Dowleh's could be taken to imply that Malkam and Moshir od-Dowleh had visited the holy shrines in Iraq together. (See his letter No. 88/3 of 7 Jamadi II 1281, IMFA 11/6130).

Tehran, was obviously impressed by the new arrival and thought it unwise to leave him unemployed. "I saw that if this person, who is so well informed of our domestic and foreign affairs, falls into the hands of the Ottomans, it would be as if with our own hands we had placed a weapon in the hands of our rivals."[1]

He thus recommended, in both official and personal letters to the Persian foreign minister, that Malkam Khan be offered a job, suggesting that Malkam, greatly depressed, might do something impulsive. Malkam, meanwhile, had apparently made some overtures to the Ottomans,[2] and Mirza Hosayn Khan, commenting on this, suggested that the officials of the Porte were receiving these overtures with favour. He had managed to convince Malkam to break off his relations with the Turks only by holding out the hope of an appointment from Tehran.[3]

Mirza Hosayn Khan sought to secure a favourable reply to his proposal by suggesting that Malkam might go to work for the Russians if Persia offered him nothing. Malkam had evidently stayed in touch with his father, who was now relaying to him Russian offers of a post as a "special officer" in the Caucasus. That such a proposal had in fact been made and was not a mere fabrication foisted on Mirza Hosayn Khan by the Malkams is perhaps indicated by the fact that the Persian minister in St. Petersburg asked Mirza Hosayn Khan to do all in his power to dissuade Malkam from accepting the offer.[4]

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1 Letter No. 53/24 of 25 Safar 1280/11 August 1863, IMFA 11/6130.

2 Letter of 11 Safar 1279/3 August 1862, IMFA 66/6129.

3 Letter No. 53/24 of 25 Safar 1280/11 August 1863, IMFA 11/6130.

4 Letter No. 143/36 of 4 Rajab 1279/26 December 1862, IMFA 53/6131.

Moshir ed-Dowleh, relaying this information to Tehran, once again praised Malkam's good qualities. He had obviously adopted Malkam as a protegé.

In late 1862 the Persian government finally relented, and Malkam was offered the post of consul in Cairo. Mirza Hosayn Khan, replying, reported that the offer had given Malkam "new life" and that the young man was "grateful and thankful." However, he wrote, Malkam was somewhat disappointed by the offer, and he himself (Hosayn) also felt that the post was not in keeping with the abilities of a man like Malkam who could with greater benefit be employed in political rather than consular tasks. He suggested instead that Malkam be named chargé d' affaires in Paris to replace Hasan 'Ali Garusi, the minister, whose return to Persia was expected in the following year. In the meantime, "in order to silence the rumours among the people, which were not in keeping with the position and prestige of the [Persian] government," Mirza Hosayn Khan said, he had housed Malkam at the Persian embassy in Istanbul.[1]

Mirza Hosayn Khan's efforts on behalf of his friend proved fruitless. The shah promised an early reply to Hosayn Khan's suggestion, but eight months later, the Persian minister had still received no answer from Tehran. Writing home on August 11, 1863, Hosayn Khan criticised the foreign minister for keeping him ignorant of his final decision. If the government attached no importance to Malkam, he asked, why then did the shah favour his father Ya'qub, in Russian employ, with numerous letters of praise and a bonus of 1000 tomans. He warned that Malkam had received messages through the Russian embassy in Istanbul offering him a job which he had decided to

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1 Ibid.

accept. So far, he had convinced him to wait a little longer, but he could not keep Malkam in Istanbul indefinitely.[1]

The upshot of these manoeuvres was that Malkam after all did go to Cairo. But he remained only a few months, having been recalled after accepting a 10,000 toman gift from the Khedive Isma'il.[2] He was then installed as counsellor at the Persian embassy at Istanbul. It was while there that on Oct. 24, 1864, he married Henriette, the daughter of the Armenian Arakil Beg at the Church of Aya Stephanus. The Armenian marriage appears to have caused serious concern to Mirza Hosayn Khan, who regarded the act as apostasy.[3] But it does not seem to have adversely affected Malkam's subsequent career.

Malkam's troubles, however, were not yet at an end. For reasons which remain obscure but which were perhaps due to the dislike the foreign minister, Mirza Sa'id Khan, felt for Malkam, the government in late 1866 suspended his salary and instructed Mirza Hosayn Khan no longer to pay it. The Persian ambassador initially ignored these directions. But when orders arrived from the shah himself to the same effect Mirza Hosayn, however, reluctantly, had no choice but to obey.[4] Possibly in

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1 Letter No. 53/94 cited above.

2 Asar, Introduction.

3 Letter to foreign minister of 7 Jamadi II 1281/7 November 1864, IMFA 11/6130. When Mirza Hosayn Khan stressed to Malkam the gravity of what he had done, Malkam reportedly replied: "Although I had always believed the affairs of this world depend on intelligence and [human] direction, today I say that the affairs of this world depend on providence and that whatever has been ordained will come to pass . . . There has been no change in my faith. I had never said I am a Muslim like other Muslims. I prefer the Muslim faith, and His Excellency, the minister of foreign affairs . . . who discussed religion with me on numerous occasions, is well aware [of my beliefs]."

4 Hosayn's letter to foreign minister of Rabi' I 1284/July-Aug. 1867, IMFA 66/6129. Mirza Sa'id Khan wished to suspend Malkam's

reaction to this, Malkom turned to the Ottomans once again. Reports began to reach the Persian embassy in Istanbul that Malkom had applied to Ali Pasha for Ottoman citizenship and had asked for employment with the Porte.[1] Both these requests were eventually granted. Malkom was given Ottoman citizenship, the rank of a colonel and a salary of 40 Turkish liras, or 120 tomans, per month.[2] Precisely what kind of work he did for the Porte is not clear. But he remained a Turkish subject and in Ottoman employ until early 1872 when Moshir ed-Dowleh, by then prime minister, recalled him to Tehran.

Malkom had of course already spent some time in Istanbul in 1857-8 on his way both to and from Paris when a member of the Farrokh mission. His Ketabcheh-ye Ghaybi and other essays, as shown above, indicate that this experience was not without its influence on his thinking on reform for Persia. During his stay of nearly ten years in the Ottoman capital in 1860's, Malkom came to know a number of Ottoman reformers and mixed in Ottoman reform circles. He was on friendly terms with 'Ali, Fuad and Munif Pashas and was apparently able to draw on this friendship when his Persian salary was stopped in 1866. He seems to have frequented sessions of the Ottoman Scientific Society and to have contributed to the journal of the New Ottoman Society.[3]

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salary for the current year (1284) and make the suspension retroactive to the previous year (1283) as well. Mirza Hosayn Khan replied that he had already paid both years in full.

1 Letter from Ahmad to foreign minister, No. 128/9, 2 Zi Hajjeh, IMFA 53/6131.

2 Yusef Khan to Akhundzadeh, Paris, 29 Jamadi II 1286/6 October 1869, Maktubat, p. 372. Yusef Khan implied that Malkom had taken these steps with the approval of "his benefactor", Moshir ed-Dowleh. See also Siyasatgaran, p. 129.

3 Alger, "Reform of the Arabic Alphabet", MES, Vol. 5, No. 2 (1969), p. 120-1.

He also appears to have been in the habit of calling on the British ambassador to the Porte, Sir Henry Elliott, with whom he discussed Irano-Turkish relations and his views on Persia.[1] The Istanbul period also marks the beginning of Malkom Khan's friendship with Mirza Fath 'Ali Akhundzadeh and, more importantly, with Mirza Hosayn Khan Moshir od-Dowleh. Both these relationships, and especially the latter, were to influence the nature of the reform movement in Persia in later years.

It was perhaps symptomatic that Malkom began writing his reform essays in 1858-9 when serving in the ministry of foreign affairs. The thrust for reform in the second decade of Naser od-Din' shah's reign came primarily from the country's diplomatic representatives abroad. Persia at this time maintained legations in London, Paris and St. Petersburg, an embassy in Istanbul, and a number of consulates at important centres in British India and the Russian and Ottoman empires: at Bombay, Baghdad, Basra, Trabizon, Erzerum, Tiflis. The men at these posts gradually came to form a small nucleus of like-minded and reform-oriented men. And in the decade of the 1860's they addressed to their government at home a stream of despatches, appeals and exhortations for reform, economic development and reorganization of the governmental and administrative systems of the country.

The men holding Persia's top diplomatic posts at this time were generally drawn from the traditional bureaucracy. Mirza Hosayn Khan Moshir od-Dowleh in Istanbul was the son of a former minister of justice. Hasan 'Ali Garusi in Paris belonged to a leading tribal family. Mahmud Khan Naser ol-Molk in London was a Qajar prince. Nevertheless they in one sense represented a new type of bureaucrat, if only by virtue of their closer familiarity with the West and with countries outside Iran. One or two had actually studied abroad; all had spent

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1 H. Elliott to Granville, Copy, No. 293, Confidential, Therapia, 21 August 1873, FO 248/294.

a number of years outside the country.

For these reasons, these men were to a greater degree than their colleagues at home driven by a sense of Persia's weakness and backwardness. More familiar with European great power rivalries, they were deeply impressed with the dangers facing Persia--what Malkom Khan described as "the two fearful floods moving towards Iran from Calcutta and St. Petersburg."[1] They came to believe that Persia's survival depended on securing the protection of some European power and that such protection was tied to giving one of these powers, through internal development, a vested interest in Persia.

Moreover, in Europe during a period of industrial expansion, they not unnaturally came to assume that the road to salvation lay in industrial development and that this, in turn, required reform of Persia's governmental system on the basis of foreign models. Finally, endowed with what they regarded as superior knowledge, they came to believe that they had a special mission, a leadership role to play in initiating and directing this process of change in Persia.

Most immediately, the attention of these men was riveted by the obvious symbols of European progress: railroads, roads, factories, schools, hospitals. A railway for Persia was a talking point at least as early as 1863, and at one time or another every one of Persia's leading representatives abroad was involved in recommending one of a number of different railroad schemes to the foreign ministry.[2] In a despatch that

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1 Asar, p. 7.

2 See for example, letter from Hasan 'Ali and Mahmud, No. 41, Paris, Rabi' I 1281/Aug.-Sept. 1864, IMFA 124/6127; from Mohsen, [London], 25 Sha'ban 1285/11 December 1886, IMFA 85/6128; and from Nazar, No. 34, [Paris], 21 Zi Qa'deh 1288/1 February 1872, IMFA 53/6131.

displays that widespread belief in the railroad as a key to progress, Mirza Yusef Khan Mostoshar od-Dowleh, the consul in Tiflis, wrote in February, 1864:

> Experience has shown and it is open to no doubt or uncertainty whatsoever that railroads and steamships give rise to trade, even if established in the Turkoman desert and the Dead Sea. In addition, the establishment of a railroad in Iran will in three years revolutionize the country, bring order and civilization to the state and nation, and be the greatest source of power. In one word, Iran will become a paradise.[1]

It was not only railroads that received such enthusiastic attention. Projects for roads, banks, irrigation works, joint-stock companies, mine-exploitation were all submitted for the perusal of officials at home.[2] Each was in turn described as the cure-all, the one vital springboard enabling Persia to leap out of her backwardness into the ranks of the advanced states of Europe. Mirza Yusef Khan described railways "the preliminary step to all the necessities of the state and nation . . . [one must] begin with a railroad." The Persian chargé d'affaires in Paris described a bank as "the necessary pre-condition for a railroad." From another capital came the advice that "roads are the key to development and progress; without roads all arrangements are fruitless and all solutions ineffective."[3]

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1 Letter No. 95, Tiflis, 5 Ramazan 1280/13 February 1284, IMFA 53/6131.

2 Persia's representatives abroad made such proposals in the course of normal correspondence and also in lengthy memoranda written up in the form of ketabcheha, or small booklets. References to such ketabcheha occur, for example, in letter from Yusef, No. 237, Paris, 24 Jamadi II 1286/23 June 1869, IMFA 53/6131; and from Nazer [Paris] 29 Rajab 1305/11 April 1888, IMFA 124/6127.

3 Letter from Yusef, No. 127 [Tiflis], 24 Shevval 1281/22 March 1865, IMFA 53/6131; from Nazer, [Paris], 12 Safer 1292/ 20 March 1875, IMFA 53/6131; and from 'Abdel Rahim, Yusef and Hassan, 1 Ramazan 1284/26 December 1868, IMFA 85/6128.

These conflicting opinions reflect that continuous search of nineteenth century Persian reformers for the one key, the 'Open Sesame', that would unlock Ali Baba's treasure cave and make available to Persia the benefits of Western civilization. It also reflects another widely-held conviction, what might be called belief in the good effects of the catalyst project. This was a conviction that if one of the examples of Western progress were introduced in Iran, the benefits would be so obvious to all that any further resistance to development would be dropped.

"If two farsakhs of railroad are constructed in the Exalted State," wrote Mirza Yusef Khan from Tiflis in March 1865, "its many benefits will be realized; the nation and state will gird themselves and spend [much money] on this task."[1] When Naser ed-Din shah in later years out of numerous considerations refused to construct a major railroad line in Persia, it was faith in this same idea of the catalyst that caused men like Malkom Khan (in London) and Nazar Aqa (in Paris) to propose launching railway construction in Persia by spanning the short ten kilometre distance from Tehran to Shah 'Abdol 'Azim.[2]

While the absence of sufficient documentation does not yet permit reconstruction of a full picture, it is fairly clear that already at this date a debate between the supporters and opponents of change was under way. Mirza Aqa Khan Nuri, while sadr-e a'zam, forbade the circulation of Makhzan ol-Vaqaye', the record of Farrokh Khan's 1856-7 mission to Europe, on the grounds that "if this is published, people will find out about

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1 Letter from Yusef, No. 127, [Tiflis], 24 Shavval 1281/22 March 1865, IMFA 53/6131.

2 Letter from Nazar, [Paris], 17 Moharram, 1303/26 November 1885, IMFA 53/6131.

conditions in Europe, and that is highly inadvisable."[1] Malkom Khan's proposals in Ketabcheh-ye Ghaybi, as we have seen, aroused sufficient opposition for a group of older bureaucrats to submit to the shah a petition refuting Malkom's arguments.

The despatches of Persian representatives abroad were often argumentative in tone, clearly intended to convert the unbeliever. The proponents of change, aware of resistance at home to projects they were suggesting, set out to refute their critics. Mirza Yusef Khan, in reply to a communication raising objections to a railway project he had proposed, wrote back in two despatches that the railway would pay for itself, and even if it would not, it would have many indirect benefits; and that anxiety over the demand of would-be investors for guarantees was unwarranted since "(such) guarantees are common in all states, and without guarantees no company of repute will invest the capital of thousands of persons in some enterprise." He added: "As to the point concerning the interference of foreigners in the internal affairs [of Persia], if the Exalted State should have laws, as God is witness, however much foreigners should interfere in internal affairs, this will be in the interests of the state and nation."[2]

The enthusiasm for trade and industry, partly reflecting the view prevalent in Europe, was reinforced by contact with Persian merchant communities abroad. Tiflis was a centre of trade for Persian merchants.[3] In Istanbul there was

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1 Farman-Farmayan, "The Forces of Modernization in Nineteenth Century Iran", in Polk and Chambers, op. cit. p. 135.

2 Letters from Yusef, No. 127 [Tiflis], 24 Shavval, 1281/22 March 1865 and No. 95, Tiflis, 5 Ramazan 1280/13 February 1864, both in IMFA 53/6131.

3 For a description of Tiflis in mid-century, see Ademiyyat, Andisheh-ha-ye Mirza Fath 'Ali Akhundzadeh (Tehran, solar 1349/1970-71), pp. 15-25.

apparently a large Persian community, many of whom were merchants.[1] There was a Persian school, financed by this community;[2] and after 1875, a Persian language newspaper was published in the Ottoman capital as well.[3] With the revival of trade routes from Istanbul to Vienna and beyond, Persian merchant communities apparently began to spring up in some European cities. Already in 1868, the Persian chargé d'affaires in Paris was recommending the establishment of three consulates in Austria (Vienna, Pest and Trieste) and three in Italy (Florence and two other cities) to protect the interests of these merchants.[4]

There is little doubt that Persian diplomats abroad at times hoped to profit illicitly by promoting entrepreneurial schemes and on numerous occasions succeeded in doing so.[5] The

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1 The dastur al-'amal or memorandum of instructions issued to Mirza Hosaya Khan before his departure from Tehran to head the mission in Istanbul in 1858-9 contains numerous references to unsettled disputes between Persian merchants and Ottoman nationals. This 23-page document is in IMFA 53/6131. Hosaya Khan's own despatches from Istanbul contain many references to the merchant community.

2 See undated letter bearing 23 seals requesting Persian government assistance for this school in IMFA 53/6131.

3 The newspaper Akhtar, which published its first issue in Istanbul in 1292/1875 devoted much space to subjects of interest to merchants, for example foreign exchange rates and prices of bonds and loan certificates on the Istanbul market--an indication of one of the groups of readers at which it was aimed.

4 Letter from Yusef No. 21 Paris, 7 Rabi' I 1285/28 June 1868, IMFA 124/6127.

5 In his book, Russia and Britain in Persia, 1864-1914 (New Haven and London, 1968), Firuz Kazemzadeh has cited numerous instances of Persian representatives lining their own pockets while promoting railway and other schemes. He wrote: "The exquisite Crown jewels of Persia, sparkling reminders of the loot of India, brought no income, but stories of a new India of stocks and bonds, of coupons and interest, excited his [the Shah's] cupidity. Persia could not long remain unaffected by the moneymaking passion of the age, nor did her rulers want to stay outside the magic circle of cascading gold." (p. 101). But his conclusion that personal gain was the dominant motive among Persians promoting such projects is an over-simplification; the cause for interest in railroads, etc. was much more complex.

endless train of European entrepreneurs who called on Iranian missions with their multitude of proposals certainly strengthened such temptations.[1] Others saw in such projects more legitimate means for personal gain. While it was to be a long time before the reluctance of Persians--bureaucrats, merchants and others--to invest in joint stock companies would be overcome, even at this early date some were already displaying an incipient interest in such undertakings. The chargé d'affaires in Paris, for example, recommending the formation of a joint stock company for construction of the Tehran-Shah 'Abdol 'Azim railroad in October 1885, offered to take two shares in the proposed company himself.[2]

Interest in trade and industry was probably strengthened by traditional links between the bureaucracy and the merchant class. While merchants and bureaucrats in Persia were often in competition, and the government was more likely to be cast in the role of the oppressor of merchants than the promoter of trade, there were points at which their interests coincided. The merchants traditionally served as suppliers of funds, both to the government and to individual officials. Some bureaucrats,

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1 At times, it appears, members of foreign embassies in Tehran were prone unofficially to lend their support to concession hunters. Lynch, who was to play a major role in the opening of the Karun in 1888, was on several occasions a visitor at the Persian legation in Paris. The Persian chargé d'affaires, Mirza Yusef Khan, described one such visit in 1869 when Lynch was accompanied by Joseph Dickson, the British embassy doctor, and Churchill, a former consul in Persia. The three men attempted to make a case for a Persian railway by citing Midhat Pasha's railway-building programme for the Ottoman empire. "Mr. Churchill said," Yusef Khan wrote, "that if the Iranian government should build a railroad, the English government would, as with the Ottoman empire, always support her independence." (Letter No. 234, Paris, 10 Jamadi I 1286/18 August 1869, IMFA 53/6131).

2 Letter from Nazar, [Paris], 17 Moharram 1303, IMFA 53/6131.

as large landowners, were engaged in the export of grains and other foodstuffs. Others were involved in business of another kind--as purchasers of government farms of the customs, mint and postal services. It is perhaps noteworthy that two of the diplomats most active in promoting projects--Yusef Khan who served in Tiflis, St. Petersburg and Paris, and Mohsen Khan Mo'in ol-Molk who was minister in London and ambassador in Istanbul--came from merchant families;[1] Mirza Hoseyn Khan Moshir od-Dowleh when consul in Tiflis, made large profits importing grain to/the Caucasus.[2]

Trade, commerce and industry were also linked in the mind of these Persians with the search for political security. Feeling threatened by Russian expansion, they turned to economic development as a means of expanding British interests in Persia and securing England's protection for their country. In a despatch from Paris in February 1864, Hasan 'Ali Garusi argued that the reason why the European powers had taken Turkey under their wing while Persia was neglected lay in Turkey's strategic importance and the importance the powers attached to denying control of the Straits to one another. Persia enjoyed no such strategic significance, and if it wished to maintain its independence and territorial integrity,

> it is necessary to find a way, a means and a solution so that the European states should see it in their personal interest and benefit to become the guarantors and supporters of the independence of the Iranian state. Otherwise, achieving this goal through friendly pleading and without sufficient ground is not possible or imaginable. If the Exalted State should wish it, the way and means of achieving

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1 Mehdi Hamded, Sharh-e Hal-e Rejal-e Iran (Tehran, solar 1347/1968-9), iii, 204 and iv, 490.

2 Ibid., i, p. 408.

> this end are numerous. Constructing a railroad from Iran to Europe, encreasing exchanges among the nationals [of the two sides], establishing a firm law for the affairs of state, making available the means for training and education of the nation, working mines, establishing factories and so forth will all be cause for attracting the goodwill of the nations and states of Europe towards Iran and inducing them, of themselves, to become the guarantors and protectors of Iran's independence.[1]

In this effort to secure the protection of a European power, Garusi, and later Malkom Khan, considered the friendship of England to be vital. "The agreement and cooperation of England in the affairs concerning the Exalted State," he added, "is a first condition, and the support of the French government alone is not enough."[2] These themes--the application of the Turkish case to Persia, the threat posed by Russia, the need to secure British protection, and the necessity to undertake reform in order to achieve this--were to be repeated again and again over the coming decades.

Individual Persian diplomats, recommending reform, were not working in isolation. Personal correspondence not being available, the degree of cooperation among them is difficult to judge. But the archives of the ministry of foreign affairs in Tehran indicate that these men were often in contact, that they knew of one another's activities, and that--despite continuous rivalries--they sought at times to coordinate their efforts. For one thing, the absence of rapid communications and the tendency of the foreign ministry to neglect and leave unanswered their correspondence forced these

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1. Letter from Hasan 'Ali, Paris, 18 Ramazan 1280/26 February 1864, IMFA 124/6127.
2. Ibid.

men to fall back on themselves and obliged them both to take the initiative on certain questions and also to consult with one another. An attempt to secure Persia admission to European congresses found the ministers in Paris and London working in harness. Hasan 'Ali Garusi wrote from Paris in February 1864 that: "In any question that arises, I have made and will continue to make His Excellency Naser ol-Molk (the minister in London) a partner to my efforts . . . just as in the matter of the congress we did not leave one another uninformed."[1] Three years later, the two men were sending joint despatches to their government on a railroad project.[2] Mirza Hosayn Khan, in Istanbul in 1867, learning from Garusi that the French emperor had invited the shah to attend the Paris Exposition, wrote home adding his voice to Garusi's in urging that the shah should go.[3]

Moreover, travel offered an opportunity for direct meetings. Naser ol-Molk visited Paris from London in 1280/1866-6 and 1281/1866-7 and on the latter occasion accompanied Garusi back to Tehran via Russia and Istanbul. Mirza Yusef Khan visited London four times while chargé d'affaires in Paris. Persian representatives going from Tehran to Europe invariably passed through Istanbul and at times through Tiflis and St. Petersburg as well. All this appears to have given opportunity for discussion and exchange of ideas. It is not merely coincidence that Mirza Hosayn Khan, appointed prime minister after his spell in Istanbul, named Mirza Yusef Khan to deputize for him as minister of justice, Naser ol-Molk to deputize for

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1 Ibid.

2 Letter from Hasan 'Ali and Mahmud, No. 41, Paris, Rabi' I 1281/Aug.-Sept. 1864, IMFA 124/6127.

3 Letter from Hosayn, No. 11/7, Istanbul, 30 Moharram 1284/8 June 1867, IMFA 52/6157.

him as the head of the war office, Malkom, who had served in Istanbul and Cairo, as a personal advisor, and Hasan 'Ali Garusi as his minister of public works. Nor is it surprising that in their despatches these men tend often to echo the same ideas and even the same turns of phrase. They not only drew on a shared experience but they had been in intermittent communication with one another as well.

A memorandum in the archives of the Persian foreign ministry gives an indication of the extent to which Persia's representatives abroad were coordinating their efforts, and also the manner in which they began to move from the relatively obvious questions of railroads and steamships to more essential questions, touching on Persia's political and legal systems. In 1284/1867-68, three of Persia's representatives abroad, 'Abdol Rahim, the minister in St. Petersburg, Yusef, the chargé d'affaires in Paris, and Mirza Mohsen Khan Mo'in ol-Molk, the chargé d'affaires in London, addressed a joint letter of considerable length to their government. After remarking that as men who had served many years abroad they regarded it their duty to report accurately what they have seen, heard and learned, the three men wrote:

> The task whose accomplishment is needed above all others is the establishment of law. Until such time as the law is established in the Exalted State and the two powers--the legislative and the executive--are separated, it will be impossible for the state and nation to strengthen the army, extend development and secure a good name among foreign states.
> The law must be established in the same manner as the powerful nations, after several thousand years of experience, have established it, and it must be implemented in the same fashion as they implement it. The difference it will have will be this: our law will be based on the holy <u>sheri'a</u>.[1]

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[1] Letter from 'Abdol Rahim, Yusef and Mohsen, 1 Ramazan 1284/26 December 1867, IMFA 85/6128.

The writers warned that inattention to the rule of law "will throw Iran into a condition of disorder similar to the present condition of the Ottoman state and perhaps worse," and added that while Turkey can hope for a certain degree of European protection, Persia would find the powers remaining neutral should a neighbouring state attack it. "In the interests of the expansion of trade, they [the European powers] would not even withhold moral support from the aggressor."

The writers then went on to list in 18 articles the moral, political and economic benefits of law. Possibly reflecting the ideas of Montesquieu, that laws embody and shape the moral consciousness of men, the three men remarked:

> Laws are also a moulder of men, as nannies and nurses are of children. Experience has shown that when men from states without law arrive in states with law, they behave reasonably, honourably and peacefully, and leave behind them all dishonourable and disorderly behaviour. On the contrary, when people from states with law arrive in states without law, they never abstain from oppression, dishonourable and disorderly behaviour and a hundred other acts contrary to the principles of humanity.[1]

Moreover, they wrote, the rule of law would increase loyalty to the ruler among a people living in relative ease and would ensure the ruler of a place in history. It would place Persia among the advanced nations of the world and secure for her the protection and support of the European powers. If greater contact with France, England and Germany was not without its difficulties, they wrote, it had its advantages as well. Resorting to anecdote, they remarked that like the deer in a folk tale that had mixed with the lions and tigers, small nations that mix with the powerful states would themselves

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1 Ibid.

acquire leading attributes, secure powerful friends, and find the will and strength to fight back the wolves at their door.

On the economic side, they argued, the rule of law would give men security of life and property and induce them to invest their money and gold in productive enterprises instead of burying it. It would attract back to Persia the 50,000 Iranians living abroad, and also enterprising subjects of other countries, and draw into productive employment those who in Persia were then living like leeches off the land. All this would lead to rapid progress: "in a short time the country will be developed and the treasury will grow full."

The last part of the memorandum contained a mixture of further description of the benefits of law and exhortations for action. The government was urged not to keep its money uselessly in the treasury but to place it in a bank, to build roads and factories, establish schools, extend agriculture, exploit mines, place steamships on rivers and to expand trade, exchanging the raw silk and cotton of Persia for the broadcloth, chintz and silk goods of Europe.

In addition, the government was advised to end oppression, especially in the collection of taxes and the administration of justice. "The collection and settlement of taxes through [the use of] mohassels," they wrote, "has destroyed the cities, and has crippled, scattered and made desperate the subjects. Collecting taxes, settling affairs, enforcing any type of decree and securing every kind of right without mohassels is the easiest and simplest of tasks." The writers also urged an end to cruel punishments, which were hated by the people and gave the country a bad name abroad. Besides, they said, cruel

punishment destroys a people's self respect, "and without self-respect, a country and nation cannot accomplish anything."[1]

The authors of this lengthy memorandum, like Malkam Khan in his essays, made only passing reference to the possible implications for Islam of the reforms they were proposing. But their remark that the law in Persia, although drawn up and implemented in the same fashion as in the European states, must be based on the shari'a indicates, on the one hand, an awareness that the problem of relating European law to Islamic law would have to be faced and, on the other, a conviction that Islamic and European law could be shown to be compatible.

The task of proving this to be the case was undertaken by one of the three signatories to this memorandum, the chargé d'affaires in Paris, Mirza Yusef Khan Mostashar od-Dowleh. At about the same time as along with his friends he was preparing this memorandum for despatch to Tehran, Yusef Khan wrote to his friend, Akhundzadeh in Tiflis, that he was engaged in a task of utmost importance for Persia. "If good fortune assists [and] the efforts of myself and my colleagues, who share my views, prove effective," he stated, "the greatest of blessings will befall us and our countrymen."[2]

Yusef Khan may have been referring in this letter to the memorandum he drew up with his colleagues in London and St. Petersburg. He may also have been referring to the essay Yek Kalameh[3] which he was at this time engaged in composing and

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1 Ibid.

2 Letter from Paris, 3 Safar 1285/28 May 1868, Maktubat, p. 368.

3 Yek Kalameh was apparently reprinted on several occasions during the Constitutional movement. The copy used here is a pamphlet dated Tehran, Rabi' I, 1325/April-May 1907.

in which he sought to show that Islam already embodied all the principles underlying European constitutional law. In fact, an alternative title to the essay was Ruh el-Islam (the spirit of Islam)--an indication of Yusef Khan's belief that he was expounding the true spirit of Islamic law. In an introduction to the essay proper, Mirza Yusef Khan described the manner in which he began during his service in the Caucasus, Russia and later Europe to wonder why his country--indeed all of Islam--had remained so backward while the states of Europe had progressed so rapidly and how, through a process of self-questioning and discussion with friends, he had reached the conclusion that Europe owed its civilization to one factor (the 'yek kelameh' of the title): government based on the rule of law.

Equating the French word loi with the Arabic qanun, and the French law codes with shari'a books (ketab-e shar'i), he went on to name five characteristics which distinguished French from shari'a law. First, he wrote, French laws were drawn up with the agreement of the government and the people. Secondly, they were comprehensive, and did not contain 'weak' or contradictory opinions, whereas the shari'a contained many such 'weak' decisions and conflicting opinions. Thirdly, French laws were written in the language of the common people, and required no interpretation or gloss by jurists. Fourthly, the French codes concerned themselves exclusively with worldly matters, while shari'a laws mixed worldly and religious matters together in one collection. Finally, while in the French law books customary ('urf) law was also codified, in Islam 'urf law remained uncodified and passed on by oral tradition, permitting much injustice in its enforcement and ensuring that it

would not be applied equally to all the subjects.

While advising against the wholesale translation of the French codes into Persian as impractical and inapplicable, Yusef Khan urged the adoption of the "essential principles" of French law as the basis for Persian law. These principles he reduced to 21 basic precepts, drawn apparently from the French constitution and the ideals of the French revolution. They included such principles as equality before the law, security of life and property, freedom of press and assembly, government by the will of the people and through elected representatives, separation of the legislative and executive powers, security of tenure for judges, trial by jury and the prohibition of torture, the right to work, free education for those who cannot afford it, graduated taxation and the publication by the government of an annual budget.

In the main body of the essay, Yusef Khan set out to show how these principles were in keeping with Islamic precepts. He wrote:

> If you study the contents of the codes of France and of the other civilized states, you will see how the evolution of the ideas of nations and the experience of the peoples of the world confirms the <u>shari'a</u> of Islam, and you will understand that whatever good laws there are in Europe, and through which these nations have achieved the highest levels of progress, your Prophet set down and established for the people of Islam 1,280 years ago.[1]

Mirza Yusef Khan went on to take each of the twenty-one principles he had set down and tried to prove that the same principles were to be found in the literature Muslims hold most sacred by citing appropriate <u>suras</u> from the <u>Qur'an</u> and excerpts

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[1] <u>Ibid</u>.

from the hadith. Legislative assemblies were justified on the basis of the hadith requiring rulers to consult others in the administration of affairs; the separation of powers was legitimized by arguing that in early Islam such a procedure was adopted by assigning certain duties to the mujtahids and muftis on the one hand and to the valis and governors on the other; graduated income tax was supposed to be another form of the requirement to pay zakat.

Mirza Yusef Khan believed that Yek Kalameh constituted a significant step in the campaign for reform in Persia. When the essay was nearing completion, he wrote Akhundzadeh, "I have found verses and the proofs from the glorious Qur'an and the correct hadith for all the instruments of progress and civilization, so that they should no longer say that such a thing is contrary to the precepts of Islam, or that the precepts of Islam prevent progress and civilization."[1]

But Akhundzadeh was far less enthusiastic. "You believe," he wrote Mirza Yusef Khan sometime later, "that with the support of the commandments of the shari'a it is possible to implement the French constitution in the East. No and never! It is impossible and impracticable."[2] Akhundzadeh was at this time acting as translator in Oriental languages to the Russian commander in the Caucasus based in Tiflis and was himself the author of a number of works.[3] He had composed poetry; he had written plays, cast in the form of social and

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1. Letter from Paris, 29 Jamadi II 1286/6 October 1869, Makatibat, p. 372.

2. Quoted by Adamiyyat, Akhundzadeh, p. 158.

3. Akhundzadeh's own works have recently been published in several volumes in Baku under the editorship of Hamid Mohammadzadeh and Hamid Arasli. An account of his life and ideas is given in Adamiyyat, Akhundzadeh.

political satires; and he had also written several essays on literary, historical and political subjects. The most famous of these is Maktubat-e Kamal od-Dowleh, a fictional correspondence between an Indian and a Persian prince about conditions in Persia.

Akhundzadeh, who had translated parts of J.S. Mill's On Liberty and one of Mirabeau's speeches during the French revolution, was an admirer of Voltaire, Montesquieu, Ernst Renan, Fenelon and Henry Thomas Buckle.[1] His Maktubat-e Kamal od-Dowleh emphasized the benefits of constitutional rule and parliamentary institutions and constituted so harsh a condemnation of despotic rule in Persia that Akhundzadeh did not wish it published under his own name.

Kamal od-Dowleh also bears witness to Akhundzadeh's strong Persian nationalism; he was among the earliest writers to express this through a glorification of Persia's pre-Islamic past. He was also a critic of Islam (and indeed of all religions), which he believed to be a barrier to progress. He for example took Mirza Yusef Khan to task for his method in Yek Kalameh because he believed Islam, with its discrimination against women and non-Muslims and its claim to dictate to men what they must believe, could not be made to appear compatible with equality and liberty.[2]

On the other hand, Akhundzadeh did not think it possible completely to turn the Persian people away from Islam. He looked, rather, to a reformed Islam, what he described as 'Islamic protestantism.' His view of what this might entail is

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1 Adamiyyat, Akhundzadeh, pp. 146, 187. Adamiyyat also shows (p. 141n.) that the translation from On Liberty and from Mirabeau's speech, previously attributed to Malkom Khan (and included in Asar by Mohit-Tabatab'i) are in fact the work of Akhundzadeh.

2 Adamiyyat, Akhundzadeh, pp. 156-7.

perhaps indicated by his description of the Americans, the English and European protestants as "outwardly Christians and inwardly the followers of reason."[1]

From his base in Tiflis, Akhundzadeh was strategically placed to establish contact with a number of prominent Persian officials. He came to know a succession of Persian consuls in Tiflis; two of these, Mirza Yusef Khan Mostashar od-Dowleh and Mirza Hosayn Khan Moshir od-Dowleh came to be numbered among the leading advocates of reform. He came to know other Persians, for example Hasan 'Ali Khan Garusi and Mohsen Khan Mo'in ol-Molk when they passed through Tiflis on their way to and from postings in Russia and Europe. To these friends and acquaintances he often sent his essays; it was in this fashion that Maktubat-e Kamal od-Dowleh, which was not published in Akhundzadeh's lifetime, was circulated.[2]

In 1863, Akhundzadeh went to Istanbul at the invitation of Mirza Hosayn Khan Moshir od-Dowleh, new ambassador to the Porte, to present to Ottoman officials his plan for a reform of the Arabic script. It was on this occasion that he first met Malkom Khan, who had himself recently arrived at the Ottoman capital. The two men maintained a correspondence in subsequent years and in the late 1860's collaborated on schemes for a reform of the Arabic script, which both regarded as too difficult and a barrier to the spread of literacy and knowledge in the Islamic world.[3]

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1 Ibid., p. 222.

2 Individuals with whom Akhundzadeh corresponded and to whom he sent his writings are indicated by the correspondence included in Maktubat.

3 See especially Alger, "Reform of the Arabic Alphabet," MES, Vol. 5, No. 2 (1969).

The Istanbul trip, however, lost Ākhūndzādeh the friendship of MoshĪr od-Dowleh. Ākhūndzādeh had brought with him from Tiflis copies of his plays and presented these, through the prime minister, Fuad Pasha, to the Ottoman Scientific Society. MoshĪr od-Dowleh had seen and praised these plays, which were critical of conditions in Persia, when he was consul in Tiflis. But possibly because he feared for his own position with the shah and the Persian government, he now took offence at Ākhūndzādeh's making public what he had some years earlier shown him in private and refused after this to have anything more to do with Ākhūndzādeh. His reaction in this instance notwithstanding, MoshĪr od-Dowleh was himself at this time a strong advocate of reform.

Mīrzā Ḥosayn Khān was the son of Mīrzā Nābī Amīr Khān, a man who had worked his way up in the bureaucracy from a relatively humble background eventually to become the shah's minister of justice. After finishing school in Persia,[1] he was sent with his brother, Yaḥyā Khān, to Paris for further study, but he remained only briefly. While still in his twenties, and through his father's connections, he was appointed consul in Bombay, where he remained nine years, and then consul-general in Tiflis, where he spent another three years. Little is known about this period of his life although he appears to have become familiar, in his official capacity, with Persian merchant communities at these two centres.[2]

In 1275/1858-9, he was appointed minister, and later

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1. According to Kermānī, Bīdārī, introductory volume, p. 134, Mirza Hosayn Khan attended the Dār ol-Fonūn, but this is not mentioned by other sources.

2. For this period of his career, see Maḥmūd Farhād-Mo'tamed, Sefārathaelar-e Akam (Tehran, solar 1326/1957-8), pp. 8-10.

ambassador, to Istanbul. Mirza Hosayn Khan spent the next eleven years at the Ottoman capital. This eleven-year stretch coincided with one of the most intensive periods of the tanzimat, and its influence on Mirza Hosayn Khan's thinking appears to have been profound. He arrived in Istanbul shortly after the proclamation of the khatt-e homayun; he left, in 1870, a few years before the proclamation of the Ottoman constitution, but not too late to witness the beginning of the constitutional agitation. In this period, under the impact of the tanzimat, the Ottoman empire had begun to modify its system of government by the creation of a cabinet modelled on European lines, a council of state to act in an advisory capacity to the sultan, and a tanzimat council to draw up reform legislation; by reform of provincial administration and the creation of provincial councils; by expansion of the court system, codification of the laws and the borrowing of Western legal codes; and by the establishment of a network of modern schools.[1]

Of all these developments, Moshir ed-Dowleh was a shrewd observer. During his eleven years in Istanbul he directed at his government a large number of despatches, recording events in the Ottoman capital, analyzing the political situation, and describing the reform measures. These despatches were not merely the comments of a disinterested observer. They reflected a political intent. They were used by Moshir ed-Dowleh as a stick to prod officials at home to undertake reform in Persia. Running between the lines of his description of the Ottoman tanzimat there was an unmistakable tone of approval; appended to each of the despatches there was usually the plea

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1 The Ottoman tanzimat are described in Roderic Davison Reform in the Ottoman Empire, 1856-1876 (Princeton, 1963).

or suggestion that Persia follow suit.

He thus described a proposed Iskenderun-Basra railway as a project which would give the Ottoman empire "a new lease of life,"[1] and the new Ottoman schools as institutions which would create an educated Ottoman public and "soon make available men of ability to the government."[2] The establishment of schools for girls and women led him to comment--with obvious approval--that "a woman who has studied the French language, read their books and learned of their customs cannot always be kept behind a veil and will of course enter society without one."[3] The establishment of the new Ottoman newspaper, Tercuman-e Ahval, led him to make a comparison--unfavourable to Persia--between the Persian and Ottoman newspapers and to regret the failure of the Persian official gazette properly to inform and enlighten its readers.[4]

He sent to Tehran Turkish translations of European books on "principles of government, the laws of nations and statecraft," hoping they would be put to good use.[5] He provided the foreign minister with a copy of Mustafa Fazel Pasha's 1867 open letter to sultan Abdulaziz, in which the Egyptian prince had recounted the ills besetting the empire and proposed reforms of a constitutional nature, and also with a copy of the sultan's speech before the opening session of the new council of state in 1868, in which the sultan had condemned arbitrary government and endorsed individual rights, the equality of his citizens

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1. Quoted in Azadi, p. 63.
2. Ibid., p. 63.
3. Ibid., pp. 62-3.
4. Letter No. 136/25 of 28 Jamadi I, 1277/12 December 1860, IMFA 66/6129.
5. Letter of 14 Shevval 1275/17 May 1859, IMFA 53/6131.

and the separation of the legislative and executive powers. He urged the foreign minister to give the documents his careful attention. "It will increase Your Excellency's enlightenment," he added.[1]

Again, describing the sultan's practice of going at the beginning of every year to the bab-e hli to hear a report from the sadr-e a'zam on the accomplishments of the past year, he remarked:

> How good it would be if this praiseworthy practice would also be enforced in the Exalted State of Iran, and if the officials of the Exalted State would inform the general public of their efforts and the progress achieved by the state as a result of their work . . . If the officials of the Exalted State have the means to emulate that practice, it would be very good.[2]

Moshir ed-Dowleh may also have been the inspiration behind a letter describing Midhat's reforms in the velayat of Baghdad which was sent to the foreign office and then circulated at the shah's orders to all provincial governors with instructions that they attempt to order and develop their provinces in a similar manner.[3]

It was this commitment to reform which accounts for Moshir ed-Dowleh's espousal of Malkom Khan's cause, when the latter arrived in Istanbul in the summer of 1862 after having been banished from Persia. To sponsor a person who had been only recently the object of the shah's displeasure and suspicion no doubt had its risks for Moshir ed-Dowleh. But he seems to have seen in Malkom a man who shared many of his ideas. Both

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1 Letter of 15 Safar 1285/7 June 1868 in Azadi, pp. 66-7; and letter of 19 Zi Qa'deh 1283/25 March 1867 in Ibid., p. 63.

2 Letter No. 9/4 of 21 Safar 1287/23 May 1870, IMFA 11/6130.

3 Government circular to provincial governors, Rabi' I 1286/June-July 1869, IMFA 53/6131.

men had been impressed by the Ottoman experiment and both believed in the possibility of applying such reforms to Persia. The 'partnership' between Malkom Khan and Moshir ed-Dowleh dates from this period and Malkom's ideas later influenced Mirza Hosayn Khan's attempts at administrative and judicial reform once he became sadr-e a'zam in 1871.

Moshir ed-Dowleh's experience in Istanbul also reinforced a conviction, shared by Malkom and other reformers, that those eastern countries whose geographical position drew them into the vortex of European politics faced a grave danger. But he also came to believe that European pressure, if exerted in the interests of reform, could be a healthy influence. He thus came almost to envy the involvement of the powers in Turkey's internal affairs. Writing in 1867 that the European states were about to insist that the Porte undertake a number of reforms, he remarked, "Although this insistence and compulsion initially appears bitter and unpalatable, it will eventually lead to salvation, success and progress."[1] This attitude partially explains his later attempts to draw England into greater involvement in Persia.

In the despatches Moshir ed-Dowleh sent from Istanbul, it is also possible to discern the formation of his view as to the means through which reforms might be carried out in Persia. His remarks make clear that he saw the government itself as the agent of reform and a select group within it as entrusted with the special mission of awakening their less alert colleagues to the need for change and then leading and guiding this movement. His various analogies describing this special role of

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[1] Letter of 19 Zi Hajjeh, 1283/25 March 1867 in Azadi, p. 61.

the leadership are instructive. In one despatch he described the power of sight as a God-given gift permitting man to inform himself of the world about him and added:

> The officers of the state are like the sense of sight, and they must without delay report and make known what they see and conclude to the government which is like the body. If they suppress [anything] and fail to call attention, they have not fulfilled their responsibilities and duties.[1]

In another letter he compared the leaders of the state to a physician "who must prescribe medicine suited to the day-by-day condition of the patient" and also to a teacher "to whom the education of numerous children has been entrusted."[2] In a despatch written in 1869, anticipating the foreign minister's advice that he should not uselessly trouble himself about the state of the country, he commented:

> If a number of persons should have boarded a ship; and if in the middle of the sea a few should realize that the ship has developed a fault which will have injurious results; and if the rest, from ignorance and unawareness, should be busy making merry, it does not follow that those few with discernment should also sit idle and desist from effort and concern.[3]

The role of able men, he wrote the foreign minister on another occasion, is decisive. It was to such men that Europe owed its progress and achievement. "In short, men can by [correct] policies in time make a small nation great and powerful, and men can also, through negligence and indifference, obliterate a great nation."[4]

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1. Letter No. 10 of 8 Rabi' I 1286/18 June 1869, IMFA 11/6130.
2. Letter of 19 Zi Qa'deh 1283/25 March 1867 in Azadi, p. 60.
3. Letter No. 42/6 of 24 Rabi' I 1286/4 July 1869, IMFA 53/6131.
4. Letter No. 48/12 of 23 Rabi' I 1283/5 August 1866, IMFA 53/6131.

Although the tenative administrative reforms introduced by the shah at the dismissal of Mirza Aqa Khan Nuri in 1858 initially raised Moshir ed-Dowleh's hopes,[1] towards the end of his stay in Istanbul he grew increasingly disillusioned, despairing at the chances of real change in Persia. Ottoman progress appears only to have sharpened his sense of Persia's backwardness. Persia's condition appears also to have awakened in him the first stirrings of a nationalism that would be more pronounced in later reformers, and it is at this time that the words vatan (patrie or fatherland) and vatan-parasti (patriotism) appear in his despatches.[2]

He complained that his recommendations for reform were treated with as much seriousness as fairy tales and, once read, were forgotten.[3] In June 1869, in a long despatch to the foreign minister he compared the standing of Persia with that of the Ottoman empire and regretfully reported that while during his ten years in Istanbul the prestige of Turkey had gradually risen in the eyes of Europe that of Persia had drastically fallen: "In short," he wrote, "they no longer consider us of any consequence and no longer regard us with respect. Whoever says otherwise is engaging in flattery. The officials of the Exalted State must therefore enter the road of progress as quickly as possible and regard a moment's quiet as forbidden to them."[4] A month later he wrote to complain of

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1 Letter No. 186 of Rajab 1276/Jan.-Feb. 1860, IMFA 11/6130.

2 Letter of 14 Zi Qa'deh 1286/15 February 1870 in Azadi, p. 72. Moshir ed-Dowleh was probably not the first to use such terminology, which occurs earlier in writings of Mirza Fath 'Ali Akhundzadeh.

3 Ibid., p. 70.

4 Letter No. 10 of 8 Rabi' I 1286/18 June 1869 in IMFA 11/6130.

ill-health, due not to personal concerns but to concern about his country:

> It so happens that my heart desires that the affairs of my country, like those of other states and in a fitting degree, should be orderly and progress from one day to the next . . . I have enough sense to realize that what is required will not come about at once . . . But my great sorrow is due to this: that we have not yet begun.[1]

It was possibly due to his failure to secure reforms in Persia by such exhortations that Moshir od-Dowleh began in 1867 to seek to induce Naser ad-Din shah to make a trip to Europe. He no doubt believed that the shah, seeing for himself the achievement of European states, would be moved to undertake a programme of reform himself. The idea of a European tour appears to first suggested itself by the decision of sultan Abdulaziz to accept the French emperor's invitation to visit the Paris Exposition.

When he learned of the sultan's intention, Moshir od-Dowleh wrote home describing the expesition in glowing terms and reporting with approval Fuad Pasha's alleged remarks (to Moshir od-Dowleh) that the visit would permit Turkey to keep abreast of the times, strengthen her international position and secure her place in the community of nations.[2] Hearing from the Persian minister in Paris that the shah too had been invited to attend, Moshir od-Dowleh quickly sent a memorandum to the foreign ministry, urging that the shah accept. The trip, he said, "will give new life to the state and nation of Iran and it will leave [the shah's] great name standing in the

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[1] Letter No. 42/6 of 24 Rabi' I 1286/4 July 1869, IMFA 53/ [illegible].

[2] Letter No. 6/2 of 30 Moharrem 1283/3 June 1867, IMFA 76/ [illegible].

history books."[1]

The shah did not take up the suggestion, but Moshir od-Dowleh persisted. Naser ed-Din finally undertook to make a pilgrimage to the holy places in Iraq, as a preliminary to a European tour, promising to go to Europe within three years.[2] But Moshir od-Dowleh continued to plead the cause of a European journey, partly because the Porte was not enthusiastic about a royal tour to an area inhabited by a large shi'i community, and partly because a trip to Iraq would not serve the purpose he had in mind. He urged that if the shah would not go to Europe, he might at least come as far as Istanbul.[3] The shah, however, remained resolute, and in October 1870 he left Tehran for the holy places.

The shah had already been much impressed by Moshir od-Dowleh. The pilgrimage to the holy places, which he wanted to undertake for private reasons, became an obsession in the face of Ottoman temporizing. He was thus deeply grateful to his ambassador for overcoming Ottoman resistance to the trip.[4] In Iraq itself, Moshir od-Dowleh appears to have further ingratiated himself with his monarch. Even before he left Ottoman soil, on 23 December 1870, he named Moshir od-Dowleh his minister of justice and minister of pensions and endowments

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1 Letter No. 11/7 of 30 Moharram 1284/3 June 1867, IMFA 52/6157.

2 Letter from Naser ed-Din shah to Moshir od-Dowleh, in Tayyuri, 'Asr-e bi Khabari (Tehran, solar 1332/1953-4), p. 9.

3 Letter of 16 Sha'ban 1286/21 November 1869 in IMFA 11/6130.

4 The shah was set on making a pilgrimage because he had dreamt of doing so during the plague of 1869-70 and made a vow to undertake such a trip should he escape the plague. (See his letter in 'Asr, p. 33). In urging Moshir od-Dowleh to overcome Ottoman objections, he wrote: "You do not know how pleased and satisfied I shall be, and this great service shall remain for years as a memory for your family. (Ibid., p. 9).

and took him back with him to Tehran. At the capital Moshir ed-Dowleh's rise was rapid. In September 1871 he was named by the shah minister of war and commander of the army (sepahsalar); by November, he was prime minister.

The numerous essays and official memoranda produced in the decade or so after 1858 and which we have been discussing were largely the work of Persians who had been abroad in an official capacity and whose experience in Europe and the Ottoman empire convinced them that Persia would not be able to stand up to external threats or gain the support of friendly European powers for her independence without internal reform. In pressing for reform, these officials were not motivated by considerations of foreign policy alone. There were also strong internal reasons for their advocacy of a change in the system of government.

As diplomats many of these officials felt personally and directly the ill-effects of mal-administration. They found often that they were left without instructions, and that their despatches were not answered; the numerous letters in the archives of the Persian ministry of foreign affairs attests to the humiliation they felt at such treatment. Moshir ed-Dowleh wrote from Istanbul on one occasion that he had received no instructions from the government or answers to his despatches for over three months.[1]

They were often left without pay for the better part of a year, and even longer, were forced to go into debt and suffered public embarrassment. "This unfortunate," Nazar Aqa

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1 Letter No. 97/1 of Rajab 1283/Nov.-Dec. 1866, IMFA 11/6120.

wrote from Paris, "is on the verge of extinction from having waited so long. Can you not find a way so that my salary for the last year and the year before last reaches me? Otherwise I shall be ruined."[1] Moshir od-Dowleh wrote on another occasion that the minister in Paris had to quit the city to escape his creditors, the new minister to London had been held up three months in Tabriz awaiting the payment of his salary, while the staff in Istanbul were without pay. "Do you think I am drowning in liras or that the streets in Istanbul are paved with them?"[2] he asked.

The emphasis those calling for reform placed on the need for guaranteeing security of life and property and the due process of law also arose in part out of a realization that any government official was at any moment liable to lose his post, his property and possibly his life at the shah's pleasure. It was with this condition in mind that Malkom Khan, ridiculing the efforts of officials to enrich themselves, wrote: "You think that you are amassing this money for your children; and you do not at all realize that like your predecessors you labour only for [the benefit of] the government." He pointed to the example of Mirza Aqa Khan Nuri, once a powerful prime minister and at this time in exile and added: "Show me the minister of Iran who, at the last breath, does not envy the lot of his stable boy."[3]

Many of the early advocates of reform saw that these conditions of insecurity and disorder applied to the country as a whole. They felt shame at the backwardness and

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1 Letter of 20 Rabi' II, IMFA 124/6127.

2 Letter No. 2 of 14 Shevval 1283/19 February 1867; and No. 213/10 of Zi Hajjeh 1283/Apr.-May 1867, and No. 3, 1 Moharram 1283/16 May 1866, all in IMFA 11/6130.

3 Asar, p. 62.

misgovernment of their country, and they came to believe that oppression was not only bad policy but also uncivilized. The concern with the reputation of their country in the eyes of Europeans is a marked feature of the despatches of Persian diplomats in the 1860s. These feelings, as already noted, gave rise to the first stirrings of nationalism among some of Persia's representatives abroad.

Those who were advocating reform in the 1860's were never a large group, and they were not a tightly knit one. But their contacts with one another and the fact that they shared many attitudes in common seems to have given them a certain group feeling. They appear to have thought of themselves as a younger generation of officials with ideas and policies different from those of what they sometimes referred to as the older generation of bureaucrats. Malkam Khan, for example, thought of the shah as launching reform by turning to the younger generation.[1] Moshir ed-Dowleh interpreted the dismissal of Mirza Aqa Khan Nuri and the administrative changes introduced in 1858 as reflecting a decision by the shah to rid himself of older and reactionary officials.[2]

The diplomats urging reform in the 1860's also believed that their foreign experience and training better qualified and equipped them to guide the country than those Persians who had not been abroad. In vaunting the superiority of the new arts and sciences of Europe they were also suggesting that as Persians with a knowledge of these sciences, they had a special claim to the higher offices of the state. This sense of superior knowledge and contempt for those who lacked it was

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1 Ibid., p. 23.

2 Letter to foreign minister No. 186, [Istanbul], Rajab 1276/Jan.-Feb. 1860, IMFA 11/6130.

expressed in Malkam's remarks to an imaginary minister:

> By what right do you expect a ministry? . . . You have not read a treaty nor seen a war plan, heard the expression 'bank' nor even know the names of the states; yet you claim a ministry. Where knowledge is concerned, you do not differ from a village boy. Where is Prussia? How do they eat Parliament? Which artist's painting is 'indirect taxation?' How many sons does the British East India Company have?[1]

Persia's diplomats also assigned to the ministry of foreign affairs and themselves as members of it a pivotal role in bringing the new civilization to Persia. Malkam believed that the foreign ministry had the duty of acting as a channel through which the achievements and knowledge of Europe could be directed towards Persia.[2] Others, as we have noted, believed that Persia's ambassadors abroad had a special mission to enlighten their government and people and lead both along the right path to progress.

This elitist attitude, which owed something both to Persian bureaucratic and to Islamic traditions, was closely bound up with the attitude to government of the early reformers. It was to the government that they looked as the central guiding force in determining and directing the affairs of the people. They favoured schools and newspapers because these offered a means for creating a better informed and better educated public. But this was at the same time a desire for newspapers, for instance, that would educate the public in ideas they believed suitable for Persia rather than as a means for permitting many schools of thought to compete for the people's allegiance.[3]

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1. Asar, pp. 59-60.
2. Ibid., p. 85.
3. For their concept of the role of a newspaper see letter to foreign minister from Mohsen, No. 21 [Istanbul], 18 Jamadi I 1298/18 April 1881; and from Hosayn, No. 225/16, [Istanbul], 17 Shevval 1279/7 April 1863, both in IMFA 85/6128.

Laissez-faire was certainly not among the ideas they brought with them from Europe, and it is not surprising that in citing models for the shah to follow, it is Frederick the Great, Napoleon and Peter the Great that most immediately came to Malkom's mind.[1]

The early advocates of reform were also influenced in the proposals that they made by the realities of the political situation in Persia. They had to take account of the susceptibilities of the shah and of other powerful officials. They perhaps realized that there were very few others who were sympathetic to their views. They looked to the shah for support and to the bureaucracy as the agency through which reforms could be carried out because they could not see any alternative means for realizing their objectives. These factors explain why the idea of an enlightened absolutism was attractive to the early reformers and why the Ottoman example in particular impressed men like Moshir ed-Dowleh. Turkey too was an Islamic state and, at least to contemporary Persian observers, appeared to be successfully modifying its traditional system of government to something more akin to European monarchical rule. The appointment of Moshir ed-Dowleh in 1870-71 in quick succession to the offices of minister of justice, minister of war and, finally, prime minister offered the advocates of change a chance to put their ideas into practice.

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1 See for example Asar, pp. 62, 86 and 93.

CHAPTER II

MOSHIR OD-DOWLEH AND HIS REFORMS

The shah's decision to name a sadr-e a'zam was in itself a new departure for Naser ad-Din, at least from the practice he had followed in the previous decade. After the dismissal of Mirza Aqa Khan Nuri, his second prime minister, in 1858, Naser ad-Din had decided he would do without a prime minister altogether. Instead, he appointed six ministers: finance, foreign affairs, war, justice, interior and pensions and endowments. The ministers were permitted to consult together on important questions and to present their recommendations to the shah. But the 'cabinet' did not function as a unit. Each minister was responsible directly to the shah and reported directly to him, and each could be individually dismissed or appointed by the monarch. The shah's approval alone gave effect to any measure.[1] The shah, at the same time, refrained from naming a sadr-e a'zam.

This omission was rooted in the equivocal attitude with which both the shah and his bureaucrats had come to regard the post of prime minister. The shah had seen, from his experience with his first two prime ministers, Mirza Taqi Khan, Amir Kabir, and Mirza Agha Khan Nuri, that there was a tendency for the sadr-e a'zam to secure for reliable relatives and proteges appointment to the important departments, to concentrate considerable power in his own hands, and to achieve

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1. For the text of decree establishing six-man cabinet, see Mohammad Hasan E'temād os-Saltaneh, Mer'āt el-Boldān (Tehran, 1294-7/1887-80), ii, p. 228.

such a degree of dominance over the administration that the shah was virtually excluded from exercising control over the affairs of significant sectors of his government.

Under Mirza Taqi Khan, the sadr-e a'zam's growing authority was eventually considered as inconsistent with royal absolutism and as constituting a threat to the throne.[1] Mirza Aqa Khan Nuri did not arouse similar suspicions. But governmental corruption and disorder, and defeat in war, during his administration were seen as the result of the prime minister's predilection to collect under his personal aegis the important functions of the state.[2] The absence of a prime minister in the six-man cabinet of 1858 thus marked a reassertion of royal authority and an attempt by the shah to exercise himself a direct control and supervision over the organs of government.

The bureaucracy as a whole, albeit for different reasons, shared the shah's reservations towards the office of prime minister. The bureaucrats saw that the existence of a sadr-e a'zam, charged with over-all responsibility for the administration, too often meant a monopoly of posts and access to wealth for the prime minister, his relatives and followers. During the governments of both Mirza Taqi Khan and Mirza Aqa Khan Nuri opposition factions formed, the 'outs' seeking to overthrow the 'ins' and to replace them in office. Another important consideration for the bureaucrats was the desire for

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1. An undertaking secured from Mirza Taqi Khan after his dismissal as sadr-e a'zam is highly instructive in regard to his relations with the shah. See Adamiyyat, Amir Kabir va Iran (Tehran, solar 1334/1955-6), pp. 482-3.

2. The farman dismissing Mirza Aqa Khan Nuri contained a reference to his monopolization of governmental offices. See Nur'at, ii, p. 228.

direct access to the shah, which the existence of a sadr-e a'zam tended to restrict. While the shah too tended to act autocratically, the bureaucrats on the whole preferred the autocracy of the shah to that of his prime ministers. The shah was, in the last analysis, the final arbiter and proved in practice less efficient than his sadr-e a'zams in controlling the bureaucracy.

The opposition to the appointment of a prime minister was not, however, always venal in intent. Many of those who favoured good government believed that the involvement of the shah in the day-to-day affairs of the administration would be beneficial, by directing the shah's attention to serious affairs of state rather than to frivolous court entertainment and as a check against the corruption to which prime ministerial rule always seemed to lead.[1] In refraining from naming a prime minister after the dismissal of Mirza Aqa Khan Nuri, the shah was thus reacting to pressures from the bureaucracy as well as following his personal predilections.

Naser ed-Din shah, however, discovered he could not on his own supervise all the departments of government, partly because of the size and varied activities of an expanding administration, partly because he lacked the specialized knowledge for effective control of certain departments, such

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[1] The author of 'Ebrat-e Nazeria, for example, was critical of "the ancient custom" of appointing a sadr-e a'zam with full powers to run the government, leaving the shah free to pursue his pleasures. (Cited in Siyasatgaran, p. 108). The idea that the country was better off without a prime minister and with the shah ruling directly continued to exercise the minds of Persian officials late into Naser ed-Din shah's reign. In the 1890's, Amin od-Dowleh urged the shah to revert to the practice he had adopted after the dismissal of Mirza Aqa Khan Nuri, describing the shah's direct rule as "the spring of the Qajar monarchy." (Mirza 'Ali Khan Amin od-Dowleh, Khaterat-e Siyasi (Tehran, solar 1341/1962), p. 178).

as the finances, partly because as a rule the bureaucrats sought to escape outside interference and control. The shah's personal habits--he spent a large part of every year in the saddle and hunting in day trips around Tehran or longer expeditions along the Caspian coast--also militated against close royal supervision. He thus repeatedly returned, under various forms and guises, to his former practice. Alternation between attempts at direct rule and reversion to direction of affairs through a sadr-e a'zam was, in fact, a persistent feature of the reign of Naser ad-Din shah.

While he refrained from appointing a sadr-e a'zam in the period after 1858, the shah nevertheless found he had to charge one man with general responsibility for the government. In the six-man cabinet of 1858, this task fell to Mirza Sadeq Qa'em Maqam, the minister of interior.[1] In July 1864, the shah reorganized his administration and divided all governmental affairs into three major departments, (military, financial and foreign affairs) and entrusted each department to a leading minister. Among these three ministers, however, one, Mirza Mohammad Khan sepahsalar, the commander of the army, was to take precedence and to supervise the administration on behalf of the shah.[2] That the shah found this system unsatisfactory is evident from another governmental reshuffle that took place in June/July 1866. In this year, the shah once again divided responsibility among several ministers, each responsible to himself alone, and set aside one day each week for receiving particular ministers.[3]

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1 Ibid., p. 18.

2 See decree of 25 Safar 1281/31 July 1864 in Mer'at, iii, p. 37; and Khaterat, p. 24.

3 See decree of Safar 1283/June-July 1866, Mer'at, iii, 57-61.

These successive reorganizations of the administration reflect the shah's inability to make the ministerial system, with himself directly at its head, work effectively. The shah, evidently feeling the need to have one man supervise the administration for him, was by 1871 ready to revert to prime ministerial rule. It is not improbable that Naser ed-Din had already reached his decision, and picked his man, when he named Moshir od-Dowleh minister of justice in late 1870; and that the year's interval between Moshir od-Dowleh's appointment as justice minister and his appointment as sadr-e a'zam was a necessary precaution on the shah's part, directed at overcoming the resistance of his other officials to the appointment of a prime minister.[1] The farman naming Moshir ed-Dowleh sadr-e a'zam was couched in terms meant to justify the reversion to such a practice.

Mirza Hosayn Khan's return to Tehran and his assumption of high office implied an intention on the shah's part to undertake a programme of reform. His views, as embodied in his despatches from Istanbul, were well known, certainly to the shah and the foreign minister and, it can safely be assumed, to other high officials as well. The shah, moreover, had taken to corresponding directly with his ambassador and had begun to send to him memoranda outlining his own plans and hopes for reform.[2] He had also made known

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1 Zendegani, i, 116.

2 This is evident from reference to a ketabcheh written by the shah and sent to Moshir od-Dowleh, apparently discussing reforms. (See letters from shah to Moshir od-Dowleh in Nasr, pp. 9 and 33). It was apparently this same ketabcheh that Mirza Hosayn Khan was acknowledging when he wrote: "The lofty contents and ideas expressed in it were of so high a nature, and so in keeping with the taste of the present age; and it will in such a manner lead to the progress of religion and state and the spread

to Moshir od-Dowleh his feeling that what he lacked were men of ability, capable of carrying out the royal wishes in this regard,[1] and to hint at his desire to have Moshir od-Dowleh by his side for this purpose.[2]

On the eve of his return to Tehran from Iraq and shortly before he named oshir od-Dowleh minister of justice, Naser ed-Din shah invited his ambassador to accompany him to Tehran and, as an additional inducement (although none, probably, was needed) hinted at his intentions. He wrote:

> I have good ideas regarding governmental affairs, [by which], God willing, the state shall progress and accomplish great tasks in the world. These tasks require tools, and, whatever I may be, what can I do alone? There is of course no better instrument than you . . . You must for a period undertake service in the royal entourage, especially in the great departments whose progress is intended . . . I support men like you with both hands and will not give you up.[3]

The fact that the shah had been able to witness in Iraq the reforms instituted by Midhat Pasha reinforced the expectation that the Naser ed-Din would introduce changes in his own administration.[4] This impression was no doubt strengthened as Moshir od-Dowleh began to collect around himself associates and friends who were identified with a desire for change. Gradually, as he moved from the ministry of justice to the prime ministry, he recalled Mirza Yusef Khan

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of civilization in the provinces of the Exalted States, and it can so be lauded in all other countries, that it lies beyond the capacity of the tongue or pen of this slave to praise or express." (Letter of 16 Sha'ban 1286/21 November 1869 in IMFA 11/6130).

1. 'Asr, p. 9.
2. Ibid., p. 33.
3. Ibid., p. 38.
4. Khaterat, p. 34.

Mostashar od-Dowleh, the author of Yek Kalameh to act as his deputy in the ministry of justice, Malkam Khan to act as a personal advisor, Hasan Ali Khan Garusi, former minister in Paris and his successor in Istanbul, as minister of public works, and Naser el-Molk, one-time ambassador in London, as a deputy in the ministry of war.

These men and their supporters regarded Moshir od-Dowleh's appointment as an opportunity to implement many of their ideas. When Mirza Hosayn Khan was named sadr-e a'zam, Mostashar od-Dowleh wrote his friend and correspondent, Akhundzadeh, that the new prime minister "will do with Persia what Peter the Great did with Russia."[1] Akhundzadeh himself wrote Mostashar od-Dowleh of his appointment to the ministry of justice, "Now is the time to translate all your thoughts into action," and described the implementation of new laws in Persia as "the first step taken in Iran on the road of civilization."[2] Malkam Khan's father, Ya'qub, making his way from Russia to Istanbul, called on the British ambassadors in St. Petersburg, Vienna and the Ottoman capital informing each that with Mirza Hosayn Khan's appointment a new page had been turned foreshadowing favourable changes both in Persia's domestic policy and her relations with England.

It was certainly in anticipation of changes in the system of government, or as a sign of disapproval of changes already made, that Mirza Yusef Khan Mostowfi al-Mamalek, the minister of finance and the leading elder statesman, took to

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1 Makatubat, p. 270.

2 Ibid., p. 199.

Ibid., p. 270.

See Granville to Alison, No. 55, Foreign Office, 27 September 1871, FO 248/266; and same to same, No. 15, Foreign Office, 11 March 1872, FO 248/277, and the enclosures in both despatches.

sitting at home and refusing to attend to his duties. The shah, however, accepted Mostowfi al-Mamalek's 'resignation' and thus at least temporarily eliminated one of the leading opponents to innovation.[1]

There were other signs of change in the tone and style of government. Mirza Hosayn Khan and the newcomers discarded the long robe (jabbeh) and the tall, conical hat (shal-kolah) that had been the unofficial 'uniform' of the bureaucrats and secretaries and adopted instead the shorter frock coat and hat akin to the stambuline and fez of the men of the Ottoman tanzimat.[2] In the official gazette items appeared, no doubt inspired by Moshir od-Dowleh himself, not only praising the new minister for his "acquaintance with European ways" but also recommending criticism as a means to progress and improvement.[3]

The two-and-a-half year period between Mirza Hosayn Khan's appointment as minister of justice (December 1870) and his dismissal from the prime ministership (September 1873) were characterized by attempts to reform certain branches of the administration, to begin the economic development of the country, and to establish Anglo-Persian relations on a firm footing as a necessary condition for achieving these ends. The attempts at reform were themselves embodied in a series of decrees issued sometimes in the shah's name, sometimes directly by Moshir od-Dowleh.

These decrees were seen at the time as innovations, and to a significant degree this view was justified. The

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1. Zendegani, I, 112-3.
2. Ibid., p. 118.
3. Rouznameh-ye Iran, issues of 24 Moharram 1288/15 April 1871 and of 14 Safar 1288/5 May 1871.

period of Moshir od-Dowleh's ascendancy reflects both traditional and new approaches to administration. This duality can be seen in the language of the decrees themselves. The decrees were invariably couched in traditional terms: They asserted the desire of the monarch to see his people enjoy the fruits of justice, peace and prosperity and depicted the ruler-subject relationship in terms of the traditional relationship of the shepherd to his flock.

The innovations, such as they were, were justified as a return to ancient practice, an attempt to recapture past glory, and as embodying the underlying principles of the Shari'a. But at the same time, there was frequent reference to the practice and experience of other states and the advanced nations, and the reform effort was depicted as a means for Persia to open a new chapter in her history and to match the achievement of the European nations.

Moshir od-Dowleh's decrees, at times, sought basically to alter the structure of the central organs of the state. At others, they aimed merely at the correction of abuses in the traditional manner. The decrees, moreover, were not issued in an administrative vacuum. They took cognizance of the existing administrative framework, they built on past efforts at administrative reorganization, and they embodied many traditional attitudes to society. In this sense, the reforms did not involve as great a break with the past as has generally been assumed. In order to evaluate Moshir od-Dowleh's measures in perspective, it will be necessary to say something of the earlier attempts at reform as each of the fields towards which he directed his attention--the judiciary, the Council of state and cabinet, the army and the finances--is considered.

Judicial reform had already been attempted in the reign of Naser ed-Din shah before the appointment of Moshir ed-Dowleh. Mirza Taqi Khan Amir Kabir had tried to establish greater central control over the shar'i courts, to extend 'urfi at the expense of shar'i jurisdiction, to assert central authority in the matter of judicial appointments, to have all cases involving persons from minority religions referred to Tehran, and to abolish the legal force of contradictory juridical opinions.[1] In 1855, Mirza Aqa Khan Nuri, then prime minister, proposed to the shah the promulgation of a code of laws, based on European codes and, like the Ottoman Khatt-e sharif-e golkhaneh, guaranteeing the security of life, property and honour of the inhabitants. But the plan proved abortive.[2]

Two further decrees were issued in 1858 and 1862. The first, a decree published on 18 November, 1858,[3] asserted the authority of the central divan over the provincial courts. It provided for the despatch from Tehran to each of the provinces of a divanbegi who would exercise general supervision over the 'urfi and shar'i courts in his district, act as intermediary between the provincial courts and the justice minister at the capital, and keep a complete record of the cases brought before him and the manner in which cases were

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1 Algar, Religion and State, pp. 129-136.

2 Lambton, "The Persian 'Ulema and Constitutional Reform", Le Shi'isme Imamite, ed. T. Fahd (Paris, 1970), p. 259.

3 The text of the decree of 11 Rabi' II 1275/18 November 1858 appears in Muhammad Taqi Danghani, "Sad Sal Pish az In: Avvalin Moqarrerat-e Dadresi: Dastur al-'amal-e Omana-ye Divankhaneh-ha-ye 'Adliyeh," Rugug-e Mardom, Vol. 1, No. 4, (Tehran, 1966), pp. 56-57.

settled.

The divanbegi's court, it appears, was not intended to replace the existing shar'i and 'urfi courts so much as to act as a clearing house to which cases were to be first presented before being referred to either of the two courts. Important cases were not to be decided at the provincial level and to be referred to Tehran. The divanbegi was to act as a kind of watchdog over the administration of justice by the local governor. The decree also established certain rules of procedure and guidelines for dealing with cases. This decree was subsequently suspended, due to the objections of the provincial governors, who claimed its application would lead to disorder.[1]

The decree of December 1862[2] sought to revive, in modified form, the earlier measure and to extend its application to the Tehran courts. It appears that at this time the tendency was for each ministry to have jurisdiction over judicial cases involving members of its departments and also over private individuals whose affairs were conceived as falling within the compass of that particular ministry. For example, cases involving tax collectors were referred to the finance minister, those involving military officers to the ministry of war, those involving merchants to the ministry of commerce. Conflicts of jurisdiction arose when the two parties to a case came from different ministries. Cases involving persons not easily classifiable by ministries fell under the jurisdiction of the local governor or the central

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1 Farhad-Mo'tamed, Sepahsalar, p. 42.

2 For text of decree of 26 Jomadi II 1279/19 December 1862 see ibid., p. 39-43.

divan.[1]

The decree was designed to over-ride these various jurisdictions. In principle it gave every subject the right to apply directly to the ministry of justice for review of his case, and gave the ministry exclusive right to try cases in which the parties were members or fell within the purview of two different ministries. Where the two parties were from the same department, the ministry of justice could exercise jurisdiction if both parties agreed; and it could be represented by an observer while the case was being tried in the relevant ministry if only one of the two parties applied to it. The only exception to this rule was a case involving foreigners, where the ministry of foreign affairs exercised jurisdiction. But even here, the case could be tried by the central <u>divan</u> if the foreigner so desired; while if tried in the foreign ministry, the central divan could send an observer and obtain a full report of the proceedings.

Cases involving persons not falling under the purview of a particular ministry were to be tried in the central <u>divan</u>. The <u>divan</u> was also empowered to summon parties to a case from any ministry, and the relevant minister was required to surrender such persons. High officials, even if governors or ministers, could also be summoned and were enjoined to regard such summonses as taking precedence over all other business.

The decree stated that in view of the objections of provincial governors, the shah had decided temporarily to forgo the establishment of a branch of the central divan in

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[1] This is clear from the text of the decree. See especially <u>Sepehrzer</u>, p. 40. For a similar reading, see <u>Zandegani</u>, p. 99. <u>Adamiyat</u> (<u>Azadi</u>, p. 73) attributes the authorship of this decree to Moshir ed-Dowleh but he cites no evidence for this claim.

each of the provinces--a scheme intended to permit the spread of justice and the creation of a register of all cases and decisions, so that a case, once decided, could not be raised again. However, rather than send a mohassel to look into provincial complaints brought before the capital's divan, the shah would send to each province a permanent representative. It would be his task to supervise judicial administration in the province and report to Tehran the local governor's handling of both cases referred to him from Tehran or presented directly to his court. Governors who acted justly were promised a commensurate reward, those acting unjustly a commensurate punishment.

The intent of the decree is clear from its introduction. This reaffirms, if only indirectly, the doctrine that the shah is the repository of all judicial authority and that justice emanates ultimately from the crown. It asserts that the authority of the ministry of justice, acting under the instructions and on behalf of the shah, cannot be restricted. It treats the judicial authority of the ministers and governors as a power not theirs by right but as one permitted them only in the interests of good administration. Moreover, it requires that the decisions of the central divan--reflecting the precepts of the shari'a--be regarded as authoritative and binding and thus serving as a precedent for governors and other judicial authorities. Ignoring the decisions of the central divan is treated as tantamount to violating the wishes of the shah.[1]

Mirza Hosaya Khan's judicial reforms built on these

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1 Sepehsalar, p. 89.

past efforts and reflected the continuing and traditional attempt at centralization of the judicial system. But they also displayed the stamp of borrowed concepts and forms of organization. Very broadly, they aimed at reorganizing the court system, establishing firm rules of judicial procedure, guaranteeing certain basic rights, and correcting common abuses.

Moshir od-Dowleh's first decree, published under the shah's name in March 1871,[1] established six courts or departments in the ministry of justice: a court of appeals to receive petitions from the public, three specialized courts to deal, respectively, with criminal, real estate and commercial cases, an executive court to carry out the decisions of the divan, and a legislative court to draw up regulations "equally applicable to every case and to all classes."

The decree specified the hours each day when the courts must sit and forbade the absence of judges when a case was pending. It provided for the hearing of cases by turn, based on the order of application, for the registration of petitions and court decisions, and for the recording of a procès verbal during court hearings. It set down procedural rules for the taking of evidence and for determination of the degree of injury caused in cases of assault.

The decree also displayed some concern for individual rights. It forbade the arrest or summoning of any man without a court order "as a general precaution against the wicked practice of those officials who, actuated by selfish motives,

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1. The text of this decree appears in a translation in two parts in Alison to Granville, No. 27, Tehran, 20 March 1871, FO 60/333 and same to same, No. 45, Tehran, 18 April 1871, FO 60/334.

seek opportunities for extorting money." It also forbade the holding of any person after he had been found innocent, and required the courts to release on bail any accused, except thieves, brigands or murderers.

The decree permitted the settlement of disputes outside the courts by mutual consent of both parties, and instructed judicial officials not to interfere in such instances. Several clauses upheld the rights of the shar'i courts. The decree required the ministry of justice to register and enforce decisions reached in shar'i courts; to allow evidence presented before a mujtahid in the manner prescribed by the shari'a; and to accept claims for injury based on a physician's report and certified by a mujtahid.

The prologue to the decree was cast in traditional terms. Its declared purpose was to seek the abolition of institutions which hinder justice and which are in truth forbidden by the pure religious law," and to establish conditions permitting the state "to emulate olden times." At the same time, however, the prologue indicated a broader purpose. It stated that the shah had selected the ministry of justice for execution of a plan through which "every department" of the state would benefit from "new regulations;" and it enjoined all officials to regard the communications of the ministry of justice as emanating from the shah.

It seems possible that Moshir od-Dowleh was seeking to transform the ministry of justice into an institution similar to the Ottoman supreme council of judicial ordinances which was responsible not only for the court system but also for drawing up reform legislation. It should be remembered that, for a certain period at least, it appeared in Turkey

that the judicial branch could serve as the government's reforming arm.[1] Such an intention is implied in the establishment of the 'legislative court' with the duty of drawing up regulations "equally applicable to every case and to all classes," and also in a provision that the justice ministry would publish a weekly newspaper "containing reports of administrative reforms, notices and miscellaneous intelligence."

The decree of March 1871 also forbade individuals from taking justice into their own hands or inflicting punishment on persons of lower rank or lesser influence. This was elaborated in modified form by a separate decree issued in July 1871 which prohibited provincial governors from imposing severe physical punishment without authorization from Tehran.[2]

The intention of the ruling, the decree said, was to prevent the imposition of unnecessary torture and suffering on the accused and to end the practice under which the governors inflicted the severest sentence permitted by the shari'a--such as severance of limbs or execution--on flimsy evidence, leading often to the escape of the guilty and the punishment of the innocent in contravention of both the shari'a and ordinary justice. The decree once again asserted the shah's exclusive authority to dispense justice. Asserting that punishment of crime "is reserved to the shah alone," the decree was framed so as to suggest that it would be the shah,

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1 Moshir od-Dowleh himself was fully aware of the functions of the council of judicial ordinances. In a despatch to Tehran, he also described the judicial procedure in the Ottoman courts and appears to have had these in mind when he drew up his own regulations. See his despatch to the Persian foreign minister from Istanbul No. 186, Rajab 1276/Jan.-Feb. 1860 in IWFA 11/4130.

2 For the decree of 26 Rabi II 1289/9 July 1871 see Sepehsalar, p. 43-44.

to whom provincial cases were to be submitted, who would deliver final judgement.

It is difficult to evaluate the effectiveness of Moshir od-Dowleh's decrees, either in ending abuses or establishing new judicial institutions. Issues of the official gazette published at the time praise Moshir od-Dowleh's even-handed justice, under which powerful and weak, rich and poor were treated alike.[1] This can, of course, be dismissed as official flattery. Contemporary observers, however, many of whom had little liking for Moshir od-Dowleh agree that to a significant degree he succeeded in improving the administration of justice and restricting oppression and cruel punishments.[2] There is little doubt, however, that after a temporary improvement, affairs very quickly returned to their former state.

There is some evidence that the system of specialized courts established by Moshir od-Dowleh survived. Official handbooks issued in subsequent years indicate the existence of specialized courts operating under the aegis of the ministry of justice, although it appears that the division of duties established by Mirza Hosayn Khan was somewhat modified in later years and the divisions, such as they were, not strictly observed. A court of appeal (mazalem) for hearing petitions was maintained, but this carried out a traditional function of the justice ministry. Other branches mentioned are a high court (divan-e a'la) which presumably dealt with important cases, an investigative court (divan-e tahqiq), and a

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1 Ruznameh-ye Iran, issues of 24 Moharram 1285/15 April 1871 and of 14 Safar 1288/5 May 1871.

2 See, for example, E'temad os-Saltaneh, Sadr ot-Tevarikh (Faculty of Law Library, Tehran University, Ms. No. 608), p. 202; and 'Ebrat-e Nazerin, as quoted in Siyasatgaran, p. 111.

commercial court (*divan-e tegarat*).[1] It is unlikely however that these courts sat with any regularity.

One court which did not long survive is the legislative court that was to draw up reform legislation. Mirza Hosayn Khan was not able to use the ministry of justice as an instrument through which to reform other branches of the administration or as a law-making body. Nor did his associate, Mirza Yusef Khan, ever get the opportunity to give effect to his projects, one for introducing a code of European laws and another for codifying certain *shar'i* laws for use in the courts.

His correspondence with Mirza Fath 'Ali Akhundzadeh indicates that he had such plans. With Yusef Khan installed in the ministry of justice in Tehran, Akhundzadeh had begun to send to him suggestions as to the form which judicial reforms should take. He urged that the participation of the *'ulama* in the administration of justice be severely restricted, that they be limited to dealing with 'religious' matters such as prayer, fasting, marriage, divorce and burial, and that the ministry of justice should be given full jurisdiction over court cases. He also suggested that the proposed codification of *shari'a* law should avoid conflicting opinions and limit itself to one generally accepted opinion and *fatva* for each class of cases.[2]

It seems clear that these plans met with strong opposition and were never realized. Not many months after he

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1 These references can be found in several books by E'temad os-Saltaneh. See *Mon'at*, I, appendix, pp. 27-8; II, appendix, p. 31; and III, appendix, p. 10; *Tarikh-e Montazam-e Naseri* (Tehran, 1299-1300/1881-3), I, appendix, p. 19 and II, appendix, p. 21; *al-Ma'aser va'l-Asar* (Tehran, 1307/1890-1), appendix, p. 46; and *Salnameh-ye Iran*, 1290 (a.p. 1290/1873-4), p. 62.

2 *Maktubat*, pp. 199-200.

had taken up his post, Mirza Yusef Khan began to send Akhundzadeh letters complaining that he was over-worked, harrassed and unable to give expression to his hopes. By August 1871, disillusion had set in. "The world has come to an end," Mirza Yusef Khan wrote Akhundzadeh, "and we have been unable to do a grain of service to nation and fatherland . . . I am desolate, and my good ideas are gathering rust."[1]

A few months later, Akhundzadeh wrote Mirza Yusef Khan tauntingly: "What then has become of your ministry of justice and your European law which you showed me and the _shaykh al-Islam_ in Tiflis?" The difficulty, he told him, was that due to the absence of education and more widespread familiarity with new ideas in the country, the rest of the people did not share the aims of the reformers. In trying to introduce new laws, Mirza Yusef Khan and his colleagues were like men trying to pull a cart with four different animals: a horse, an ass, a bull and a cow.

> The horse is speedy, the ass of medium speed, the bull slow and the cow is stubborn and prevents any movement at all. In this situation, the cart will never be moved . . . You men of ideas desire the cart to move, and the liberals in Persia are like the horse and are followers of your ideas. The rest . . . are like the ass, the bull and the cow, who go along with your ideas either with distaste or not at all.[2]

Moshir ed-Dowleh did not remain long enough in the ministry of justice to carry out an ambitious programme, but it seems doubtful that the ministry could ever have become an effective instrument for the realization of his plans. The office of minister of justice under the Qajars was not

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1 _Ibid._, p. 399.

2 _Ibid._, p. 267.

traditionally one that conferred great power. As a law-making body, the ministry suffered certain disadvantages, remaining the domain of a single minister. Moreover, as Moshir ed-Dowleh must have soon realized, the problem was not so much drawing up regulations as finding the means to implement them.

The task of proposing legislation would seem to have fallen more naturally to the dar ash-showray-ye kobra, the consultative council established shortly after March 1871 also at Moshir ed-Dowleh's urging. This was not the first advisory council established under Naser ed-Din shah. Alongside the six-man cabinet he established in 1858, the shah, as already noted had set up two advisory councils. The first of these, the majlis-e showra-ye dowlati, was composed of eleven members: six portfolio-holding ministers and five other leading officials and princes.[1] To head this council, Naser ed-Din shah named Ja'far Khan Moshir ed-Dowleh, the man who had apparently suggested the council to the shah.

The second council, established by Naser ed-Din in 1859, was the maslahat-khaneh. Headed by 'Isa Khan, E'temad ed-Dowleh, this was a considerably larger body of 26 members. Among them were a few important personages. But the membership was generally drawn from middle-level court and government officials, mostowfis, secretaries and writers, and therefore represented a different class of people than those prominent in the majlis-e showra-ye dowlati. Its members were directed by the shah to meet everyday and to discuss "important civil

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1. Mer'at, ii, 249.

and military matters, the ordering of affairs, the welfare of the subjects, the development of the kingdom and the progress of the state." Similar bodies were to be set up in each province.[1]

Although both councils acted only in an advisory capacity, the majlis-e showra-ye dowlati, by virtue of its membership, was the more important and dealt with more weighty matters than the maslahat-khaneh. It also appears that while the members of the majlis-e showra-ye dowlati were expected to reach decisions on problems submitted to them, the members of the maslahat-khaneh were expected only to hold discussions and offer general advise. This seems the import of Amin ed-Dowleh's remark that the two councils were established so that in the first "the important affairs of the kingdom should be settled by consultation and agreement among the ministers, and in the other [the members] should say whatever they know of reforms and progress [so that] these might be implemented by the shah."[2]

The majlis-e showra-ye dowlati appears to have had a longer life than the maslahat-khaneh, but neither body proved very effective in practice. Amin ed-Dowleh blamed the weakness of the councils on the autocratic tendencies of the shah and the timidity of the members. "If an important matter was referred to the showra-ye kobra," he wrote, "the style, tone and manner of presentation indicated the shah's will, and the well-experienced ministers voted in the manner they had understood the shah's wishes."[3] Bureaucratic rivalries also acted to undercut the councils. The more conservative officials

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1 Ibid.

2 Khaterat, p. 20.

3 Ibid., p. 21.

were opposed to the innovations altogether,[1] while the portfolio holding ministers, jealous of their prerogatives, apparently rejected or simply ignored proposals put to them by the _mashkat-khaneh_ and attempted to usurp its functions.[2]

Malkom Khan, who had himself proposed the creation of a council of ministers to act in an executive capacity and a legislative council to draft regulations, initially welcomed the division of responsibility among six ministers as a step in the right direction.[3] But writing a year later, he described the councils as a dismal failure, due to the incompetence and ignorance of the ministers and confusion of the legislative and executive functions. "Today in Iran we have three councils (_majlis_)", he wrote, "two legislative councils and one executive council. Yet the strange thing is that despite the designation of these two [legislative] councils, still executive and legislative authority have been concentrated in one council."[4]

Moshir ed-Dowleh, in Istanbul in 1858-9, had reacted with approval to the formation of the councils, regarding them as a commitment by the shah to reform and a positive step forward since "a state without a consultative council cannot be considered strong or stable."[5] In a despatch from the Ottoman capital, he also gave an account of the existing Ottoman councils and their responsibilities, and hinted at the advisability of a similar division of responsibilities among

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1. _Asar_, Introduction; _Azadi_, p. 57.
2. _Asar_, p. 125.
3. _Ibid._, p. 19.
4. _Ibid._, p. 124.
5. Letter No. 184, Istanbul, Rajab 1276/Jan.-Feb. 1860, IMFA 11/6131.

councils in Persia.[1]

The consultative body established at his behest in 1871 certainly owed something to the earlier Persian councils. The name chosen for the new council--the dar ash-showra-ye kobra[2]--had been also applied to the majlis-e showra-ye dowlati of 1858 and is a sign of a sense of continuity. Ten of the sixteen members of the new council had served in the majlis-e showra-ye dowlati or the maslahat-khaneh. Moshir od-Dowleh himself had been appointed to the majlis-e showra-ye dowlati during a brief trip to Tehran in 1280/1863-4, but since he soon returned to his post in Istanbul, he cannot have attended many of its sessions. The new council no doubt also owed something to his observation of the development of Ottoman councils during his twelve years in Istanbul.

The sixteen members of the dar ash-showra-ye kobra were drawn exclusively from among the leading men of the state and included the portfolio-holding ministers, a number of important Qajar princes, influential court and government officials and the ambassadors to London and Paris. The council was to sit twice a week to consult on important matters of state. The shah could call additional sessions for consideration of urgent matters. Yahya Khan, the shah's brother-in-law and the brother of Moshir od-Dowleh, was to act as intermediary between the council and the shah, carrying the shah's instructions to the council and submitting the council's views to the shah. The council had no formal authority, nor was its position in the government or its relationship to the Crown ever clearly defined. It represented, rather, a loose

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1. Ibid.
2. Mer'at, iii, 138.

collection of ministers and other officials whose advice the shah occasionally sought and whose members consulted in a purely informal manner on various subjects, such as provincial appointments or tax collection, submitted to them by the shah or the prime minister.

The council was, however, part of Moshir od-Dowleh's larger scheme for the re-organization of the central organs of the state. This scheme was more fully elaborated in a number of decrees and farmans issued once Moshir od-Dowleh, after a brief spell as minister of war, was on 23 November 1871 named sadr-e a'zam. Two of these decrees stand out both for what they tried to do and for the concepts underlying them: the first was issued at Moshir od-Dowleh's appointment as prime minister, the second a year after he had assumed office.

Moshir od-Dowleh's purpose in the re-organization implied by these decrees was to secure authority firmly in his own hands, to give a legal basis to his exclusive access to the shah and to permit himself greater control in coordinating the work of his ministers. But he was also actuated by a desire to specify more clearly the functions of each ministry, to end overlapping and confusion of authority, to establish the principle of ministerial responsibility and to control the cost and size of the bureaucracy.

In the farman of appointment,[1] no doubt inspired by Moshir od-Dowleh himself, the shah took a diametrically opposite position to the one adopted when he dismissed Mirza Aqa Khan Nuri from the prime ministership with the stricture

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[1] For text of the farman, and the ta'liqeh issued by shah to Moshir od-Dowleh himself, see ibid., III, 146-8.

that one man cannot effectively shoulder responsibility for all the affairs of state. The shah now blamed the disorder in the country on the departure from the practice, prevalent "in every state and also in Iran in the past," of entrusting the affairs of the country to one man. He therefore expressed his determination to resume this ancient practice and to name a sadr-e a'zam "whom we shall hold responsible for . . . and who must supervise all the affairs of the state, whether civilian or military, whether domestic or foreign."[1]

The lengthy farman, and the appended instructions to the sadr-e a'zam, conferred great authority on the prime minister and made him, at least in theory, the one recognized head of the government and virtually the only official with direct access to the shah. It directed that, unlike the past "when from every place and on every minor issue, reports were sent to the royal presence, inconveniencing his majesty," provincial officials were now to report directly to the prime minister himself. This practice was to apply equally to the ministers of finance and education, the foreign minister, the governors of the towns and provinces, and military commanders. Even the affairs of the shah's private household were to be supervised by the sadr-e a'zam who was to represent the shah in all affairs. "The seal of the sadr-e a'zam shall take the place of the royal seal," one of the clauses stated.[2]

The prime minister was to prepare brief reports on the state of affairs in various fields, whether concerning finances, foreign affairs, the army or the provinces, for the shah's approval. While major decisions would still be taken

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[1] Ibid., p. 166.

[2] Ibid., p. 167.

by the shah, for example in military, foreign and provincial affairs, and relayed to the proper quarters by the prime minister, the sadr-e a'zam himself was authorized to take final decisions in a number of fields, including education, judicial administration, the finances, urgent foreign affairs business and, during the shah's absence from the capital, provincial matters as well, later informing the shah of action taken.[1]

Only a limited number of officials were permitted to communicate directly with the shah, but then only after the prime minister had first seen and sealed their reports. A specially-designated military adjutant, for example, was to carry to the shah bi-weekly reports on army affairs. But this report was to be prepared by the prime minister himself, who in any case remained commander of the army. The minister of finance was to submit to the shah regular reports on all payments made or assignments on revenue issued, while the minister of court was to do the same for important court cases coming before the divan. But these reports had first to be seen and approved by the prime minister.

A year after he had assumed office, in November 1872, Moshir ed-Dowleh secured the shah's approval for a second major decree.[2] This divided the government into nine ministries: finance, war, justice, foreign affairs, interior, stipends, education, court, and commerce and agriculture. The nine ministries were constituted into a cabinet, the darbar-e a'zam which was headed by the prime minister and responsible for all the affairs of state. The prime minister was appointed by the

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1 Ibid., p. 147-8.

2 For text, see ibid., p. 163-6.

shah. But the ministers were to be appointed and dismissed by the prime minister, subject to the shah's confirmation.

Each minister was to be responsible for and autonomous in his ministry and none was to interfere in the affairs of another. But in session, the ministers were to be jointly responsible. They were to hold twice-weekly sessions at an appointed time and place. The prime minister was designated as the first person (shakhs-e avval) of the state, responsible to the shah for the cabinet as a whole and the intermediary between it and the monarch. "The other ministers shall submit matters, requests and reports of activities in their ministries to the prime minister. The prime minister will submit necessary, important matters to his majesty, receive an answer and inform the concerned minister in writing accordingly," the decree states.

Each ministry was to have a fixed place of business and a set of internal regulations specifying its duties, its mode of operation, and the number of officials and clerks in its employ. No minister was permitted to hire or dismiss members of his staff or alter their salaries without permission. Salaries, moreover, were to be paid to the office and not, as had been the practice, to individuals regardless of the post they held or whether they performed any official duties at all. In other words, salaries (mevajeb) were to be distinguished from pensions (mostamerri), and the prime minister obviously intended to cut down on the latter.[1]

Moshir ed-Dowleh attached a great deal of importance to the darbar-e a'zam and regarded it as the initial step and

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[1] Zandegani, i, 123.

essential foundation for a broader scheme of reform. It was designed after the European cabinet system.[1] The decree establishing the darbar-e a'zam asserted that "whenever this basic foundation is correctly ordered, the other affairs of the state will gradually achieve order [as well]." Initially apprehensive as to the shah's reaction to his proposal, Moshir od-Dowleh took Naser ad-Din's quick approval of the darbar-e a'zam as an indication of the monarch's total commitment to reform and a green light to further develop his plans. In a letter thanking the shah for his endorsement of the proposal, he wrote: "From this day, I shall apply myself to the nurturing of the darbar-e a'zam with the fullest hope. I will submit my projects one by one."[2]

The design of the darbar-e a'zam drew heavily on Malkam Khan's proposal for a council of ministers, as elaborated in his Ketabcheh-ye Ghaybi. In fact, a considerable part of Moshir od-Dowleh's decree is lifted, almost word for word, from the relevant sections of Malkam's essay.[3] However, Malkam, writing in 1858, when the position of the sadr-e a'zam was under attack, ascribed only a minor role to the prime minister, designated in Ketabcheh-ye Ghaybi merely as ra'is al-vozara, or chief minister. In Moshir od-Dowleh's formulation, the role of the sadr-e a'zam was central.

Malkam himself, recalled from Istanbul by Moshir od-Dowleh, was by this time back in Tehran acting as special

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1 Report in official gazette as quoted in Bidari, introductory volume, p. 137.

2 Majlis Library, Tehran, Moshir od-Dowleh collection (hereafter MJL), undated letter.

3 Compare especially articles v, vi and xii of Ketabcheh-ye Ghaybi with text of decree on darbar-e a'zam.

adviser to the prime minister and urging him, by various means, to push ahead with reform. In a memorandum to the prime minister written a few days after Midhat Pasha had been named Ottoman sadr-e a'zam (July 30, 1872), Malkam wrote:

> The big news is that Midhat Pasha has become sadr-e a'zam . . . The eyes of Europe will now be concentrated on comparing the activities of the two sadr-e a'zams. Midhat will strive to surge ahead of your excellency [and] even to depict all activities here as without significance. In short, a good field of competition has been found . . . He will begin by building railroads in a number of places; he will build a bank in each Ottoman village; he will borrow 1,000 crores and spend it all on development.[1]

In addition to judicial administration and the central organs of the government, Moshir od-Dowleh also turned his attention to the army. Mirza Moosya Khan had held the ministry of war only six weeks (28 September to 13 November 1871) before he was appointed prime minister. But as sadr-e a'zam, he continued to hold the title of sepahsalar and to head the war ministry through a deputy, Mahmud Khan Naser ol-Molk. He thus maintained a continuing interest in the improvement of the army.

Military reform had been a concern of the Qajars ever since the reign of Fath 'Ali shah. In the early part of the century, they were assisted in this task by officers seconded to French and British diplomatic missions to Persia. Even before the arrival of these missions, Russian renegade officers had been serving in the army of the crown prince, 'Abbas Mirza. In 1807 General Gardanne arrived with a group

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[1] Letter of 20 Jomadi I [1289]/1 August [1872], MJL.

of French officers, but his stay in Persia was short lived. Under treaties signed between the shah's government and England, several British officers served with the Persian army: a group came under the Malcolm/Ousley mission in 1809 and another under Col. Pasmore in 1834. The services of this last group of officers was terminated by the outbreak of the first Afghan war in 1838.

European officers continued to serve with the Persian army after 1838. They came from different nationalities--French, Italian, Austrian and Hungarian--and many of them were refugees. But the officers were of indifferent calibre, they remained for only brief periods, and their impact was minimal. The Persian government, with the threat of invasion and its own territorial ambitions somewhat diminished, also did not take military reform very seriously. Another group of French officers, under General Bronard, arrived in 1859. But they left in 1861, having accomplished little.[1]

Under Nāṣer ed-Dīn shah there were also attempts before Moshīr ed-Dowleh's appointment in 1871, to improve the army through purely internal measures. During the period when Amīr Kabīr was <u>sadr-e a'ẓam</u> an important change was introduced in the manner of recruitment. As part of its tax quota, each town or village was required to provide a certain number of soldiers for military service. One consequence of this measure was that "the army was no longer composed mainly of contingents furnished by the local governors and landowners, whose loyalty was to their own commanders and not to the state."[2]

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1 For a brief account of these military missions, see G. Curzon, <u>Persia and the Persian Question</u> (New impression, London, 1966), i, 576-587.

2 Lambton, "Persia: The Breakdown of Society", <u>Cambridge History of Islam</u>, i, 453.

Several decrees aimed at correcting abuses were also introduced in the first two decades of Naser ed-Din's reign. These decrees sought to end corruption and ensure that pay and rations reached the troops; to prevent the sale of military offices and restrict traditional hereditary rights to military rank; to ensure the good order of arms factories and arsenals; and to end common malpractices such as the maintenance of large personal households and the use of soldiers as servants by the officers. Attempts were also made to strengthen the army by transferring commands and reorganizing the provincial divisions along which the regiments were formed.[1]

Seen in this context, the measures adopted by Moshir ed-Dowleh for the improvement of the army clearly fell within the established pattern. These measures were intended, as were similar measures in the past, to prevent peculation of pay and rations, to assert central control over army finances, to end nepotism, and to improve the quality of the army by the appointment of capable officers, the employment of foreign instructors and the purchase of more modern weapons.[2] The creation of the Cossack Brigade aside,[3] neither during Moshir ed-Dowleh's prime ministership nor in later years, when he ceased to be sadr-e a'zam but continued to command the army, was there a radical departure, either in the composition of the army, the organization of the troops, the sources and composition of the military budget, or in training and tactics.

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1. Ner'at, 111, 44-5; 61-2; and 105-7.
2. Sepahsalar, p. 56.
3. On the Cossack Brigade, see Firuz Kazemzadeh, "The Origin and Early Development of the Persian Cossack Brigade", The American Slavic and East European Review, 15, No. 3 (October 1956), 351-63.

The army continued to be composed, as it had traditionally been under the Qajars, of a permanent royal guard, an irregular cavalry based on tribal levies, an irregular infantry militia raised and supported locally by each district, and a semi-regular army of infantry, cavalry and artillery which constituted the bulk of the defense forces.[1] Nevertheless, reform under Moshir od-Dowleh, if cast on traditional lines, was pursued with a greater degree of determination and, at least for a brief period, yielded better results than in the past.

The ceremonies marking Moshir od-Dowleh's appointment as minister of war were themselves designed to lend a special importance to the event. The appointment was announced by the shah at salaam ceremonies commemorating the birthday of 'Ali, the coincidence of the religious holiday and the appointment intended to depict the beginning of a new regime in the army as a particularly auspicious event. The shah himself appeared in military uniform before his ministers and councillors and, perhaps hoping to blunt resistance to the appointment of a civilian to army command and to the anticipated military reforms, announced that he was personally taking over command of the army. Moshir od-Dowleh was to act as his deputy (nayeb) and as intermediary between the monarch and the army.

In a speech to the assembly,[2] the shah declared himself dissatisfied with the condition of both the army and the other departments of the state. The army in particular, he said, had been slow in adopting the new weaponry, drilling techniques and military sciences developed in Europe. He

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1 Curzon, Persian Question, i, 589.

2 Mer'at, iii, 164.

troops had neglected their training, and drill techniques had been forgotten. The officers had engaged in "unbecoming" practices, and the reputation and standing of the army had declined. Influence and inheritance, not merit, determined military rank. In a separate dastkhat[1] to Moshir od-Dowleh, the shah instructed his minister to correct these abuses, to put into effect military regulations formerly drawn up but never enforced and to reorganize the army on a new basis "which shall have no relation or similarity to the past."

One of the first steps taken by Moshir od-Dowleh was to order a review of military stores. It was discovered that there had been no stock-taking in nearly 20 years. "The affairs of the storerooms have been in disorder for a long time," the accountant in charge of the stock-taking wrote. "Everyone interferes. No one has paid for losses. No one has information on operations for many years. The longer affairs remain in this state, the heavier the burden will grow and the understanding of the matter will be beyond the capacity of any man."[2] Moshir od-Dowleh also put back into operation cannon-casting and other arms factories that had long remained idle,[3] attempted to collect sums owed the army by former officials[4] and sought to improve frontier fortifications.[5] With some success, he strived to pay the troops on time.[6]

The key to Moshir od-Dowleh's failure or success

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1. Ibid., p. 145.
2. Sepehrnejad, p. 93.
3. Ibid., p. 90.
4. Ibid., p. 93.
5. Ibid., p. 56.
6. Mer'et, iii, 167-8.

lay in the administration of the finances. For it was only by securing sufficient revenue and arranging for its honest administration that Moshir od-Dowleh could ensure that government officials and the troops were paid, undertake the reforms and economic projects contemplated, place the central government in a strong position, and, by checking extortion, ease the burden on the peasants.

When Moshir od-Dowleh assumed office, the state of the finances, by his own account, was once more in great disorder. Taxes were not reaching the centre and government lists were inflated by the names of pensioners and other receipients of salaries. Sale of government offices, bribery and similar abuses had again become widespread. Government assignments on revenue (barats) were selling at a fraction for their face value, three hundred to four hundred thousand tomans of these bills annually remained unpaid, and "the state treasury had less credit than a money-changer's shop."[1]

Moshir od-Dowleh was able to introduce some order into the exchequer. He evidently considerably reduced the number of persons receiving pay and pensions from the government and restricted the practice whereby members of a deceased officials family automatically received his salary. He more tightly tied salaries to the actual performance of duties. He also prevented the shah from unduly engaging in largesse.[2] His measures had some effect on limiting bribery and extortion. The judicial decree of March 1871 had already contained an injunction against bribery. During a salaam held on 25 Shawwal 1288/7 January, 1872 the shah issued a further warning against

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1 Lepahselar, p. 114.

2 'Ebrat-e Nazerin, as quoted in Siyasiqaran, p. 119; Sadr, p. 308.

this and other forms of corruption.[1]

These strictures were further elaborated in a decree[2] issued by Moshir od-Dowleh shortly after the shah's statement. Describing bribery as "the worst and the greatest of the evils leading to the destruction of the state," Moshir od-Dowleh warned officials of the direct consequences should they be found culpable. The decree represented an attempt to challenge the notion that members of the royal family and others close to the shah had an automatic right to office, and that office itself was an automatic passage to wealth.

Officials, it said, "have not yet understood that the crown has no special relationship to sons, kin and government . . . and that the true children of the crown are the army and the subjects." It pointed out that while the government provided its servants with sufficient income to lead a respectable life, "the government is not a guarantor of your desire to own harnesses worked in gold, to have pink bowls and dishes laid out at your receptions, immediately to acquire a few properties, or to provide yourself with luxuries."[3]

Injunctions against bribery were not uncommon in the past, but there is some evidence that Moshir od-Dowleh's efforts yielded better results. The author of 'Ebrat-e Nazerin Va 'Ebrat-e Nazerin remarks that Moshir od-Dowleh not only prevented bribery but also prohibited the practice of ta'shir whereby a tenth of salaries and bills was deducted as the share of the official making the payment.[4] E'temad os-Saltaneh, in later life a critic of Moshir od-Dowleh's, wrote that

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1 Mer'at, 111, 152.
2 For text, see ibid., p. 152-3.
3 Ibid., p. 153.
4 Siyasatgaran, p. 111.

provincial governors feared ignoring his decrees. He cites numerous cases of governors instructed by telegraph to return money to individuals from whom it was unlawfully extorted and of telegraph office operators being dismissed for acting in collusion with governors in extortionate activities.[1]

These measures were designed to make the existing revenue system function more effectively rather than fundamentally to alter it. The trimming of pension and salary lists, some restraint on royal expenditure, greater pressure on governors to remit revenues were the traditional means of bolstering a shaky exchequer. These same methods had been employed, for example, by Mirza Taqi Khan, Amir Kabir, in 1848-51.[2] Although a year after he had assumed office Moshir od-Dowleh boasted that positions in the government were no longer sold, the evidence belies so sweeping a claim.

No salary was, for example, specified for provincial governors, who continued to purchase their appointments and were expected to make up for their initial outlay and personal expenses by the imposition of additional taxes. There was apparently an intention to establish a more regular system for the payment of salaries--a step urged by Malkam Khan in his early essays and touched on in the decree establishing the Darbar-e a'zam--and some progress seems to have been made in this direction.[3] But there is no evidence that the practice became sufficiently well established to obviate the need for bribery and douceurs.

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1 Sadr, p. 284.

2 Adamiyyat, Amir Kabir va Iran, p. 108-15; Lesan ol-Molk Sepehr, Nasekh ot-Tavarikh: Tarikh-e Qajariyyeh (Tehran, solar 1337/1958-9), Book III, 30-1.

3 Bidari, introductory volume, p. 136.

Moshir od-Dowleh may have hoped to impose sufficient control over the bureaucracy through the darbar-e a'zam and other institutions to prevent large-scale corruption. But in fact his control over the government machinery, though in some ways considerable and effective when applied to individual cases, was never such as to permit sustained pursuit of specific policies. The nature of his relationship with the shah and his position relative to other high officials imposed limitations on what he might do.

Mirza Moseya Khan continued throughout his premiership to enjoy the shah's strong support. This support was perhaps not unqualified, since many of Moshir od-Dowleh's powerful enemies continued to hold high office during this period. A number of these men, such as Dust 'Ali Khan Mo'ayyer ol-Momalek, the head of the treasury, had served in the royal household. Their retention of office may indicate either that the shah sought to counteract the influence of his sadr-e a'zam or that he felt himself too weak fully to rid himself of older bureaucrats with a vested interest in the status quo.

Nevertheless, available correspondence between Naser od-Din shah and Moshir od-Dowleh indicates that the shah had come to depend heavily on his prime minister and was willing to go far in backing his actions. In reply to a letter from Moshir od-Dowleh complaining of the activities of his opponents, the shah wrote:

> I desire nothing but the order of the state, and I recognize you as the head (aqzam) of the government. To whatever degree necessary, upholding you and the order of the state is incumbent on me. Whoever prevents or undermines order, even if he be our son, must be pushed aside."[1]

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[1] Sepehsalar, p. 121.

Again, when Moshir od-Dowleh issued a strong warning against continuation of his oppressive rule to Soltan Morad Mirza Hesam os-Saltaneh, uncle to the shah and governor of Khorasan, the shah not only did not object but was pleased: "Former ministers," he wrote, "never . . . wrote so bluntly to the governor of Kashan let alone the vali of Khorasan and Hesam os-Saltaneh."[1] When Moshir od-Dowleh, on his own authority, finally recalled Hesam os-Saltaneh, the shah fully supported the move.[2]

The reasons for such support are clear. Naser ed-Din shah had already decided on a reform of the administration. Although the measures introduced by Moshir od-Dowleh were designed considerably to strengthen the position of the prime minister, they at the same time contributed to a larger degree of centralization. By freeing the shah from concern with the day to day details of running the government, they offered him the possibility of securing, through the agency of his sadr-e a'zam, a clearer idea of the state of affairs, a firmer control over the activities of his ministers and a tighter reign over the finances. Moreover, while a certain tension in the relations between royal and prime ministerial power was inherent in the situation, this did not rule out the possibility that monarch and prime minister might make common cause in asserting central authority.

This working relationship was achieved between Moshir od-Dowleh and Naser ed-Din shah because unlike Mirza Taqi Khan, Moshir od-Dowleh never appears to have aroused the shah's jealousy or suspicion. This was due partly to the caution

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1 Ibid., p. 123.

2 Ibid., p. 127.

exercised by Mirza Hosayn Khan in his relations with Naser ed-Din, partly to the strategy the prime minister chose to adopt in pursuing his aims. Moshir ed-Dowleh was certainly aware that the administrative changes he was proposing implied a certain limitation on royal prerogatives. He had witnessed a similar process at work in the Ottoman reforms, and had commented on this effect of the council of state established in Turkey in 1868.[1]

Like Malkom Khan, Moshir ed-Dowleh appears to have believed that the measures he had in mind would increase rather than diminish the <u>effective</u> power of the crown. Like Malkom, his aim was the good organization of government. To achieve this aim, he believed it necessary that the shah be willing to act through established procedures and to consult a limited number of officials before reaching decisions. This was not in principle incompatible with the objective of effective government run by the shah himself.

On the contrary, as Malkom had pointed out, the shah, though in theory absolute, was in practice powerless to ensure the enforcement of his wishes;[2] while it was self-evident that the European monarchies, though in theory limited, exercised far greater power than the shah of Persia. Malkom, Moshir ed-Dowleh and other Persian reformers must have noted, as did their Ottoman counterparts, that in countries such as Austria and France the council of state had become an effective institution for the drafting of laws and administrative purposes, and might develop either toward constitutionalism or in support of royal absolutism in the absence of parliament.[3]

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1 Amani, pp. 66-7.
2 Asar, p. 152.
3 Davison, Reform in the Ottoman Empire, Chap. VII.

It was not unnatural that the means to effective administration in Persia should be sought in similar institutions.

Moreover, although the farmen of appointment and the decree establishing the darbar-e a'zam conferred on the prime minister the authority to act in certain circumstances without consulting the shah, it is clear from the existing evidence that Moshir od-Dowleh rarely exercised this prerogative. He appears to have dismissed Hesam os-Saltaneh on his own authority, with the approval of the cabinet. But he had first assured himself of the shah's disapproval of the governor of Khorasan; and in any case such instances of independent action were rare.

Moshir od-Dowleh appears, rather, to have consulted the shah on the most mundane matters. This involvement of the shah in the day-to-day affairs of the government was necessary to assuage the shah's suspicions and to lend authority to the prime minister's activities. But it meant retention of the element of uncertainty and personal whim in the conduct of affairs that the administrative reforms were intended to cure. There was, ultimately no guarantee that the shah would adhere to the newly established rules. He might do so; then again he might not.

Such evidence as exists indicates that the independence of the government continued to be limited by the need to take cognizance of the shah's spoken and unspoken wishes. This is dramatically reflected in an exchange of letters between the council and the shah in 1871 on Naser ad-Din's proposal to name his notoriously corrupt son, Zell os-Solton, as governor of the rich province of Fars. Reporting the opinion of the council (the darbar-e a'zam) on this proposal to the

shah, Moshir od-Dowleh wrote that the ministers had found the state of the country to be especially critical. The peasants had been hard hit by famine and had sold their belongings. Many had died and therefore taxes had fallen more heavily on those who remained alive. The government was pressed for funds to pay salaries and undertake military and other reforms. He added:

> In such a situation [the members of the council felt] the appointment of . . . Zell os-Soltan is not in the present interests of the state. On the one hand, due to his nearness to the throne, he is self-confident; on the other hand, he has excessive love for amassing wealth. He will leave no one property or goods. The subjects will be rendered destitute and government taxes will not reach the treasury . . . This slave said to them: 'I confirm your reasons and am aware of the difficulties prevalent this year. However, the prince is the eldest son of the Refuge of the Universe and it is not possible to leave him idle . . . If we should despatch the prince . . . having set prior conditions and received undertakings, and do not give him the right to violate the honour of the people; and if we send with him an experienced and mature steward and hold the steward responsible for the taxes, what harm can there be in it?'[1]

The ministers approved this proposal but took care to add that: "next to His Majesty's opinion and will, our reason is weak and deficient. Whatever the shahanshah wishes is right and will immediately be put into effect." The shah, however, apparently was not to be drawn out so easily. He wrote back: "As I have repeatedly stated, I shall not direct you or offer any opinion whatever in this year or afterwards on the subject of the appointment of governors and stewards to

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[1] Sepehsaler, p. 131-2.

the large and small provinces. Arrange for the governor and steward of Fars as dictated by the best interests of the state and dispatch them quickly."[1] The result of this exchange was that the council opted for caution and confirmed Zell os-Soltan's appointment as governor of Fars.

Moshir od-Dowleh also appears to have experienced difficulty in establishing his authority over other powerful officials. In the provinces, far from Tehran, governors and other bureaucrats could resort to delaying tactics, so that it required lengthy correspondence and several months to secure the settlement of even minor complaints.[2] In Tehran, officials jealously guarded their administrative domains against outside encroachment by subterfuge, the administrative means at their disposal or appeals to the shah. Moshir od-Dowleh's inability to control his more influential colleagues, to limit access to the shah or to check irregularities is illustrated by the case of Dust 'Ali Khan, Mo'ayyer al-Mamalek, the head of the treasury.

In a letter to Naser ad-Din shah complaining of Mo'ayyer al-Mamalek's activities, Moshir od-Dowleh accused the treasury chief of gross corruption in the handling of provincial and other accounts. Mo'ayyer al-Mamalek, he claimed, had borrowed money from the haram (andarun) treasury and, as in the past, had no intention of paying it back; secured part of the Gilan revenues in order to purchase flour for the government but failed either to deliver the flour or the larger part of the funds; bought grain from the government in the

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1 Ibid., p. 132.

2 See, for example, FO 60/343 for lengthy correspondence on several small provincial cases Moshir od-Dowleh attempted to settle from Tehran.

provinces for nine tomans a kharvar and then sold it back to the government at forty-five tomans a kharvar, after transporting it on government-owned mules; and had undertaken to pay 20,000 tomans for appointment as governor of Gilan but, having secured the appointment, failed to pay either the purchase money or the guaranteed revenues.[1]

Even allowing for a degree of exaggeration, it is obvious that, installed at the treasury, Mo'eyyer al-Mamalek was taking advantage of access to the tax records for various types of mal-practice. For example, he was apparently cashing in twelve-year old barats and government bills that the treasury had already paid once before.[2]

Moshir od-Dowleh's activities earned him a large number of enemies. Some of those who ranged themselves among his opponents had been adversely affected by his acts in a direct and personal fashion. Mirza Yusef Khan, Mostowfi al-Mamalek, for example, had to surrender office and to retire to his village in Ashtian as a result of the rise of Moshir od-Dowleh and the effect of his measures. Hasan os-Saltaneh had lost the governorship of Khorasan at the prime minister's insistence. Mo'eyyer al-Mamalek had clashed with him over the control of the finances. A much wider circle of officials believed their positions threatened by his innovations.

The rise of a powerful new favourite, as noted, was in itself calculated to arouse the opposition of other powerful officials. In the case of Moshir od-Dowleh, not only were the prime minister's powers extensive, but also they were cast in

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1 Sepehrolar, pp. 115-6.

2 Ibid., p. 116.

a 'legal' framework, thus lending to his prominent position a certain kind of legitimacy. The establishment of the cabinet and consultative council implied a collective responsibility which was alien to the traditions of a bureaucracy in which each official was master of his own department; and the authority vested in the prime minister implied a degree of encroachment on their private domains which other ministers proved unwilling to countenance.

His financial measures, though more limited in impact, also engendered opposition. More stringent standards in the matter of provincial and military accounts were naturally resisted. The pruning of salary and pension lists not only affected many influential personages, including princes,[1] but also a large number of lesser bureaucrats and hangers-on who depended on the government for their livelihood.[2] His measures also seem to have violated the sense of a wider public as to what was proper, traditional and Islamic. This public reaction must have been reinforced by the fact that, although Moshir ed-Dowleh's measures were not always innovations, they were made to appear as such, represented by him as deriving from European, and therefore superior, origins.

The attempt by Moshir ed-Dowleh better to regulate the business of the prime minister's office is a case in point. A decree[3] issued during his prime ministership set aside a specific day in the prime minister's week for receiving each particular minister and one day for general business. It prohibited anyone from calling on the sadr-e a'zam in his

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1. Sadr, p. 308.
2. Ibid.
3. For text, see Mer'at, iii, 158-9.

office on personal matters and enjoined all callers to state their business briefly, receive their replies and leave. There was nothing particularly new in this procedure, since an attempt had earlier been made to draw up a similar schedule for the shah's week. The decree was, however, prefaced by a short essay on the virtues of time.

"We know for certain," the decree said, "that one of the reasons for the good order of European states is that they have grasped the meaning of time; and through careful arrangements they have so managed matters that they draw from time, as from other natural resources, a thousand benefits." In Persia, by contrast, "due to the poor training and misfortune of the countries of the East, time has no value."[1] Thus, even minor administrative rearrangements were seen by their proponents as applications of European modes of action to the Persian situation and, at the same time, as a means of inculcating desirable qualities.

Moshir od-Dowleh's innovations may have been regarded as constituting threats not only because they disturbed deeply imbedded patterns of behaviour--a roomful of visitors was constituted a sign of prestige while a high value was attached to a willingness to hear petitions and extend ungrudging hospitality--but also because they were couched in terms touching on basic principles.

Even ostensibly sensible measures, such as the trimming of salaries and pensions could appear both as imposing material hardship and also as violating honourable traditions in a country where the government was expected to dispense wi' largesse to its servants. The author of 'Ebrat-e Nazeria v/

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[1] Ibid., p. 158.

'Ebrat-e Nāẓerīn, for example, criticised Moshīr od-Dowleh not only for causing suffering by cutting off the salaries of incumbent officials and denying pensions to their families after their death, but also because he forgot that it was the government's duty to look after the needs of those that had served it and also the needs of their families.[1]

Europeanized habits and ways of living, which increased during Moshir od-Dowleh's government, also obviously caused resentment. The author of 'Ebrat-e Nāẓerīn wrote of the newcomers that

> they attached no importance to the sunna of the Prophet and encouraged servitors, government servants and other classes . . . to ape the Europeans and to resemble them; to eat and drink as they do and to adopt their way of conversing and social intercourse; to speak in their tongue and write in their script. Four nights each month they held a reception and called these gatherings 'soirees'; all classes, Muslim and infidel, came to these gatherings . . . In those gatherings coming and going, standing and sitting had to be in the European manner. One had to sit bare-headed and wear boots. Those present were permitted to sit and rise and lie as they chose, free from the objection of others; and free to drink and gamble.[2]

These various grievances came to a head and the opposition to Moshīr od-Dowleh coalesced over the vast concession granted to Baron Julius de Reuter in July 1872.[3] The concession awarded Reuter a 70-year monopoly for the construction of railroads, tramways and irrigation works in the country; an exclusive right to exploit forests and uncultivated land, and to work all mines (except silver, gold and precious stones);

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1 Siyāsatgarān, p. 119.

2 Ibid., p. 121-2.

3 For a detailed account of this concession, see Kazemzadeh, Russian and Britain, pp. 100-147.

a first option on a national bank and on all projects for the construction of roads, telegraphs, factories and all manner of public works; and a 25-year farm of the entire customs of Persia.

The major project envisaged under the concession was the construction by Reuter of a railway from Rasht to Tehran. The Persian government was to receive a share of the profits, after deduction of cost, of these enterprises; and although it was not to make any investment or provide any guarantees on investment itself, it undertook to provide Reuter with labour and to facilitate purchase at a moderate price of land required for the railway and other projects.

The concession, initially negotiated by Mirza Mohsen Khan Mo'in ol-Molk, the Persian minister in London, was carried to conclusion in Tehran by Moshir od-Dowleh. A large number of other officials were involved both in the consultations among ministers on the concession ordered by the shah and in the actual negotiations. There is little doubt that Reuter purchased the favourable response of these officials, and perhaps that of the shah himself, by generous bribes.[1] However, personal gain does not constitute the whole explanation for the Reuter concession.

Many Persian officials, as we have seen, had come to believe that the country's survival depended at least partly on its economic development, and in the 19th century railroads played as central a role in the concept of what constituted development. The terms of the concession--what Curzon described as "the most complete and extraordinary surrender of the entire industrial resources of a kingdom into foreign hands that has probably ever been dreamed of, much less accomplished, in history"[2]--are no doubt to be explained largely by monetary

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1 Ibid., p. 101.

2 Curzon, Persian Question, i, 480.

considerations. But some role must also be assigned to the inexperience of Persian officials in these matters.

There was also a trend in Persian 'reformist' thinking that favoured large-scale, all-encompassing concessions and the handing over of the responsibility for the country's development to a few, or even one, foreign company.[1] Besides, given the desire, it was possible to find a seemingly reasonable justification for the terms of the concession. A committee of ministers, assigned the task of reviewing the agreement by the shah, admitted that Persia seemed to have given a great deal away. But the members argued that Reuter had in fact acquired the right to exploit "unemployed resources which up to now have conferred no benefit on the government and, should they remain in our hands, will after this confer no benefit either."[2]

The Reuter concession seems also to have been connected in Moshir ed-Dowleh's mind with a policy directed at cementing Anglo-Persian ties. The Persian government had long sought from Britain a guarantee for Persia's independence and territorial integrity. Britain, refraining from extending a unilateral guarantee, had succeeded in securing Russian adhesion to a general undertaking to respect Persia's independence. This understanding was first reached in 1834 and periodically renewed (in 1838, 1865, 1873, 1874 and 1888). But Persia regarded this as inadequate.

To entreaties for a stronger commitment, British diplomats repeatedly asserted that Persia's best guarantee lay in the opening of the country to trade and the development of

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1 Azadi, pp. 87 and 182.

2 'Asr, p. 105.

her resources. The Reuter concession was, in a sense, to constitute dramatic evidence of the government's intention to open up the country and thus to win British and European approval and support. It was in search of closer ties with England and other European states--as well as of a means to impress more firmly on the shah's mind the need for reform--that Mashir ed-Dowleh took Naser ed-Din on a European tour in the summer of 1873.[1]

Shortly before leaving the country, the shah reviewed the troops of the Tehran garrison, and the prime minister read aloud to the assembled officers and soldiers an imperial dastkhat issued to mark the shah's first European visit. The shah stressed in the dastkhat the importance he attached to the army and its welfare, reminded the troops that their salaries were paid on time in the past year and expressed hopes that such regularity of payment would continue in the future. He also expressed confidence in the loyalty of the troops and in their determination to maintain good order in the country during his absence. He suggested that the welfare of the army was part of the reason for his going abroad: "We shall devote the duration of our trip to completing the requirements of the army in the way of armaments and instructors, and our royal thoughts shall not cease to dwell upon you."[2]

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1 Malkam Khan, who was sent to Europe early in 1873 to make arrangements for the royal tour, expressed similar hopes for the projected trip to the British ambassador, Andrew Buchanan, in Vienna. Buchanan remarked: "He entertains perhaps over-sanguine expectations as to the influence of the Shah's visit to Europe is likely to have on H.M.'s policy and opinions . . . (Buchanan to Granville, Copy, No. 39, Vienna, 27 February 1873, FO 248/286). After the shah's return to Persia, Malkam stayed on as minister to England.

2 Hajj Mirza Hasan Fasa'i, Farsnameh-ye Naseri (Tehran, 1313-4/1895-7, new impression), i, 332.

The shah appointed his young son, Kamran Mirza, to head the state in his absence, but the running of the government was in fact entrusted to the shah's uncle, Farhad Mirza Mo'tamed od-Dowleh. In a separate dasthkat the shah conferred full powers on Farhad Mirza, commanded all the officials of the state to act in accordance with his directions and issued a warning: "Any person who violates [Farhad Mirza's] orders and prohibitions will with certainty incur the royal displeasure."[1] The two decrees give a measure of the shah's desire to justify his European trip, to ensure the loyalty of the troops, and to prevent disorder in the government during his absence.

The tour took Naser ed-Din to Moscow, London and a number of other European capitals. When the royal party returned home and landed at Enzeli on September 7, the shah learned that some eighty leading officials, courtiers, army commanders and 'ulama had taken sanctuary in the palace of Anis od-Dowleh, the shah's favourite wife, and were demanding the dismissal of the prime minister.[2] Petitions to this effect reached the shah from Tehran at Enzeli and continued to arrive as he made his way to Rasht. At Rasht, several princes in the royal suite took sanctuary in the royal stables and joined their voice to that of the party in Tehran. Soltan Morad Mirza Hesam os-Saltaneh, one of the princes in the royal party, declared that he would rather sacrifice his life than see the prime minister remain in office.[3]

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1 Ibid.

2 Thomson to Granville, No. 107, Gulahek, 7 September 1873, FO 60/351.

3 Enclosure 1 in same to same, No. 115, Confidential, Gulahek, 18 September 1873, FO 60/351.

It quickly emerged that the two groups, the officials in Tehran and the members of the royal suite, had been in touch, letters and messages having been carried back and forth while the royal party was still abroad.[1] Most of the important officials and princes in the kingdom appear to have been involved in the plot against Moshir od-Dowleh.

In Tehran, the party included Anis od-Dowleh, who had accompanied the shah on his outward journey as far as St. Petersburg, but had been sent back when the harem was found too troublesome, a humiliation for which she did not forgive the prime minister; Mirza Sa'id Khan, the foreign minister, whose importance in the government had suffered in consequence of Moshir od-Dowleh's rise; Farhad Mirza Mo'tamed od-Dowleh, who had been left in charge of the government during the shah's absence, with an aversion both to Moshir od-Dowleh's westernizing policies[2] and his attempt to interfere with the independence of provincial governors;[3] 'Isa Khan, the governor of Tehran; 'Ali Qoli Mirza E'tezad os-Saltaneh, the minister of education; and two leading mujtahids, Hajji Molla 'Ali Kani and Aqa Seyyed Saleh 'Arab. Among those prominent in Rasht were the shah's uncle, Hesam os-Saltaneh, who had earlier lost his post as governor of Khorasan and Nosrat od-Dowleh, who had been replaced at the head of the army by Moshir od-Dowleh. Some important military leaders also appear to have been involved.[4]

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1 Enclosure 2 in above. These contacts are confirmed by many other sources. Precisely where first contact was established is less clear, however. According to E'temad os-Saltaneh (Sadr, p. 293), who was a member of the royal party, Mohammad Ebrahim Khan, the servant of E'tezad os-Saltaneh, arrived in Istanbul with messages from the group at the capital.

2 Sepehsalar, p. 50.

3 Sadr, p. 292.

4 See footnote The involvement of army leaders is

A number of considerations appear to have actuated this alliance of courtiers, officials, 'ulema and princes. The roots of the opposition to the prime minister in the court and within official circles has already been described. The Reuter concession was used by these groups as a smokescreen to disguise objections to the prime minister's policies founded chiefly on personal considerations and the threat to their position in the bureaucracy. Many of the officials involved in the plot against Moshir od-Dowleh were also signatories of the Reuter agreement.[1]

On the other hand, some genuine concern appears to have developed as to the full implications of the concession, especially regarding the status of private property. One letter to the shah, for example, expressed the fear that private property would be violated by road, irrigation and other works, and that land required by the concessionnaire would be acquired under duress and at unreasonably cheap prices. There also appears to have been concern that the undertaking of the government to make available the labour necessary for construction of the railroad would denude the villages and towns of their work force, especially during the harvest.[2] It was pointed out to the shah that in giving Reuter a monopoly over mines and forests, moreover, no provision had been made to ensure a sufficient and reasonably priced supply of coal and wood for internal consumption.[3]

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not however mentioned in the Persian sources.

1 These included Mirza Sa'id Khan, the foreign minister; E'tezad os-Saltaneh; Mo'ayyer al-Mamalek, the finance minister and several others.

2 'Asr, 128.

3 Ibid., p. 127.

The position of the 'ulama, and more particularly Molla 'Ali Kani and Seyyed Saleh 'Arab who led them, requires some comment. As pointed out in a recent study, the 'ulama had already found Moshir od-Dowleh's Westernizing and centralizing policies objectionable.[1] The projected Rasht-Tehran railway appears to have aroused in their minds the spectre of India's gradual colonization by England through the agency of the East India Company, and the fear that foreigners would pour into the country and undermine state and religion.

It was probably also due to these two mujtahids that the ordinary populace was aroused against the concession as well. British sources make no mention of public unrest, but there are some indications that it existed. According to E'temad os-Saltaneh, it was rumoured in the bazaar and among the common people that the prime minister intended to Christianize Persia.[2] Placards appeared in the streets of the capital against the prime minister; and among the signatories of the petitions against Moshir od-Dowleh there appear to have been many from the non-official classes.

Mirza Hosayn Khan, however, claimed that the placards were the work of Mirza 'Isa Khan, the governor of Tehran,[3] and that the signatures of "the people" (mardom) were obtained by Aqa 'Ali Amin-e Hazur partly through coercion partly by convincing the ignorant that the shah had sent him back with the harem from Europe to organize the movement against the prime minister.[4] Moshir od-Dowleh also claimed that Mirza Sa'id Khan, the foreign minister, had by showing a distorted

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1 See the letter from Molla 'Ali Kani to shah in ibid., pp. 127-6.

2 Sadr, p. 301.

3 'Asr, p. 48.

4 Ibid., 43.

translation of the concession to Molla 'Ali Kani caused the mujtahid to believe that the railroad would cut across the shrine of Shah 'Abdolu 'Azim outside Tehran.[1]

The prime minister charged Kani and Seyyed Saleh 'Arab with personal motivations as well. He claimed that Molla 'Ali Kani had been involved in hoarding grain and selling it at extortionate prices during the 1871 famine--a charge which may well be true--and that he had incurred Seyyed Saleh 'Arab's enmity by refusing to give to him one of the villages in the Firuzabad area. This village, he said, had been turned over to the mujtahid during the shah's absence from Tehran by Farhad Mirza and 'Isa Khan in exchange for his support of the opposition party.[2] Seyyed Saleh Arab and perhaps other 'ulama as well appear to have issued a takfir-nameh against Moshir od-Dowleh declaring the prime minister an infidel.[3]

In the absence of documentation, the degree of Russian participation in the overthrow of Moshir od-Dowleh is not known, but it appears to have been considerable. Russian hostility to the Reuter agreement was undisguised, and Moshir od-Dowleh was received with marked coolness when the royal party stopped in St. Petersburg on its way back to Tehran.[4] Soltan Morad Mirza, a member of the royal suite, was believed to have been swayed by Russian influence,[5] while the pro-Russian predilections of the foreign minister were well-known. Since the alliance between the members of the royal suite and

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1. Siyasatgaran, 88.
2. 'Asr, 44.
3. Sadr, p. 293.
4. Enclosure 1 in Thomson to Granville, No. 115, Gulahek 28 Sept. 1873, FO 60/351.
5. Ibid.

the Tehran party appears to have been forged during the last stage of the shah's homeward journey, it seems possible that the decisive turn in the decision to seek the overthrow the prime minister came on Russian soil. The extent of Russian hostility to the concession, made known to members of the suite during the return journey, may have provided the opposition the extra assurance it needed to act.

The shah, in the face of this alliance, dismissed Moshir od-Dowleh on September 9, took heart and reinstated him again on the 10th and, still making his way to Tehran, gave way and again relieved the prime minister from his duties on the 11th, possibly because of the alarming nature of letters received from leading mujtahids and army commanders in Tehran.[1] Moshir od-Dowleh remained behind, having been appointed as governor of Rasht.

The overthrow of Moshir od-Dowleh underscored the effectiveness of an alliance of officials, 'ulama, courtiers and princes, backed by a foreign power, as a means of securing immediate and limited aims. It left its mark on Naser ad-Din shah who appears to have been considerably shaken by the degree of Russian opposition to internal development, especially under British auspices; by the extent of the opposition among the 'ulama and their followers at home to innovations that threatened to increase foreign influences in the country; and by the depth of resentment aroused among his officials by the type of changes he was attempting under Moshir od-Dowleh. He did not altogether lose his interest in reform; but he began after this to move with greater caution. Moshir od-Dowleh also

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[1] Ibid., enclosure 3.

appears to have been scarred by the experience. His foreign policy, initially directed chiefly towards securing an understanding with England, became disoriented as he sought to ingratiate himself now with Russia, now with Britain. In his approach to domestic issues, he continued to urge reform, but there was little evidence of the former drive and determination; and his reputation for honesty was increasingly compromised by a marked tendency towards corruption.

His reforms although in some cases involving important changes, were not always as innovational as has generally been assumed. Yet to his contemporaries, Moshir od-Dowleh's prime ministership seemed to mark a significant break with the past. Zell os-Solton claimed that "his basic aim and his overall intention was to alter the position of the Qajar monarchy."[1] E'temad os-Saltaneh described the condition of Persia before his assumption of office as comparable to "a virgin girl . . . untouched by foreign hands," and remarked that the result of his policies had been to "uproot the state and nation of Iran."[2]

These comments can be dismissed as the observations of men whose objectivity was not among their outstanding qualities. But they seem to reflect a feeling that a fundamental change had taken place, or at least had been attempted, during Moshir od-Dowleh's ascendancy. In one sense, this was true. The period of his prime ministership marked the first attempt to put into practice the ideas Persians had been developing in their contact with Europe and the first major endeavour to develop the country with outside assistance. Both

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1 'Asr, p. 36.

2 E'temad os-Saltaneh, Khalseh, ed. Mahmud Khatira'i (Tehran, Solar 1348/1969-70), p. 47-8.

measures proved abortive. But at the same time a certain cluster of ideas, of administrative forms, and of basic assumptions about the characteristics of government had been introduced in a more forceful way than in the past; certain tensions, both foreign and domestic, had been released. If some Persians began to feel that Persia was not the same after Moshir od-Dowleh, the impression was not entirely unjustified.

CHAPTER III

CABINETS AND COUNCILS

Upon his return to Tehran after the dismissal of Moshir od-Dowleh, Naser ed-Din shah appears to have set himself two tasks: to reassert his authority over his rebellious ministers and to resume the work of reorganizing the administration interrupted by the uproar over the Reuter concession. Initially, the shah seemed to yield to the anti-Moshir od-Dowleh faction. He announced the abolition of the post of sadr-e a'zam[1] and established a cabinet dominated by officials involved in the plot against the former prime minister.[2] Mirza Sa'id Khan Mo'tamen ol-Molk and 'Ali Qoli Mirza E'tezad os-Saltaneh retained their posts as ministers of foreign affairs and education. Firuz Mirza Nosrat od-Dowleh, who had been replaced as commander of the army in 1871 by Moshir od-Dowleh and, along with Hesam os-Saltaneh was probably the figure behind the army's participation in the anti-Moshir od-Dowleh movement, was reappointed minister of war. The shah recalled Mostowfi al-Mamalek from his self-imposed exile in Ashtian and put him in charge of the ministries of finance and interior, the government of Tehran, the council of state and the royal buyutat. Farhad Mirza Mo'tamed ol-Molk and Hesam os-Saltaneh were given assignments outside Tehran. But as governors, respectively, of Kurdistan and Khorasan, they remained in powerful positions. The clergy, Naser ed-Din shah

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1 Announcement in the official gazette of October 3, 1873, as cited in Thomson to Granville, No. 126, Tehran, 7 October 1873, FO 248/288.

2 For list of members of this cabinet, see Sefr 'at, iii, pp. 186-7.

mollified by calling personally on Molla 'Ali Kani upon his return to the capital.[1]

The shah, however, began almost at once to whittle away the influence of this clique. While still at Rasht, he had replaced Mirza Nasrollah Khan Dabir ol-Molk, his private secretary, with Mirza 'Ali Khan Amin od-Dowleh.[2] Several other court officials, such as Mohammad Taqi Majd od-Dowleh, Aqa 'Ali Amin-e Huzur, and Mostafa Qoli Khan Mir Shekar, all closely involved in the intrigue against the former prime minister, gradually lost their positions and were replaced.[3] In time, the shah also got rid of Nosrat od-Dowleh, first by dividing the army command among four individuals and putting Firuz Mirza in charge of only one of these and finally by desiring him not to appear in court at all.[4] He also exiled Mirza Musa, the governor of Tehran, to Kerman and neutralized Hasan os-Saltaneh by recalling him to the capital and eventually requiring him to reside in Isfahan.[5] Finally, in April

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1 Sasani, Siyasatgaran, p. 81.

2 On Amin od-Dowleh, see further pp. 152-4; 203-4; 207 passim.

3 Khaterat, p. 49-51. These three men were also named by Moshir od-Dowleh as among those planning the intrigue against him. See his letter to the shah of 27 Rajab 1290/20 September 1873 in 'Asr, p. 43.

4 Thomson to Granville, No. 155, [Tehran ?], 5 November 1873, FO 248/388.

5 Thomson to Derby, Confidential, No. 25, Tehran, 25 July 1875, FO 248/308. Hasan os-Saltaneh was regarded by Thomson as one of Moshir od-Dowleh's most dangerous enemies. The Qajar prince, who had close connections with the army, had accompanied the shah to Europe, "and it is generally believed," Thomson wrote, "that if his wish to be allowed to remain in Persia in the Shah's absence had been acceded to by His Majesty, a revolution would have been the consequence." After Moshir od-Dowleh's return to Tehran and his appointment as foreign minister, Hasan os-Saltaneh approached Thomson and asked him to act as intermediary for a reconciliation between himself and Mirza Hasan Khan. However, Thomson added, "while he was making these advances through me, I fear that there is good ground to believe that he was actively intriguing with the hereditary chiefs of Koochan, Doroguz and other places [and] fomenting insurrection with the view at all

1874, the British minister, W.T. Thomson, reported that the shah had dismissed Farhad Mirza, "the last of the persons of note" who had taken part in the anti-Moshir ed-Dowleh movement, and had summoned him to Tehran.[1]

The shah was at the same time maintaining a regular and secret correspondence with his former prime minister. Even while he was still making his way from Rasht to the capital, he had written Moshir ed-Dowleh a warm and flattering letter. "I very much regret your distance from our presence," he told him. He also promised to appoint him foreign minister by October 13--that is, within four weeks--and enquired whether Moshir ed-Dowleh would accept the post.[2]

In moving to restore Moshir ed-Dowleh to office, Naser ed-Din Shah was acting partly with an eye to European opinion. He believed the rising against Moshir ed-Dowleh and the prime minister's dismissal, following hard on the heels of his trip to Europe, would make Persia look "uncivilized and barbarian" in European eyes and that by bringing the former sadr-e a'zam back to Tehran he could "erase this blot and make a good impression on the people of Europe."[3] But the shah was

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events of ousting the ex-Grand Vizier from his present post and from the Councils of the Shah. Letters from him to the chiefs of Khorasan are said to have been intercepted . . ." (Thomson to Granville, No. 18, 26 January 1874, FO 60/361).

1 Thomson to Derby, No. 91, 18 April 1874, FO 60/362.

2 Sepehsālār, p. 186, quoting shah's letter to Moshīr ed-Dowleh. This letter is not dated, but it is clear from Moshīr ed-Dowleh's reply of 27 Rajab, 1290/20 September 1873 (reproduced in 'Asr, p. 43) that the shah's letter and, indeed, Moshir ed-Dowleh's reply were written before the shah set foot in the capital.

3 Sepehsālār, p. 186. The concern over the impression made in Europe by Moshīr ed-Dowleh's dismissal was no doubt reinforced by the remarks addressed to the shah by the British minister and other embassy officials. (See, for example, Thomson to Granville, No. 113, Gulhek, 14 September 1873, FO 60/351). But this concern was shared by Malkom Khān, Persian minister in

also at this stage sorely feeling the burden of running the government without the assistance of his prime minister and desirous of continuing the work of reform initiated by Mīrzā Moṣaṭṭ Khān. Writing to Moshīr od-Dowleh again on September 26, the shah remarked that,

> Affairs are extremely complicated and confused. In one way or another, I give some shape and order to my work. Ministers have been and are being appointed. Major affairs are turned over to the council. Authority for decisions and the final word in government is in my hands. God willing, I shall not allow anything to go wrong or the revenues (māl) of the state to be squandered. But I must in truth carry this work forward with a great deal of effort, annoyance and physical wear and tear.[1]

Complaining about the dearth of capable and trustworthy officials and the lack of progress in affairs, he declared himself eager to carry on with a broad programme of reform and produced a long and varied list of projects he wished to carry out. Among these, he included: the improvement and development commerce, agriculture, mines forests and the customs; construction of schools, hospitals, forts, bridges, factories and irrigation works; reform in the administration of the mint, public endowments and state lands; institution of a system of stamps for legal documents; maintenance of security on the roads; implementation of measures to ensure the welfare of the people "and a thousand other things."[2] He continued:

> All these tasks remain, and there is

London (see remarks cited in Moshīr od-Dowleh's letter to Malkom Khān in Sīyāsatgarān, p. 83), and played up by Moshīr od-Dowleh himself, no doubt partly to impress on the shah the need to return him to office. (See his letter to Nāṣer od-Dīn cited in 'Aṣr, p. 43).

1 Sepehrālār, p. 186.

2 Ibid., p. 188.

> absolutely no one to think about them or to care. It is for the shah to provide money, to give orders and support; it is for the servant to work. But to whom should I give money, and with what confidence? Who should build and who should understand? Except that the money be lost and the tongue grow tired, no advantage will result . . . So come and begin working on these tasks . . . In addition to undertaking special assignments, you will always be in the royal presence, and you will also be consulted on other matters. Whatever you know and understand, you will of course submit [to us]. With your presence in the royal entourage, the other ministers will find it impossible to commit improper acts in the work entrusted to them, lest you inform us.[1]

That the shah was sincere in these protestations is clear from the considerable risks he entertained to bring Moshir ed-Dowleh back to the capital. The opposition to the former prime minister was still considerable, and Naser ed-Din had to move with great caution. True to his word, he recalled Mirza Hosayn Khan to Tehran by 13 October. But he did not immediately appoint him foreign minister. He had already warned him, on September 26, that he could not give him the assignment as early as he had hoped and that it must wait a more opportune moment; at the same time he sought to mollify Moshir ed-Dowleh by pretending that the foreign ministry was not an office of great moment, especially for a man of his talents.[2] He had also warned Moshir ed-Dowleh "to give up once and for all any thought of the office of prime minister," and, once back in government, to confine himself strictly to the affairs of his own department and to treat all classes, "especially the mollās" with respect.[3]

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1 Ibid., pp. 188-9.

2 Ibid., p. 188.

3 Ibid., p. 186.

The shah also sought to pave the way for the former prime minister's recall by securing the approval, even if only in the way of lip service, of his leading officials for the decision. Early in October, the shah summoned to an audience all the great princes and ministers in the government: Mo'tamed ed-Dowleh, Nosrat ed-Dowleh, Hesam os-Saltaneh, 'Emad ed-Dowleh, Mostowfi al-Mamalek and Mo'tamen el-Molk. He "declared to them that He had state affairs of great importance to settle with the ex-Sadrazam, that He could not do so by telegrams or by couriers, and that, therefore, He required his presence here, and desired them to petition His Majesty to order him to come to Tehran. The petition was at once presented."[1]

The shah also took the precaution of ordering the commander of the Chaharl cavalry regiment to accompany Mirza Hosayn Khan on his journey from Kasht to Tehran. In a further order, this time issued to Mirza Yahya Khan Mo'tamed el-Molk, Moshir ed-Dowleh's brother and the man who had been acting as confidential messenger and go-between in the shah's correspondence with Mirza Hosayn Khan, Naser ed-Din wrote:

> Moshir ed-Dowleh has been summoned by telegraph today . . . [He] has many enemies. In coming to Tehran, let him exercise great caution along the way lest, God forbid, something happen. It is very necessary that, in the manner you consider best, you send some clever and confidential servants to accompany him and guard him. Return this note. Of course, of course, exercise the utmost caution . . .[2]

Upon his return to Tehran, Moshir ed-Dowleh kept to his house and, at the shah's instructions, busied himself with

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1 Dickson's Memo. of October 7 in Thomson to Granville, No. 128, Secret and Confidential, Tehran, 8 October 1873, FO 60/367.

2 'Asr, p. 46.

the Reuter concession which the government was now trying to cancel or at least modify, both to meet Russian objections and to mollify public opinion. His position remained uncertain however. As late as November 5, Thomson wrote Granville that talk of Moshir od-Dowleh being sent out of Tehran was still common in the capital. Initially, it was rumoured that Mirza Hosayn Khan would be sent back to Kasht. He himself, however, requested the shah's permission to retire to Qom. This permission was granted, then withdrawn, due to the objections of Moshir od-Dowleh's opponents who argued that, once in Qom, he might take sanctuary in the shrine in that city.[1]

Moshir od-Dowleh's opponents may thus have still hoped to have him formally exiled or at least wished to avoid having him near the capital, where he could be in a position to influence the shah. Naser ad-Din, it is clear, was for several months not entirely free to do as he pleased and considerably restricted in his actions by the attitude adopted by his ministers. By December, however, the shah appears to have felt himself strong enough to act. On December 11, he issued the <u>farman</u> appointing Moshir od-Dowleh foreign minister.[2]

With Moshir od-Dowleh back at his side, Naser od-Din shah took up once again the unfinished business of reorganizing the central institutions of the state, a task which was to occupy his attention, off and on, to the end of the decade. In the course of this pursuit, the 'cabinet' and the council of state underwent numerous transformations. These

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1 Thomson to Granville, No. 155, 5 November 1873, FO 248/286.

2 Thomson to Viceroy of India, Tehran, 11 December 1873, FO 248/286.

transformations charted an erratic course. The shah at times conferred considerable powers on the cabinet. At others, he had it shorn of its authority. In certain periods, he distributed responsibility for the major affairs of state among several ministers; in others he concentrated this responsibility in the hands of as few as two or three officials. The council of state was revived and reconstituted, its membership altered, its duties reformulated, and its functions repeatedly reaffirmed. But here too the scope and role of the body tended to fluctuate. At times, the shah looked to it as a source of advice and used it as a forum for discussion; at others, he ignored it altogether. Sometimes, it was the sole advisory body in existence; more often, it failed to meet altogether, or its advisory functions were usurped by small, ad hoc, consultative committees.

None of the mutations through which the cabinet and council of state passed were of long duration; taken singly they were of little importance in themselves. However, Naser ed-Din shah's response to pressing political exigiencies can be discerned through the broader, if erratic, pattern of these various experiments. The experiments--hesitant, muddled and contradictory though they were--reflect the monarch's search for an arrangement that would provide him with a cabinet that could at once ensure effective government and his control over the administrative machinery, and with a council of state that would at once satisfy the demand of his officials for a wider participation in affairs and also provide him with sounder advice on which to base major decisions.

The recall of Moshir ed-Dowleh to Tehran suggested the shah's continued desire for change. Mirza Hosayn Khan for

his part was convinced of this. Writing in June 1874, a few months after he had assumed charge of the foreign ministry, to his friend, Malkam Khan, new minister in London, he defended the shah's retreat before the opponents of the Reuter concession as a temporary tactical manoeuvre and declared his belief in the shah's continued commitment to reform.[1] "Be certain," he wrote, "that the government of Iran will not remain in this state and condition; be certain that it will enter the highway of progress and that, with all due speed, it will complete the [necessary] stages; and know for certain that through the sacred person of His Majesty it will achieve this bounty and blessing."[2]

It is evident from the first major innovation that Naser ed-Din shah introduced in the months immediately following Moshir ed-Dowleh's return to Tehran that the monarch was still thinking in terms of a European style cabinet. In April-May 1874, he issued a decree[3] establishing a cabinet composed of six of his leading ministers. On these six ministers, who were to be known as the vezara-ye mohtar-e darbar-e a'zam, he conferred responsibility for "all the affairs of the kingdom which were separately entrusted to each one of them." The ministers were to be held jointly responsible and to act "as one person in a united body." The cabinet was granted considerable authority, including:

> . . . the balancing (tatbiq) of the revenues and expenditures, the ordering of the army, the elimination of all internal disorder and of injustice by the governors of the provinces and the agents of the

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1 Siyasatgaran, p. 86.

2 Ibid., p. 87.

3 For text of decree, see Mer'at, iii, 193-4.

> diwan; the collection of transferred funds and the transfer of berats; and the carrying out of certain royal wishes . . . From here on, the seal of this mejlis alone shall be sufficient for the completion and effectiveness of decrees. [The members] are empowered to appoint and dismiss officials, giving the reasons.[1]

The decree in effect conferred on a collective body the powers which in the decrees of 1871 and 1872 had been conferred on the prime minister alone and marked the first time that responsibility for such weighty matters as the army and the finances was entrusted . . jointly to a body of officials. It was to this body that officials, such as the provincial governors, were to report and from whom they were to receive their instructions; and it was this body which was to keep the shah abreast of affairs of state by submitting to him summary reports of developments prepared jointly by the six ministers, thus sparing him concern with minor and day-to-day details.

Moreover, while the shah had in the past also promised to lend a sympathetic ear to the recommendations of his ministers and advisory councils, he appears in this instance to have gone further, at least in language, in this respect and to have suggested something akin to a partnership between himself and the cabinet in administering the state. "Whatever they consider good for the country," the decree stated, "we shall immediately put into effect; and they must implement immediately decrees issued by us for the well-being of the kingdom."[2]

The absence of a prime minister left the new cabinet without an officially appointed and generally recognized head to direct affairs; and it apparently was not possible to

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1 Ibid., p. 193.

2 Ibid., p. 194.

realize in practice the concept of a partnership between the shah and his ministers, or of corporate responsibility among the ministers themselves. The 1874 cabinet enjoyed a very brief life. Within six months, the shah abandoned the scheme[1] and assigned the various departments independently to different ministers. In November 1874, he gave Mostowfi el-Mamalek independent control over the finances, the ministry of interior and provincial governorships.[2] A short while later, he named Moshir ed-Dowleh minister of war while keeping him in charge of the ministry of foreign affairs.[3] Other ministerial changes completed the trend away from a jointly responsible cabinet and towards individual ministers answerable to the shah alone.[4]

One reason for the failure of the 1874 cabinet was the persistent rivalry between Moshir ed-Dowleh and Mostowfi el-Mamalek. In 1294/1877-8 this rivalry was given more formal recognition in a royal decree which divided responsibility for virtually all the affairs of state among the two men.[5] Each was given authority over a large bureaucratic domain consisting of several ministries and provincial governorships plus a number of other departments. In addition to the ministries of war and foreign affairs, Moshir ed-Dowleh

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1 Thomson to Derby, No. 145, Gulahek, 15 July 1874, FO 60/364.

2 Mer'at, iii, 196.

3 Ibid., p. 196.

4 For example, Nezam el-Molk was appointed as the new minister of justice (ibid., p. 195) while the shah's own court of appeals was reconstituted under 'Ali Reza 'Azd el-Molk. (Ibid., pp. 198-9).

5 Mer'at, iii, 222.

also had under his charge the important provinces of Fars and Khorasan.[1] Mostowfi al-Mamalek held the ministries of finance and interior, which gave him effective charge over the finances, the treasury and general provincial affairs,[2] and was also made responsible for the ministries of justice, pensions and endowments, public works and commerce, the customs and a number of court offices.[3]

In theory, Moshir od-Dowleh was to handle all military and foreign affairs, while Mostowfi al-Mamalek was to look after domestic affairs. In practice, Moshir od-Dowleh tended to encroach on and interfere in the domestic sphere,[4] while Mostowfi al-Mamalek attempted to assert his ascendancy over his rival. In time, the bureaucracy itself divided into two great factions, each owing allegiance to one of these two men. As E'temad os-Saltaneh wrote, "The people were in two groups; some were supporters of Mostowfi al-Mamalek and the others were supporters of Moshir od-Dowleh."[5]

It is tempting to regard the rivalry between Mostowfi al-Mamalek and Moshir od-Dowleh, between the old, traditional bureaucrat and the younger, more European-oriented minister, as a struggle between the opponents and the supporters of change, between the die-hard conservatives and the new reformers. No doubt, there was some element of this in their rivalry. A group favourable to reform had, as noted, coalesced around Moshir od-Dowleh; while many of his contemporaries

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1 E'temad os-Saltaneh, Sadr, p. 303; and Mer'at, iii, 222.

2 Sadr, p. 316.

3 Mer'at, ii, appendix.

4 Sadr, p. 303.

5 Ibid., p. 306.

regarded Mostowfi al-Mamalek as a representative of the older bureaucratic traditions. However, by this time, Moshir ed-Dowleh was no longer the enthusiastic reformer he had once been, and the difference between the two ministers centred more on issues of bureaucratic jurisdiction than on policy.

Among the chief matters in dispute was the issue of financial control. During his first period as minister of war, in 1871, Moshir ed-Dowleh had succeeded in securing a degree of financial independence in military affairs. The army was assigned annually 240,000 tumans from the customs revenues and 70,000 tumans each from the revenues of Fars, Isfahan and Kerman.[1] After his resumption of the office in 1874, Mirza Hosayn Khan sought to revive this practice. The question at issue it appears was not only the assignment of specific revenues for a particular function, which was a common practice, but also control over the collection and disbursal of these funds and over the audit of military accounts.

Repeatedly, Moshir ed-Dowleh urged the shah to give him independence in financial matters, arguing that such independence was the necessary concomitant of the shah's desire for the complete separation of military and financial affairs and the means to achieve order in the army.[2] He also claimed that such independence was the means to ensure good relations between himself and Mostowfi al-Mamalek. "The one issue that can arouse friction between us at this moment," he wrote the shah, "is this very matter of the [army] budget (tankhah). If its source (mahal) is fixed, not a word would pass between us till the day of judgement."[3] The shah, however, refused to give

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1. Sepahsalar, p. 57.
2. Ibid.
3. Farhad Mo'tamed (private) collection, Moshir ed-Dowleh

way and supported Mostowfi al-Mamalek's claim to authority over the budgets of all departments.[1]

At the same time, the shah sought to bring the two men together and to get them to reach some kind of working agreement. On one occasion, he ordered both officials to work out their differences in a session with the court minister, 'Ala ol-Molk.[2] On another occasion, an intermediary was assigned to meet each man separately to see if outstanding differences might not be resolved. The report of this intermediary,[3] setting down Moshir od-Dowleh's replies to questions posed by Mostowfi al-Mamalek on the financial and judicial jurisdiction between the two great departments reveals the extent of conflict between the two ministers.

Mostowfi al-Mamalek, who in 1870 resigned from office rather than submit to control over the finances by the incoming prime minister, now emerged as the champion of centralization; while Moshir od-Dowleh who as prime minister argued the advantages of central control in judicial, financial and administrative affairs, now emerged as the advocate of departmental independence.

In reply, for example, to Mostowfi al-Mamalek's query as to the status of court cases involving, on the one hand, members of the war and foreign ministries and, on the other, members of other classes, Moshir od-Dowleh agreed that cases in which members of his two ministries were the plaintiffs should be tried by the justice ministry. of justice.

Correspondence, undated letter to shah. [Hereafter, MFM].

1 Ibid., shah's marginal comment on Moshir od-Dowleh's letter.

2 Ibid.

3 MJL, undated letter. The signature on the letter has not been identified.

But he insisted on handling himself cases in which members of his two departments were the defendants. "It is not necessary," he remarked, "that all the people in creation and all the subjects of one state live under the same laws and regulations." This position ran counter to the general philosophy propounded by Moshīr od-Dowleh during his period as prime minister and to the particular regulations he himself promulgated as minister of justice in December 1870.

On the crucial question of the army accounts, Moshir od-Dowleh admitted the right of Mostowfi al-Mamaleh's office to audit the military accounts. But he refused to permit the accounting department (daftar-e ostifa') directly to question the army treasurer (vazir lashkar). "Whenever there is need for question and answer," he stated, "they [the auditors] will ask me and through me will be shown the reply of the army treasurer. The army treasurer cannot be questioned without an intermediary."[1]

It was also to further his aim of achieving independence in military affairs that Mirza Hosayn Khan in 1293/1877-8 produced a set of regulations specifying the respective authority and duties of the governors and military commanders of the provinces. The regulations[2] have been treated by at least one historian as further evidence of Moshir od-Dowleh's progressive views.[3] And it is true that the law gave the

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1. Ibid.

2. For text, see Mer'at, iii, pp. 220-222.

3. Azodi, p. 85. Adamiyyat writes: "Mirza Hosayn Khan established this law at a time when he was himself commander of the army. But desiring the establishment of government based on law and aware of the injustice and oppression of the men of sword and the boot, he believed this progressive step necessary in order to bring about justice and make it effective." This would appear to read far more into the law than is apparent from its text.

provincial governors a position of 'precedence' (*hagg-e tagaddom*) over the military commander. But examined closely, the regulations, it is clear, constituted another weapon brought into play by Moshir od-Dowleh in his struggle against Mostowfi al-Mamalek. The 'precedence' of the governor, it turned out, was confined to a right to demand troops whenever needed. This request, the military commander was required to heed, although the governor would be held responsible for troop movements requested without authorization from Tehran. This was perhaps an important concession, but it was the only one.

Otherwise, the regulations strictly forbade interference by the governor and the military commander in one another's affairs. The governor, moreover, was required to hand over to the military commander the entire sum specified in the provincial revenues for military use; to give the army's financial requirements precedence over those of all other departments; to make no excuses, such as the slow receipt of revenues or the non-collection of taxes, to delay payment or decrease army funds; and to cut the budgets of other departments if necessary in order to satisfy army needs.

In addition the governor was required to accept from the military commander a single receipt for the lump sum paid out to him and not to demand, as was the practice, evidence of detailed expenditure. The finance ministry's accounts department was to remain satisfied with a lump-sum receipt as well. The fate of these regulations, which were approved by the shah, is not known, although E'temad os-Saltaneh claims they for a time gave Moshir od-Dowleh considerable hold over the provincial governors.[1] However, it is clear that Moshir

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[1] *Sadr*, p. 303.

ed-Dowleh, having failed to secure financial independence by a direct appeal to the shah, was now seeking to escape the general audit and achieve the same ends by more indirect means. In a government resting ultimately on force, it was perhaps not unreasonable to accord the military some priority; but Moshir ed-Dowleh's handling of army funds was not such as to suggest that his primary concern was to increase the efficiency and strength of the army.

At issue in the rivalry between Mostowfi al-Mamalek and Moshir ed-Dowleh was the office of prime minister or, if not the office itself, primacy in the direction of the administration. Mostowfi al-Mamalek did not perhaps actively seek appointment as sadr-e a'zam. But as minister of finance, the traditional stepping-stone to the office of prime minister, and as one of the oldest and most respected ministers in the administration he had a strong claim to recognition as the first person in the government and, for brief periods immediately preceding Moshir ed-Dowleh's appointment as prime minister and immediately following his dismissal from that office, was for all practical purposes at the head of affairs.[1] Mirza Hosaya Khan was considered a candidate for the office of sadr-e a'zam almost as soon as he had returned to Tehran in October 1873. His recall and appointment as foreign minister was considered by many observers as a preliminary step taken by Naser ed-Din preparatory to his appointment as prime minister, and on a number of occasions in the following years, his appointment to the office of prime minister was thought to be imminent.[2]

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1 Ibid., pp. 313 and 316.

2 See, for example, Thomson to Granville, No. 265, Tehran, 22 November 1874, FO 60/364 and Thomson to Derby, No. 182, 6 December 1875, FO 60/372.

Naser ed-Din shah appears to have been both perpetrator and victim of this rivalry. On the one hand, he must have been tempted to encourage it and play off one man against the other as a means of ensuring his control over these two powerful ministers. On the other hand, he was dependent on both men: on Mostowfi al-Mamalek because of his long experience, especially in the vital financial department, and his influence with the traditional members of the bureaucracy and the ruling classes; and on Moshir od-Dowleh because he held out the promise of a reformed and more efficient government and because his 'moderate', 'reforming' tendencies appealed to the British,[1] a consideration which carried some weight with the shah.

The inability of the two men to work together, however, could not but hamper the work of the administration. Although the shah's correspondence with Mostowfi al-Mamalek, if it has survived, has not yet come to light, extant letters to Moshir od-Dowleh reflect the persistence of the rivalry between the two ministers and the shah's growing irritation with Mirza Hosayn Khan. In 1878 the shah moved to end this division of power. He transformed the diumvirate into a triumvirate and introduced his youngest son, Kamran Mirza, as the new member in what now became a three-fold division of authority. The shah appears to have been actuated by a number of considerations. It is clear, that the need to improve the

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[1] British officials in Tehran tended to see the rivalry between Moshir od-Dowleh and Mostowfi al-Mamalek as one pitting the supporters and opponents of change against one another. Commenting on this rivalry and increased favours shown by the shah to Moshir od-Dowleh, for example, Thomson described Mostowfi al-Mamalek as "of the reactionary party." (Thomson to Derby, Confidential, No. 144, Gulahek, 20 September 1875, FO 60/372).

efficiency and effectiveness of the government, to specify functions and impose a more precise division of labour among the ministries, was still a primary aim. As Naser ed-Din himself stated, he was dissatisfied with the operation of the administration and the slow progress of vital reforms, which he attributed to the "excuses and slowness" of his two chief ministers.[1]

By introducing his own son into the central administration, the shah may also have wished to break the monopoly of office exercised by Mirza Hosayn Khan and Mostowfi al-Mamalek and to give a member of the royal family immediately related to himself, a share of power.[2] As we shall see in a moment, parts of the decrees setting out the new arrangement in fact reflect a reassertion of royal authority over the bureaucracy.

Moreover, by pushing forward Kamran Mirza, who gained considerably in power and influence after this date, the shah may also have been actuated by the apprehension he felt in regard to his two other sons, Zell os-Solten and Mozaffer ed-Din Mirza. Zell os-Solten, the shah's eldest son, was barred from the succession because his mother was not a Qajar. But he had entrenched himself in a position of great power as governor of Isfahan. In time he was to secure for himself the governorships of Isfahan, Shiraz, Kurdistan, Luristan, Arabistan and Yazd--an area comprising two-fifths of the whole of Persia--and to maintain an army of 15,000 men that was in many ways better armed and equipped than the shah's own regiments.[3] He was by some believed to pose a threat to

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1 Mer'at, 111, 235.

2 Zendegani, i, 149.

3 Curzon, Persian Question, i, 416.

an orderly succession, and even to the shah himself.

Insofar as the vali 'ahd, Mozaffar ed-Din Mirza, was concerned, the shah was impelled by other motives. The crown prince as governor of Azarbayjan had proved a weak and incompetent ruler. The affairs of his province were persistently in disorder, and his prospective succession to the throne was regarded by many with great misgivings. The shah himself was said to share this apprehension.[1]

The new division of offices itself was announced in a series of decrees and impressive ceremonies designed to emphasize the importance Naser ed-Din shah attached to the reorganization of the administration. These ceremonies reached their climax on 9 October 1878 at an assembly of all the princes, high officials, courtiers and military commanders when the new decrees were read out by Lesan ol-Molk Sepehr, the official court chronicler.[2]

Under the new arrangement, Mirza Hosayn Khan and Mostowfi al-Mamalek retained, with one or two minor exceptions, the posts and ministries they had previously held, Moshir ed-Dowleh heading the ministries of war and foreign affairs and Mostowfi al-Mamalek the ministries of finance and interior (under which were grouped half a dozen other ministries) and numerous court offices. Komran Mirza was charged with the government of Tehran and the ministry of commerce, and with

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1 For an assessment of Mozaffer ed-Din Mirza, see ibid., p. 413-415. The shah himself thought very little of the crown prince. In one especially bitter moment, when Azarbayjan's affairs were once again in disorder, he remarked: "The state is barren; it does not have a son." (shah's letter of Zi Qa'deh, 1298/Sept.-Oct. 1881, in MJL). Some years later, there were even rumours that the shah intended to deprive him of the succession. (Khaterat, p. 191).

2 For text of decrees, see Mer'at, iii, 235-39.

the affairs of the 'ulema, the Qajar princes and the merchant community. Each of the three men was also put in charge of a number of major and minor provinces, but the areas assigned to each were not geographically contiguous, thus compounding the problem of their administration.[1]

All communications and reports to the shah were to be channelled through these three ministers. Only five other officials were permitted to make direct submissions to the shah, and then only on matters not falling under the purview of the three departments. These five were 'Ali Qoli E'tezad os-Saltaneh, the minister of education, and 'Ali Reza 'Azd ol-Molk, the keeper of the royal seal and head of the shah's court of appeals, both leading Qajar princes; the court minister, 'Ala ed-Dowleh; Aqa Ebrahim Amin os-Solton, who looked after part of the private household; and the *mir shekar*, or master of the hunt.

The three ministers were required to meet twice a week, on Mondays and Thursdays, in a special *majlis* to which a limited number of ministers and notables would be admitted, "to discuss important matters, the reform of the affairs of the kingdom, and the progress of every branch, military and etc., and to report the result of their deliberations and their conclusions to the royal presence." The shah also

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[1] The distribution of provincial governments was as follows:
Komran Mirza: Mazanderan, Gilan, Damavand, Firuzkuh, Qom, Kashan, Saveh, Zarand, Tuyserkan, Nahavand.
Mostowfi al-Mamalek: Isfahan, Fars, Kerman, Yazd, Kermanshahan, Kurdistan, 'Arabistan, Luristan, (Persian) 'Iraq, Borujerd, Golpayegan, Khwansar, Natanz, Jushqan, Hamadan, Asadabad, Kangavar.
Moshir ed-Dowleh: Azarbayjan, Khorasan, Sistan, Asterabad, Gorgan, Turkoman, Qazvin, Khamseh, Sawaje, Damghan, Shahrud, Bastam and Garus. (See Mer'at, iii, 236-7).
A similar list, with only minor differences, appears in Mer'at, iii, appendix.

instructed the ministers to work together, to eschew "old ways and methods" and to avoid all elements that might affect the efficiency of their departments.

The purpose of the new administrative divisions was set out towards the end of the decree in a long passage that constitutes a veritable catalogue of all the reforms that had been in the air and under discussion since the 1860's. The decree stated:

> The meaning of administration and the purpose of this arrangement is to safeguard the wealth (mal) of the state; to watch over the governors and to prevent their injustice to the subjects; and to establish new laws and regulations so as to ensure the development of the provinces, the protection of the subjects, the spread of industry, the expansion of commerce, the construction of roads and bridges, the maintenance of buildings and the establishment of correct order so that the people can be certain of life and property and the honour of men be secure; to bring security to the highways and byways and to punish the depredations of disturbers of the peace (ashrar); to avoid creating meaningless expenses for the government, increase the profits of the kingdom and decrease useless expenses, pay the people on time and secure the treasury its due; to establish courts for the redress of grievances in all the towns so that the complaints of petitioners in each district can be examined with complete independence and objectivity; to despatch competent physicians to every place, establish health commissions and complete and improve pharmacies in every town and village . . . (to make) great efforts towards the implementation of the vaccination law, even among the inaccessible tribes; [and] to maintain the cleanliness of the towns and villages so that nothing which might pollute the air should collect anywhere.[1]

After the reading of the decrees, the shah's private secretary, Amin od-Dowleh, administered an oath to the three

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[1] Ibid., pp. 238-9.

ministers, a practice, we are told by the author of Ker'at el-Beldan, "which is customary in all well-ordered states for those charged with important responsibilities."[1] The decree reveals the persistence of those conflicting purposes that, as was evident from earlier attempts at administrative reform, arose directly out of tensions inherent in the major political structure.

On the one hand, the decrees repeatedly stressed the complete independence of each of the ministers in his particular department. The three ministers, the decrees stated, "shall always heed the limits (hudud) of their responsibilities, keep to the established duties without violating or exceeding [these limits], and consider interference in the affairs and duties of one another forbidden to them." The shah, moreover, undertook to respect this division of responsibilities. "The necessities of independence (estiqlal) and respect for the limits (hudud) of the three departments," the decrees said, "will receive the special attention of His Majesty . . . and he will issue every order (hukm) to whichever place and whomever it may be, through the three independent departments and require the answer from these same departments."[2]

On the other hand, although independent in their own departments, the three ministers were told "to consider themselves as one person, to regard themselves as partners and participants in the good and bad of every affair. Should a difficulty arise in affairs for one of them, the other two should assist him and not rest until that matter is settled."[3]

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1 Ibid., p. 239.
2 Ibid., p. 237.
3 Ibid., p. 238.

These formulations give some idea of the problem involved in administrative reorganization.

The need to prevent disputes over authority, the encroachment of one powerful official on the domain of another, and the rivalries that persistently plagued the government dictated the strict separation of the different departments. This explains the emphasis placed on the estegial, or 'independence' accorded to each minister in his own sphere and on the hadad, or 'limits' on each. The need to ensure a smoothly operating administration, however, dictated a commitment to the principle that the government depended on a 'partnership' among the three ministers.

Secondly, while the shah conferred authority on the ministers to decide for themselves a large number of important matters, it is clear he was simultaneously seeking to strengthen his hold over the ministers. The shah's seal was once again required on accounts and major financial transactions. The introduction of Kamran Mirza into the top echelon of the administration, while intended partly as a check on the power of Zell es-Soltan and reinsurance against the weakness of Mozaffer ad-Din Mirza, was also actuated by a desire on the shah's part to exercise more direct control over the government.

By dividing the bulk of offices among a very limited number of ministers--a device which had been tried before--the shah hoped to be able to fix more precisely responsibility for different duties among the ministers and to free himself from the need to devote time to minor matters so as better to deal with the major questions. In geographically scattering the provinces assigned to each of the three ministers, he appears

to have sought to prevent any one of them from building up a strong power base. The shah may also have sought to control the activities of his three ministers through the agency of his private secretary, Amin od-Dowleh, through whom all correspondence to and from the shah was to be channelled. While this, in itself, may have been no more than an administrative device, Amin od-Dowleh was also assigned the special duty of supervising the work of the three great departments and ensuring the effective implementation of all royal decrees and orders.

These conflicts--between the desire to avoid friction between the ministers and to ensure a degree of cooperation among them, and between the need to grant ministers a degree of autonomy and yet maintain the shah's control over them--were not necessarily insoluble. The tripartite division of responsibility introduced in 1878, like a number of previous reorganizations, was in fact another attempt to strike a workable balance between these different forces. But it was precisely this balance that persistently eluded the Qajars. This was true not only where Naser ad-Din's efforts to establish a cabinet or ministerial system was concerned. It also obtained in regard to parallel and related efforts to turn the consultative dar ash-showra-ye kobra, or council of state, into an effective institution.

As noted in the previous chapter, Naser ad-Din shah established the dar ash-showra-ye kobra in 1871, at the instigation of Moshir od-Dowleh. The role of this council, however, appears to have been eclipsed by the cabinet, or the majlis-e darbar-e a'zam, which Moshir od-Dowleh set up in

1873; and the council suffered further decline after Moshir ed-Dowleh's fall from power in the following year, meeting only irregularly, lacking a fixed membership and having no important function in the administration.[1] In 1875, Naser ed-Din shah moved to revive his council of state and to reconstitute it on a more formal basis. Appearing before an assembly of princes and officials in December, the shah in a formal speech expressed his dissatisfaction at the indifferent performance of the dar ash-showra-ye kobra, declared his intention of reorganizing it, and set down the lines along which the reconstructed council was to operate.[2]

The shah's personal appearance before the ministers was intended to emphasize the significance he attached to the council of state, which he described as "among the necessities in the present affairs of the state." He ordered the members to meet twice (and later three times) a week, "continuously and without interruption," to concern themselves with "every matter, great or small" and to submit their views, in writing, to the monarch on matters which he had referred to them. Time permitting, the councillors were also allowed to discuss and submit to the shah their own ideas and proposals for the improvement and progress of the country. The shah named his private secretary, Mirza 'Ali Khan Amin od-Dowleh, as the chairman (modir) of the council and the intermediary between

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1 The unsatisfactory state of the council in this period is reflected in the shah's speech of 1875 (see below). However, the council did not disappear altogether as is evident both from the shah's speech and scattered references to it elsewhere. See, for example, Mer'at, iii, 189, 194 and 198.

2 Text of the shah's address in Mer'at, iii, 206. Also see Thomson to Derby, No. 190, Tehran, 20 December 1875, FO 60/372; E'temad os-Saltaneh, Ruznameh-ye Khaterat, ed. Iraj Afshar (Tehran, solar 1345/1967), p. 59 and Khaterat, p. 65.

himself and the councillors. He was to inform the council of the shah's directives and to submit to the shah the council's views and conclusions. The council was to meet in a room set aside for it in the government building (_'emarat-e dowlat_). A table covered with green felt was also built for the council. The shah was evidently sometimes in the habit of receiving the councillors in the afternoon, at the end of their session.[1]

Significantly, the shah sought to justify the principle of joint consultation by appealing both to the _shari'a_ and to the practice of other states. He said:

> In [all] other states these councils exist in full force and continuity; and in addition to reasons of state, we must, according to the dictates of religion and the injunctions of the noble _shari'a_, regard consultation in affairs and the maintenance of the _majlis-e showra_ equal to what is [in religion] incumbent on us. Of course, ideas, thoughts and opinions [of the many] discern things in each affair and detail beyond the reach of a single mature mind. This is the same _majlis_ to which in every place they have given different names and which we call _dar ash-showra_ and _majlis-e vozara_?[2]

In a separate directive to Amin od-Dowleh, the shah also urged his ministers to exercise freedom of debate and be frank in their discussions. He also laid down some of the functions of the council.

> The members of the council shall be free in regard to discussion. They must state everything without a trace of self-interest, fear or hesitation. For example, if a person from the lower ranks [of the _majlis_] should rise and make a pertinent criticism of the great ministers, that 'you did such a thing out of ignorance, for such a reason,' that minister must not and has no right to take offense. He must, in the proper manner,

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1 _Khaterat_, p. 65 and _Montazem_, iii, 355.

2 _Mer'at_, iii, 206.

> either rebut the assertion of that person or admit [it] . . . Henceforward, the confirmation and approval of the members of the majlis shall be required even for governors appointed to the provinces, for an assessor (momayyez) assigned somewhere, or for the issue of important decrees etc.[1]

Shortly after this, a smaller body, the majlis-e tahqiq, whose members were drawn from among the dar ash-showra councillors, was also established. It appears that the larger council proved somewhat unwieldy for the conduct of business, and the majlis-e tahqiq, with Amin od-Dowleh once again directing it, was to act as a kind of clearing house for the dar ash-showra and to be a place where measures could be discussed before being taken up by the larger body.[2]

The paucity of research on the history and functions of the Persian council of state has perhaps led to the conclusion that this and similar consultative bodies were of little importance during the reign of Naser ed-Din shah. Such a conclusion is not altogether justified. While it was never as highly developed as its counterpart in the Ottoman empire, the council of state in Persia functioned in one form or another for some twenty years, from 1871 to about 1891. During this period, it dealt, albeit irregularly, with a wide variety of affairs.

Government concessions, whether to foreigners or to Persians, were almost invariably presented to it for approval.[3]

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1 Text of letter in Mer'at, iii, 206.

2 Khaterat, p. 67, Mer'at, iii, 224, and i, appendix, p. 5. This body does not appear to have long survived, however, since in 1882 plans for establishing another majlis-e tahqiq were discussed. (See Ruznameh, p. 165-6).

3 There are numerous references, in both the British Foreign Office files and in Persian sources, to the submission of concessions to the council of state for discussion. See for example, Thomson to Derby, No. 5, 26 February 1876, FO 60/382;

Provincial questions were very often referred to the council of state as well. For example, when in 1881 differences arose as to the powers and financial privileges Moshir ed-Dowleh was to enjoy as governor of Azarbayjan, Naser ed-Din shah referred to the council both Moshir ed-Dowleh's request for permission to come to Tehran to present his case (to which the council acceded) and his demand for autonomy in running the province (which the council rejected).[1]

Moreover, although the council of state was not regularly in session, the shah often sought the advice of his principal officers, constituted as a council, on matters of great moment and during periods of crisis, when contemplating important changes in the administration or when on the verge of an important decision. The views of these officials was sought not only on some foreign policy questions, such as the Anglo-Persian negotiations on Herat in 1877-8,[2] but on major domestic issues as well.[3] The shah, moreover, repeatedly pressed his councils to provide him with a programme of reform,[4] to come up with plans for the reorganization of the administration,[5] or to consider how his sons might be brought under control.[6]

On these and other occasions, the composition and membership of the council tended to be fluid. Affairs were as

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Thomson to Salisbury, No. 161, 20 September 1878, FO 60/411; and Thomson to Granville, No. 71A, Confidential, 15 April 1882, FO 60/444.

1 Khaterat, p. 83; and Thomson to Granville, No. 8, 19 January 1881, FO 60/436.

2 Khaterat, p. 72.

3 Ibid., p. 79.

4 Ibid., pp. 141-2.

5 Ibid., pp. 95-6.

6 Ibid., pp. 112-14.

likely to be referred to an informal gathering of the principal officers of the state as to the dar ash-showra-ye kobra assembled in official session. Nevertheless a fairly distinct group of high officials and princes gradually emerged whose views were normally sought, in the council or out of it, by the shah. Moreover, while the shah was not necessarily guided and certainly not bound by the advice of his councillors, he continued in the 1870's and early 1880's to refer questions to this group, partly because he needed, indeed was desperate, for advice, and partly because agreement between the chief officers and powerful men of the state was necessary, if policies were to have a chance of success.

The problem lay not so much in the absence of consultation as in its haphazard character. The Persian council of state never developed much beyond an ad hoc advisory body; it evolved no firm rules and regulations to govern even its internal procedure; it had no fixed membership; it never succeeded in establishing its independence and authority; and in the end it proved powerless to prevent its own demise. There were numerous reasons for this.

In the first place, Persian officials never seemed to adjust to the purely mechanical aspects of administering a council of state. The manner in which the bureaucracy traditionally operated, and certain accepted rules of social behaviour, worked against the institution of regular procedures. In addition, such procedures--weekly sessions, agendas, votes, written opinions--carried political implications acceptable neither to the shah nor his officials.

Naser ed-Din shah's addiction to travel posed a particular difficulty, since government business could rarely

be conducted, and decisions taken, in his absence. He was often away from the capital for weeks on end on extended trips, and even when in Tehran was almost daily in the saddle, moving from camp to camp and palace to palace along the Tehran foothills. His practice of taking several ministers, and his private secretary, who was in charge of the council, with him when travelling outside the capital precluded regular meetings by the dar ash-showra.[1]

The council, it appears, did not often meet in the room set aside for it, but anywhere that proved convenient. The sessions were informal, with drawn-out lunches being an established part of the procedure. While the shah's directive in 1875 that proposals of the council be put to him in writing implied the maintenance of some kind of written record of proceedings, this was evidently not carried out. Nor was the shah's directive that decisions be based on majority vote ever observed,[2] perhaps because the idea that decisions should be reached by consensus (ijma') continued to exercise an influence. Leading ministers, such as the Mostowfi al-Mamalek, refused to attend meetings,[3] as is indicated by the shah's injunction

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1 Khaterat, p. 67. Entries in the shah's own diaries and the diaries of E'temad os-Saltaneh indicate that there was hardly a week when the shah was not for several days in the saddle. On a not untypical occasion, he left Tehran for Mazanderan on 21 September 1875 and was away from the capital for 75 days. He was on the move practically everyday during these 11 weeks. He returned to Tehran on January 1, 1875? and, within the week, was out again, this time to hunt and ride around Tehran. (Ruznameh, p. 58). His movements were the despair of his ministers and courtiers. E'temad os-Saltaneh wrote in his diary: "It has grown clear that [the shah has become] like alcoholics who, having once drunk from the cup, drink continuously. He went to the hills yesterday. He is going today as well." (Ibid., p. 87).

2 'Asr , p. 2; Curzon, Persian Question, i, 424-25.

3 Zendegani, i, 111-12 and 143.

that absence from or late arrival to the sessions was not to be tolerated.[1]

The informal atmosphere of the meetings aggravated another difficulty--a tendency for the membership of the council to remain fluid and for the size of the dar ash-showra to expand. The shah himself occasionally appointed new men to the council and by 1294/1877-8 it had expanded from an original eleven to twenty-four official members.[2] The size of the council was also kept uncertain by the habit of persons not officially appointed to drop in on the meetings. This inevitably interfered with the orderly conduct of business. There were repeated efforts to restrict the membership of the council.[3] At the same time, the shah sought to get around this difficulty by frequently by-passing the dar ash-showra-ye kobra in favour of smaller groupings of advisors whom he consulted on important affairs.[4]

In about 188[illegible], with the dar ash-showra-ye kobra once again performing indifferently, the shah accepted a suggestion from Amin od-Dowleh that he appoint a smaller council, composed of the "more impartial, upright and knowledgeable" members of the government to permit the more expeditious conduct of business. A royal farman appointed some six officials to this council and they were excused from attending the sessions of

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1 Mer'at, iii, 206.

2 Ibid., i, appendix, p. 5.

3 The shah, in his 1873 speech, specifically referred to the need to keep "unauthorized persons" from attending council meetings. (Ibid., iii, 206).

4 See, for example, Khaterat, p. 92, when shah summoned seven of his principal officials to consider his decision to dismiss Kamran Mirza and name Zell os-Soltan commander of the army.

the dar ash-showra. But it met with only limited success.[1] At times, there were attempts to confine the main body of the shah's advisors to portfolio-holding ministers (thus, in a general sense, constituting a cabinet) and relegating other officials to the dar ash-showra.[2]

Such practices tended further to diminish the importance of the dar ash-showra. In time, according to 'Abdollah Mostowfi, it became a gathering place for ministers and provincial officials who had been relieved of their duties and who got themselves appointed to the council. "Twice a week, they would go to this assembly. They met their friends; they ate a lunch. It gave one prestige and passed the time of day."[3] This is confirmed by Amin od-Dowleh who describes the council in the middle 1880's as a gathering place for non-portfolio holding ministers.[4]

These difficulties were compounded by the failure to make a clear distinction between the council and the cabinet and to define more precisely the relationship between the two. The desireability of making such a distinction had been asserted from the early beginnings of advisory councils under Naser ed-Din shah. Malkam Khan's Ketabcheh-ye Ghaybi of 1859 as noted in chapter I had called for the establishment of both a cabinet and a legislative council, one charged with executive and the other with legislative functions.[5] The idea of two

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1 Khaterat, pp. 80-82.

2 This is the import of the shah's instructions, in establishing his six-man cabinet in 1873, that "the other ministers, who are not privileged with the title of 'mokhtar', shall be members of the general ('umumi) council." (Mer'at, iii, 194).

3 Zendegani, i, 149.

4 Khaterat, p. 132.

5 Asar, p. 24.

bodies, one of councillors or legislators, and another of ministers performing executive functions, coupled with a certain confusion as to the distinction between the two, remained a characteristic of Persian ministerial bodies throughout Naser ad-Din shah's reign.

But while a cabinet and a council were nominally retained side by side at most times after 1859, the membership and the functions of the two bodies tended to overlap. The council, however, was for the most part too unwieldy a body to permit the effective conduct of business by the ministers during its sessions; while the absence of the important portfolio ministers from the council meetings tended to relegate the dar ash-showra to secondary importance.

These organizational and procedural difficulties persisted to nearly the end of Naser ad-Din's reign. An interesting account is given by E'temad os-Saltaneh of an occurrence in 1884 during Mostowfi al-Mamalek's prime ministership. Mostowfi al-Mamalek, who in any case had little confidence in consultative procedures, persisted in holding the meetings of the dar ash-showra in his own home, leaving the meetings open to a large body of officials, and accentuating the informality of the proceedings by having lunch brought up from his kitchens.

According to E'temad os-Saltaneh, in the course of one such meeting a messenger arrived from the shah and whispered in Mostowfi al-Mamalek's ear that the shah wished these practices to end, lunch no longer to be served, the meetings to take place in the council chambers at shams ol-'emareh and the sessions to be confined to authorized members only. The prime minister is reported to have replied out loud

for all to hear.

> Firstly, I do not eat lunch; but the dignity and grandeur of your court is due to these very lunches I have brought from the house. Very well, then, we will tell them not to bring lunch any more. Secondly, as to my coming to the shams ol-'emareh, I am an ailing old man and my physical condition does not permit me to come from my house to the shams ol-'emareh. And thirdly, to put a farrash at the door and to prevent the entry of other ministers will cause offense to a number of persons, the majority of whom, and their fathers before them, have been servants of the state.[1]

A second major source of difficulty was Naser ad-Din shah's equivocal attitude to the dar ash-showra and the other ad hoc councils he convened in this period. His no doubt sincere desire to have a properly functioning council of state was coupled with an attitude of mind and habits of rule that were calculated to erode the foundations of the very institutions to whose construction he was presumably committed.

His equivocation was rooted partly in his reluctance to surrender power, partly in the not unjustified misgivings with which he had come to regard the intentions of his ministers. If the cabinets and consultative bodies set up during his reign were often concessions coaxed out of a reluctant shah by assertive ministers, there was also another side to the coin. It was the shah who was frequently in the position of having to brow-beat and urge his ministers to consult together, to seek jointly to come to grips with the problems facing the country and to make the dar ash-showra a success.

Naser ad-Din's address at the reconvening of the dar ash-showra in 1875, with its appeal to the shari'a and to

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[1] Khazaneh, p. 377.

the practice of other states, and its patient elaboration of the meaning of debate and criticism indicates a shah seeking to convince his ministers of the benefits of consultation. Amin ed-Dowleh cites numerous other instances when it was the shah who took the lead in advocating the cause of consultative bodies.[1] On one occasion, during one of his many fits of anger and frustration at the disorganized state of his government, the shah addressed a letter to all his principal officers on this question. The shah said:

> Repeatedly, discussions have been held on the subject of reform of the affairs of the state, memoranda from Malkam and others have been read, and the ministers and our own servants in our presence and in council have said and continue to say these same things. However, the ministers and servants have not come up with the necessary solution, something which might be submitted [to the shah], or an idea that might be for the good of the state. All has passed in story-telling, hair-splitting, criticism, and empty talk.[2]

The shah told his ministers that weighty questions of state could not be solved at one sitting, in a few hours, and without considerable discussion and debate.

> And yet during these two hours or half a day [in council], when papers are read and concentration of thought and mind are called for, one says nothing whatever, another dozes, the attention of the third is not on the meeting at all. The sadr-e a'zam must regulate the majlis as follows: Firstly, each must be free to speak, without reservations. Secondly, in making statements, each should speak in turn; so that no one else speaks until the first completes his remarks, irrelevancies are not uttered, and each state his opinion to the end and listen to the reply. The vote (rayy) of the majlis should then be taken. Whatever is the majority view that of course is the correct one.[3]

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1 Khaterat, pp. 104-6.

2 'Asr, p. 2.

3 Ibid.

Supposing the country to be a sick man and the ministers to be physicians, he said, the principal officers must diagnose the disease, if they could, and prescribe the correct medicine. Otherwise, it was best to leave the sick man to fend for himself, for the wrong treatment could kill the patient.[1] The ministers, he said, must at least do what lay within the country's means:

> We do not say that our army and treasury and the other activities of our government must today be on a level with those of the French and the German governments. But can they not achieve the level of the government of Bulgaria which was recently separated from the Ottoman kingdom, has become a state, and is not as large as our Gilan and Tavalesh; or of the government of Serbia which was an Ottoman province and is now a state? . . . If we cannot build a railroad can we also not build a wagon road and a road which camels and mules can easily cross. If all our troops cannot be improved, cannot even 1,000 men, as a model, be brought up to the level of the Rumanian army? Cannot the condition of the servants, the grand vizierate, and the ministers be brought under at least some regulation so as to resemble that of civilized states? Cannot the revenues and expenditures of the state be correctly balanced?[2]

The ministers, he said, must push personal considerations aside.

> They must not think that, 'if there are reforms and the affairs of the government are regulated, our personal interests [will suffer] and the importance of our affairs might diminish or remain unaccomplished.' An intelligent and sincere servant must of course value the welfare of the fatherland (vatan) and the good order of the state above his person. If he values his personal gain higher than the good order of the state, he can be called a traitor.[3]

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1. Ibid.
2. Ibid., pp. 4-5.
3. Ibid., p. 5.

Yet, at least insofar as the ministers were concerned, the shah's concrete actions belied his verbally-stated intentions. He spoke of regularity and system, but in his personal habits observed none. He spoke of delegation of authority, but ruled autocratically. It is clear from the available accounts of the sessions of both the dar ash-showra and the other councils of this period that the ministers remained uncertain of their position in relation to the shah, felt constrained to offer any advice at all and, if they did so, were exercised first to discover the shah's own wishes and to tailor their views accordingly rather than to offer contrary advice and incur his displeasure.

When the council of the "more impartial, upright and knowledgeable" officials put together by Amin ed-Dowleh began to meet in the early 1880's, for example, the members spent much time discussing the nature of their brief: were they authorized to initiate legislation or were they to discuss only those measures put to them by the shah? In the end, caution appeared the wiser course, and the ministers opted for the more conservative view.[1] Again, when the shah in great secrecy put to a select number of ministers the advisability of dismissing Kamran Mirza from the ministry of war and appointing Zell es-Sultan in his place, the ministers put off giving a reply, hoping in this way to gain time to secure a clearer idea of the shah's own wishes.[2]

On the day that the dar ash-showra was asked to propose candidates for the lucrative post of supervisor of Government buildings, then held by Mo'tamed el-Molk, E'temad

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1 Khaterat, p. 82.

2 Ibid., p. 93.

es-Saltaneh noted in his diary:

> In putting down my opinion, I wrote: 'It is best, given the shah's complete confidence in Amin es-Solten that all the buildings be turned over to him.' At this juncture, Amin-e Hazar arrived. He said, 'I too must write my opinion, and it is that they should give [the post] to me.' The ass did not realize that the shah's intention was to turn over the task to Amin es-Solten and to dismiss Mo'tamed el-Molk.[1]

Mostowfi al-Mamalek is reputed to have remarked: "If the shah should say: 'I want to throw myself off the roof of the house onto the ground,' I would reply, 'whatever the shah wills is of course correct'."[2]

The shah also seemed to entertain a curious idea of what was involved in the process of consultation. Although he paid lip service to the need for careful deliberation, he would frequently call his ministers together, berate them for the state of affairs and send them off to consult, expecting them to come up with an immediate 'solution;' or he would interrupt his advisers in the middle of a session and require an answer to a problem he had put to them. On such occasions, the ministers merely patched together a hasty report for submission to the shah.[3]

The shah also grew increasingly indecisive and capricious, was easily influenced and subject to rapidly changing moods. One morning the ministers would find his patience with his sons at an end and his mind made up to dismiss all three of them; the next day, the sons having promised to correct their ways, the shah had changed his mind and preferred

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1 Ruznameh, p. 82.

2 Khaterat, p. 57.

3 Ibid., pp. 95 and 106-7.

not to act.[1] At one moment he seemed determined to reform the army; at the next he had pocketed the elaborate plans drawn up for such a reform and had dismissed the idea.[2]

The third important factor accounting for the indifferent performance of the dar ash-showra was the attitude of the shah's officials. If the most well-meaning minister was a prisoner of the shah's whims and autocratic nature, the shah himself was to a degree the prisoner of his officials. For the most part, in the council as out of it, the ministers pursued their personal interests, refused to work together and constantly endeavoured to undermine their rivals. The few ministers Amin ed-Dowleh picked for his select council in the early 1898's were angered rather than pleased at being included. "What better means than this," they said, "could there be for finishing and destroying us, putting us in the bad books of the shah's sons and the great ministers and making all else our enemies? How is it possible in this kingdom to speak the truth and seek what is good? As if the shah does not know where the fault lies and with whom."[3]

In discussing issues in the council, self-preservation was uppermost in many councillors minds. When proposals for establishing a new, select council was put to the dar ash-showra in 1882, E'temad Saltaneh noted in his diary: "Out of a number of considerations, I said nothing. For one thing, I see no continuity and stability in the affairs of the government. They might expel me from the council. For another, I was afraid lest I should come out in opposition to the views

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1 Ibid., pp. 113-4.
2 Ibid., pp. 78-9.
3 Ibid., p. 81.

of Amin ol-Molk, the president of the council."[1]

Moreover, prime ministers rarely countenanced a strong council of state. Moshir ed-Dowleh, though a prime mover behind the first dar osh-showra-ye kobra, sought to concentrate power in his own hands. Mostowfi al-Mamalek, both before and after he became sadr-e a'zam, had little confidence in consultative bodies. Amin os-Soltan as sadr-e a'zam gradually whittled down the standing of the dar osh-showra until he had reduced it to a mere cypher. Amin ed-Dowleh believed that Naser ed-Din shah could have been moved towards reform had his principal officials been sincere and had at least a few of them given him good advice.[2] As it was:

> Neither the shah knew what he wanted nor did the ministers know what needed to be done. It seems certain that if some of the ministers and the leading courtiers were determined to set right the state of the crown and the government and to provide the people with security and peace of mind, and were to secure through persuasion the agreement of Naser ed-Din shah, this king who had developed a desire for ease would not have shied away from reform. Alas, all were busy looking after themselves and reaching out for personal gain; yet they claimed the shah opposed reforms. To repeat: the shah had lost confidence in his officials and they in him.[3]

Visiting Persia in 1889, Curzon found the dar osh-showra still in existence but in much the same condition as depicted on these pages. He wrote:

> The Persian Council of State, as it at present exists, has no ministerial responsibility and no collective authority,

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1 Kazemeh, p. 165.

2 Khaterat, p. 79.

3 Ibid., p. 107.

> either executive or legislative. It is a purely consultative body, convened sometimes to advise the Shah beforehand, more commonly to discuss the fulfillment of his orders when already delivered. Its sole executive power is that of the individual men composing it, who are the Shah's servants, and can be shifted, promoted, or dismissed without any relation to their colleagues. There is a titular President of the Council who summons the meetings, but he has no other presidential functions. He neither takes the chair nor puts questions to the vote. Indeed no speeches are made or votes taken. The discussion is purely informal and conversational, and each minister is in the habit of reporting privately to his sovereign.[1]

The council continued to occupy such a status until 1892-3 when, under the prime ministership of Amin es-Solten, it for all practical purposes ceased to exist.[2]

The failure satisfactorily to resolve the conflicts of power and authority inherent in the attempt to reorient Qajar administration towards a cabinet system was also reflected, in the post-1873 decade in the paucity of reform in other fields. Austrian advisers were employed to assist in the training of the army and the administration of the finances, the posts and the mint. But these steps were of only marginal importance in their influence on the political and administrative structure. The Russian-officered Cossack Brigade was established, although the significance of this development became apparent only much later.

The most ambitious measure introduced in the post-1873 decade was a measure--the <u>lanzimat-e hasanah</u>--involving the establishment of administrative councils in all the major

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1 Curzon, <u>Persian Question</u>, I, 424-5.

2 "Memorandum by Sir Mortimer Durand on the Situation in Persia," Enclosure by Picot, Part I, No. 12, FO 60/581.

provincial centres. The scheme, elaborated in a 48-article bill,[1] was announced in Safar 1292/March-April 1874; the education minister, E'tezad os-Saltaneh, was charged with its implementation.[2]

According to the provisions of the bill the provincial councils were to be composed of six members: a secretary and one representative each from the ministries of finance, commerce, pensions and endowments, justice and war. Although each member was to look after the business of his particular ministry, the members were to act in concert and to take all decisions jointly. Each council was to be known as a majlis-e tanzimat; a similarly composed council was to sit in Tehran with E'tezad os-Saltaneh at its head; E'tezad os-Saltaneh was to exercise a broad supervisory authority over all the other councils. The measure was aimed at achieving four major aims.

First, it sought to end injustice in provincial administration. The practices forbidden by the bill, in fact, constituted a catalogue of abuses and the guises through which provincial officials practiced extortion on the provincial population. The bill forbade governors and other officials to exact more than the authorized taxes from the peasants. It also banned the many types of 'gift money'--imposed to mark religious and national holidays, the delivery of a robe of honour and even the serving of a summons--that had become the accepted methods by which officials augmented their income.

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1. A copy of the text of this bill is in the possession of the Majlis Library, Tehran. It has recently been printed in Mohammad Taqi Dehghani, "Sad Sal Pish Az In" (10), "Tanzimat-e Hasaneh," Nogus-e Mardom, Volume 4, No. 15, (Solar 1348/1969), pp. 72-78.

2. Mer'at, p. 194.

It banned lower level officials from demanding the 'cashiers share' when paying out pensions or receiving taxes; and it warned officials against the practice of issuing drafts that were payable at such distances from the place of issue that holders were forced to encash them at discounts of 30 and 50 per cent. To prevent conscription officers from exacting payments for releasing villagers from military service, the bill provided for a conscription system based on the drawing of lots. Since tax collectors, assessors and other petty officials could no longer make a living by extortion, provision was also made to pay such persons a salary. Others, who were already receiving a salary, were told to make do with what they were officially being paid.

The second major purpose of the tenzimat-e hassaah was to introduce system and order into provincial administration and, by extension, into the central administration as well. The councils were to undertake new assessments of the tax liability of villages, both to bring up to date the list of cultivators liable to tax and also to excuse ruined villages from paying in full. Taxes were to be paid by each village in instalments, and fines were to be exacted for late payment. Conscripts, who were to remain in active service for ten years, were to report for duty for 40 days every second year after their release for refresher training.

Several clauses dealt with measures for bringing salary and pension lists under control. For example deaths of recipients of salaries or pensions had to be registered and reported, while the rule was laid down that henceforward no new pensions would be paid for which a duly authorized royal order did not exist. Other clauses provided for the

systematization of internal tariffs and gate tolls, and still others for the maintenance of security on the roads and of cleanliness and good order in the towns.

The third significant aspect of the new regulations lay in the introduction of the tanzimat councils as an important factor in provincial government and a counter to the governor's power and authority. Indeed, the establishment of the councils implied a considerable diminution in the governor's independence. The new bill transferred control over the judicial administration from the governor (and to a lesser degree from the 'ulema) to the council; it made the governor answerable to the council for the safety of the roads and the cleanliness of the streets.

It forbade the governor to send agents (mehassels) into the villages but authorized the council to send investigators for certain specific purposes if it wished. The bill also instructed the governor to take no independent action on affairs touching on the customs, commerce, pensions, endowments and state lands, but to follow the council's lead on these matters. The governor was required to present to the council any official demanded by the majlis-e tanzimat. The governor was powerless to dismiss any of the members of the council and could only refer disputes with it to Tehran for a decision.

Finally, the tanzimat-e hasanah implied the assertion, to a marked degree, of the principle of centralization. Although one of its stated purposes was to reduce contact between government agents and villagers, its intended effect was to give the central government significantly increased control over provincial affairs. The members of the tanzimat

councils were all to be appointed from Tehran. They were, in effect, to act as the central government's watchdog over the activities of provincial officials.

They were to systematize (at least in principle) the administration of pensions and endowments, the collection of taxes, the disbursement of expenditures. And they were to provide the government in Tehran with a large quantity of information. The representative of each department, whether concerned with the army, the finances or with pensions, was to supply Tehran with a biweekly report of his activities. The secretary to the council was to submit a general report, including a summary of taxes collected and payments made. Village chiefs were to be ordered to take a census and maintain a register of births and deaths in their villages.

The bill provided for the gradual introduction of the administrative councils, first in Tehran and the surrounding provinces, in the following year in Isfahan, Yazd, Gilan and other centres and finally over the rest of the country.[1] However, according to the British Consul W.G. Abbott, it was Gilan that was finally chosen as the "ballon d'essai", because "the Gilanese are noted for their docility, indolence and apathy as Tabrizis are for turbulence and love of strife. From the people, therefore, of this Province, no opposition against these reforms need be entertained . . ."[2]

However, as Abbott noted, the Rasht *'ulama* were hostile to the new measures. They had been in communication with members of the *'ulama* in Tehran, Kashan and Isfahan on the subject; and on the day when the royal *farman* announcing the

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1 Damghani, *op. cit.*, p. 72.

2 Enclosure 2 in Abbott to Derby, No. 6, Rasht, 31 March 1875, FO 60/374.

new regulations was read from the pulpit of one of the principal mosques of Resht,

> It was remarked that when the Imaum Jumma had finished reciting the Khotbeh or prayer for the Sovereign, he did not wait to listen to the Firman, but descended the pulpit and quitted the mosque; and that the only mollah of any standing who remained there during the reading of the Firman was the son of Hadji Mollah Reffee Moojtehed of Resht.[1]

For a time, the Resht 'ulama actually withdrew from performing their judicial functions as a sign of protest.[2] Petty officials, who were threatened with the loss of lucrative sources of income, and governors, who stood to lose both income and power, were no doubt also opposed to the new measures. Abbott predicted "a state of confusion, bordering on anarchy", in the absence of a clear definition of the functions and authority of the tanzimat council as against those of the governor,[3] while his successor, H.A. Churchill, noted both that the quality of the men sent to run the council did not inspire confidence and that they were insufficiently paid.

> Eight hundred tomans [£320] is the aggregate [annual] salary assigned to these six members of the Tanzimat Mussaus by the Persian Treasury! Will His Majesty the Shah or the Sipah Salar be surprised to learn, in the course of time, if they have not been informed of it already, that the very Council sent out to Ghilan to control the Executive Power has become a hotbed of corruption and extortion, and a source of additional vexation to the people.[4]

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1 Ibid.

2 Enclosure 1 in Churchill to Derby, Resht, No. 11, 1 July 1875, FO 60/374.

3 Enclosure 2 in Abbott to Derby, No. 6, Resht, 31 March 1875, FO 60/374.

4 Enclosure 1 in Churchill to Derby, Resht, No. 5, 8 May 1875, FO 60/374.

In the event, the tanzimat council did not last very long. On September 7, the British minister reported home that the Rasht council had been dissolved. Indeed, the whole scheme had been abandoned. Four weeks earlier, E'temad os-Saltaneh had noted in his diary: "The tanzimat-e hasaneh have been halted."[1]

If the crisis over the Reuter concession, coupled with the inability to turn the central organs of the state into instruments for effective administration, had considerably dampened the zeal for reform among its proponents at home, the proponents of change abroad continued to press on their government the type of projects envisaged under the Reuter agreement. The Reuter concession was no sooner set aside than the Iranian minister in Paris wrote home urging a new railroad scheme on his superiors. "I do not know," he wrote, "what is the cause of hesitation among the leaders of the Exalted State in such instances."[2] A little later, the same minister, temporarily setting aside his railroad scheme, proposed to advance the cause of a bank concession.[3]

From another Iranian diplomat abroad came proposals for the purchase of a factory capable of producing 2000 gas lamps a year. The same correspondent also relayed, and endorsed, offers by an investor interested in the supposedly rich oil deposits of Mazandaran. "Is it not a pity," wrote the Iranian diplomat, "that all this oil, which is the source of

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1. Ruznameh, p. 13.
2. Nazar Aqa to foreign minister, [Paris], 4 Moharram 1291/22 February 1874, IMFA 53/6131.
3. Same to same, Paris, 12 Safar 1292/20 March 1875, IMFA 53/1631.

many benefits and when sold is worth its weight in gold and silver, should spill profitlessly into the sea and that the Iranian government should derive no benefit from it?"[1] The enthusiasm for such schemes, and the desire for a share in promoting them, had hardly waned.

Malkom Khan was also active in the promotional field. Writing to Moshir od-Dowleh shortly after the latter's appointment as foreign minister in December 1873, he offered to arrange for the construction of a railroad and the establishment of a bank in Persia and, with his usual hyperbole, described these two projects as "the necessary condition for Iran's existence . . . these steps aside, any arrangement, any cleverness, any heroism we apply will have no other result but to increase misfortune, hunger and ridicule."[2]

Yet Malkom did not confine himself merely to such schemes. He appears in these years to have come to feel that the key to reform in Persia lay in the reform of the finances; that without money neither could frontiers be defended, nor the administration improved nor public works be undertaken; and that financial reform required abandonment of the traditional revenue system in Persia and the application of what he described as the principles of European 'political economy'.[3]

One of the reasons why the states of Asia have been left so far behind the states of

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1 Unsigned letter of 17 Sha'ban 1290/10 October 1873 in IMFA 124/6127.

2 Malkom to foreign minister, enclosure 1 in Packet No. 7, 4 Rajab 1292/6 August 1875, IMFA 124/6127; also, same to same, enclosure 3 in Packet No. 5, 6 Jamadi II, 1292/10 June 1874, IMFA 83/6128.

3 The term 'political economy' appears in Malkom's despatch of 4 Rajab cited above. He wrote that "in Europe these sciences are considered the secret (key?) and the basic tools of existence in this age; and we must necessarily accept the dictates of these sciences."

> Europe [he wrote Moshir od-Dowleh] is that we have never attached any importance to the sciences of Europe, while the wonder of European inventions lies not in the training of troops, the cannon of Krupp or in the telegraph. If we want to appreciate the power and greatness of the mind of Europe, we must refer to those quasi-magical sciences they have developed in the field of finance . . . the spring of the development of Iran lies in these sciences.[1]

In the same vein, when Moshir od-Dowleh resumed command of the army, he wrote to him that the means to military reform was money. "You must go to His Majesty . . . and say that without money--<u>crores</u> of it--we shall have neither army, nor weapons, nor anything resembling a soldier." And money could not be raised under Persia's existing financial system. Malkom chided Moshir od-Dowleh for not making this clear either when he first became <u>sadr-e a'zam</u> or now when he once again accepted the army post; he was, in consequence, certain to fail:

> From afar I see in what unbecoming petty details they have drowned your time and ability. And again, I see as clear as the sun that by the time this letter arrives, lack of money will have rendered all Your Excellency's arrangements and efforts fruitless and will have reduced to ruins all these meaningless experiments.[2]

Malkom in these years was intent not only on proposing new schemes for reform. He appeared also anxious to nudge Moshir od-Dowleh into action. Although his letters to Mirza Hosayn invariably contained warm praise and heavy flattery, there was also an undercurrent of criticism of Moshir od-Dowleh

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1 Enclosure 1 in Packet 15, London, 14 June 1885, IMFA 85/6128.

2 No. 15, 15 Zi Hajjeh 1291/23 January 1875, IMFA 85/6128.

for his caution, his silence despite pressing problems, his unwillingness to take up unpopular projects. Acknowledging his first letter from Moshir od-Dowleh in six months, Malkom wrote him in 1875:

> I saw that the situation is the same one with which I am familiar and the problem the same one that I have often analyzed. Yes. Unemployment among the people; universal poverty; pennilessness and the danger of pennilessness. The problem the same; the situation the same; and the sickness the same. If we are really patriots, capable and talented, the time to display this is now, in this situation and over this problem.[1]

He recognized that the opposition was strong and the difficulties great. But the opportunity was also unequalled:

> There is one statement of your excellency's which I will never under any circumstances accept: 'it was not possible; it is not possible; they did not permit it; they do not permit it.' All these are (empty?) phrases; and, seen against your powers, unbecoming untruths. If these great tasks which constitute the heart of the matter have not yet been accomplished I believe the basic reason to be confined to this: that you have not been as determined as necessary to carry them out.[2]

To much of this advice and criticism, Moshir od-Dowleh was turning a deaf ear. As in the case of a number of his predecessors (and successors) in high office, the almost insuperable barriers to effecting reform, the shah's willingness to sacrifice in a crisis even his most well-intentioned ministers, and the sense of insecurity this habit engendered, did not leave him unscathed. All the sources agree that his commitment to reform, his standards of honesty and his sense of propriety all seemed to have suffered a decline once he returned to office

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1 Enclosure 1 in Packet No. 7, 4 Rajab 1292/6 August 1875, IOFA 124/6127.

2 Ibid.

after his dismissal as prime minister. Amin ed-Dowleh wrote that his behaviour underwent a change. Having in the beginning spoken strongly against taking bribes, selling posts and and degrading the honour of office, he "exceeded his predecessors in these fields and increased several-fold the 'gift' money which had been customary in the kingdom in the past."[1] Thomson noted that "he has made large sums of money by illicit means in the administration of the Offices he has held, particularly in that of the Ministry of War."[2] Naser ed-Din shah himself was irritated at Moshir ed-Dowleh's questionable handling of the army finances.[3]

The sale of military promotion and rank during his command of the army grew so widespread, that when he proposed to raise one Mohmud Khan from the rank of colonel to the rank of general, Naser ed-Din shah is supposed to have remarked: "Write the sepahsalar that it would seem that, since he has given everyone the rank of general and commander, there is no one left [in the army] with the rank of colonel, except Mahmud Khan. In order that there remain one example of this rank, and it does not altogether disappear, let him remain a colonel."[4] Moshir ed-Dowleh's relationship with a young Qajar prince, Vajiholleh Mirza, on whom he heaped military honours and whom he permitted numerous financial indiscretions, also did little to enhance his reputation.[5]

More to the point, having burnt his fingers over the

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1 Khaterat, p. 56.

2 Thomson to Granville, No. 213, 18 September 1880, FO 60/ 338.

3 Ruznameh, p. 143.

4 Khaterat, p. 71.

5 Ibid., p. 56; Ruznameh, pp. 95-6.

Reuter concession, Moshir od-Dowleh was not after his return to office willing to take risks, an attitude reinforced by his desire to be reappointed sadr-e a'zam. The British minister, noting this, wrote of him in 1877 that "his great object is to be reinstated as Prime Minister, and all questions brought before him are pressed on, deferred or evaded, as they affect this object of his ambition."[1] He also appears to have kept from the shah some of Malkam's proposals for reform.

Naser ed-Din shah, for example, was irritated to learn that Moshir od-Dowleh had not passed on to him a proposal by Malkam for the establishment of a bank. Moshir od-Dowleh's explanation of this oversight smacks of sophistry. The project, he wrote the shah, was not new; secondly, believing the shah to be all-wise and all-knowing, he was certain that the shah had himself not brought up the question of a bank "out of a special wisdom;" and thirdly, he was not convinced of Malkam's disinterestedness in the matter.[2]

Naser ed-Din appears, in any case, to have tired of his former grand vizier, his ambitions for himself and his endless claims and protestations. A note of irritability crept into his correspondence with Moshir od-Dowleh and he began to display a desire to curb rather than to advance the career of Mirza Hosayn Khan.[3] When Moshir od-Dowleh used a despatch from the Persian ambassador in Istanbul on the progress of the

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1 Thomson to Derby, Confidential, Tehran, February 22, 1877, FO 60/398.

2 MFM, letter of Ramazan 1292/October 1875.

3 Ibid. See for example shah's letter to Moshir od-Dowleh on his powers as minister of war and foreign affairs of 1293/1876-77.

Ottoman army to complain of the comparatively little attention the army in Persia was receiving, the shah minuted:

> Again and again I have told you to apply yourself to the progress of the army, armaments and officers and [said] that I shall not with-hold anything that you want from me in the way of bringing arms, purchasing sufficient cannon and bring military officers and commanders. What have you wanted from us that was with-held or postponed? If there are any shortcomings, it is due to you people.[1]

Gradually, the shah eased Moshir od-Dowleh out of his positions of influence. In 1878, as has been noted, he gave to Kamran Mirza part of the responsibilities for the government that ever since 1873 had been shared by Mostowfi al-Mamalek and Moshir od-Dowleh. In Shawwal 1297/September-October 1880, the shah dismissed Moshir od-Dowleh from both the ministries he had held and put Kamran Mirza at the head of the war ministry and Mirza Sa'id Khan of the foreign ministry. His fall from power was virtually complete.

Thomson believed the dismissal of Moshir od-Dowleh was due to an intrigue by his enemies in Tehran who, in an incident reminiscent of the events of 1873, used the occasion of the shah's visit to Mazandaran to write letters to friends in the royal camp

> accusing the Sepehsaler of having usurped the Shah's authority in various administrative matters, and of having misappropriated the revenues entrusted to him as Minister of War. These were shown to the Shah, and the statements they contained having been corroborated by many of his immediate personal attendants, His Majesty's suspicions were aroused and the Sepehsaler's dismissal was then decided on.[2]

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1 MJL, letter dated 1291/1874-75.

2 Thomson to Granville, No. 213, 18 September 1880, FO 60/428.

Thomson's account is perhaps a somewhat simplified version of the course of events, but it seems certain that there was a movement to unseat Moshir ed-Dowleh and that the shah did not discourage it. Although the shah undertook to protect Mirza Hosayn Khan from harm[1] and offered him the important governorship of Fars,[2] Moshir ed-Dowleh ended up with the relatively unimportant government of Qazvin. Moreover, the shah not only was making ready to review Moshir ed-Dowleh's accounts in the army and foreign ministry, but he also coupled kind words ("we are not in the smallest degree angry or displeased with you personally") with a veiled threat: if Moshir ed-Dowleh felt disinclined to accept a provincial assignment, he was to leave Tehran within 48 hours and take up residence somewhere outside the capital since "your remaining in Tehran is attended with inconvenience and damage to your own interests."[3]

Following his dismissal, Moshir ed-Dowleh held important governorships, but only for short periods, and he ceased to play an important role in the central administration. After heading the government of Qazvin, he served briefly as governor of Azarbeyjan (November 1880-February 1881); led a mission to Russia at the death of Alexander II and the accession of Alexander III (April-June 1881); and was then appointed governor of Khorasan (June 1881). He died in Khorasan a few months later, in November 1881.[4]

As he had done on a number of previous occasions,

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1. Ibid., Inclosure 2.
2. Ibid., Inclosure 3.
3. Ibid.
4. Ruznameh, p. 140. Some Persian sources suggest that Moshir ed-Dowleh, on the shah's orders, met with an 'accident.' (See for example, Bamdad, Rejal-e Iran, i, 422). But British officials

Naser ed-Din shah attempted after the dismissal of Moshir ed-Dowleh to run the government himself. The result, however, Ronald Thomson reported, had not been satisfactory.

> Business has been greatly impeded by the practice adopted of referring everything to His Majesty, even matters of minor importance, and all money control having been withdrawn from the Chiefs of the Government departments, there has been considerable difficulty and delay in the payment of the troops and others, and discontent has been manifested in consequence.[1]

The shah, having done without a prime minister for almost ten years, began again to think of appointing a sadr-e a'zam. If Thomson's sources are to be trusted, he had earlier toyed with the idea of naming Moshir ed-Dowleh and even his own son, Zell es-Soltan, to the post.[2] But a council of leading officials called by the shah to discuss the matter proved unenthusiastic and proposed instead that the shah appoint a council of 14 persons to whom all questions should be submitted, who should each be held responsible for the affairs of his department, and who should decide matters referred to them by majority vote. The shah's approval was required before decisions could take effect.[3] The shah agreed to this proposal and a rescript was issued in Safar 1298/ January-February 1881 setting out the new arrangements.

In the rescript[4] Naser ed-Din shah asserted that the most important functions of the state were to ensure the

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discounted reports of foul play. (See Thomson to Granville, No. 19 (73), Tehran, 6 March 1882, FO 539/21).

1 Thomson to Granville, No. 8, 19 January 1881, FO 60/436.

2 Ibid Zell's candidature is not mentioned in any of the Persian sources and appears somewhat unlikely.

3 Ibid.

4 For text, see Montazam, i, 250.

good order of the various departments, the security of the frontiers and the welfare of the subjects; that the achievement of these ends required the swift and correct implementation of useful laws; and that this, in turn, depended on the efforts of able and dedicated ministers. The reseript continued:

> Therefore, on the basis of this reseript which we are writing ourselves, we give full powers and authority to the incumbent ministers who are commanded to meet in the darbar-e a'zam so that from this day forward they shall be authorized, permitted and empowered [to act] in every branch of the affairs of the state, whether small or great, to make the arrangements [necessary] to ensure the good of the state and the nation.
> Whatsoever they believe good and submit [to the royal presence] we will accept and not refuse. We confer on the members of this majlis the authority and influence of the crown so that, God willing, they should, by implementing the [royal] commands, bring to light and realize whatever the government intends and has in mind for the progress of the kingdom and nation, and render us joyful and honoured by their good service and good intentions and daily increase our good opinion and favour towards them.[1]

The new body was apparently intended to operate as a kind of cabinet. The name given to it--the darbar-e a'zam--was the same as that applied to Moshir od-Dowleh's first European-style cabinet of 1873.[2] Thomson, however, entertained little hope for it. "The arrangement in its present form does not appear to be of a practical character," he wrote, "and it is supposed that it will not long remain in force."[3]

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1 Ibid.

2 Thomson, in his No. 8 of 19 January 1881, FO 60/436 describes the body as a council of state; however, since the dar ash-showra continued to function at this time, to refer to it in this way is somewhat confusing.

3 Ibid.

Thomson's prediction was not far wrong. Within six months, the arrangement proving unworkable, the shah announced the dissolution of the new body and the suspension of decrees issued by the majlis-e darbar-e a'zam. Although he confirmed the existing ministers in their posts, he also singled out one of them--Mostowfi al-Mamalek--for special attention. The finance minister, though new head of the government, was not given the title of sadr-e a'zam, possibly because neither he nor the shah wished to risk the opposition that the appointment of a prime minister always seemed to arouse in the bureaucracy. A new rescript, issued on 24 Jamadi II 1298/25 May 1881, justified the assignment of special duties to Mostowfi al-Mamalek in the following terms:

> Since there must be a person in the darbar-e a'zam who will act as our eyes and ears, be present every day and act as the medium between ourselves and the other classes of the people; through whom the petitions and requests of the people will reach the royal presence, through whom our commands on any subject can be put into effect, and who will be our aide in advice and consultation, we therefore appoint Jenab-e Aqa [Mostowfi al-Mamalek], who in addition to the finance post he already holds, should undertake the above duties with all dedication.[1]

At the same time as he was making these changes, Naser ed-Din shah appears to have been contemplating a reorganization and reform of his administration of a far more ambitious and sweeping nature. The rescript appointing Mostowfi al-Mamalek first minister was issued on May 25. On May 31, Malkam Khan called on Lord Granville at the Foreign Office and told him that the shah had asked him to return to

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[1] Montazam, ii, p. 319. See also Ruznameh, p. 86; and Thomson to Granville, No. 79, 12 June 1881, FO 60/437.

Persia to assist in the introduction of certain administrative and financial reforms. "He had refused to go, though he thought that he might be of use. But he added that he would be prepared to go, if Her Majesty's Government would give him their moral support and would assist the Persian Government with their advice."[1] The British reaction to Malkam's advances was non-committal. Asked for its opinion by the Foreign Office, the India Office replied that Lord Hartington "cannot offer any practical remarks, or say whether or not [it is] expedient to press on the Persian Minister a duty which he professes to be reluctant to undertake."[2]

Malkam's remarks to Granville were, for once, not an exercise in self-aggrandizement. He had indeed been summoned home and had refused to go, offering the death of his father and the lack of money as an excuse. In the meantime, at Granville's instructions, Thomson had been checking Malkam's remarks in Tehran. He reported in July that, according to Mirza Sa'id Khan, the foreign minister, Malkam's return to Iran had been suggested a few months earlier, when the subject of reform was under discussion in the ministerial council. Malkam, however, had been unable to come for personal reasons, the council had since been dissolved and the matter had been dropped. There was no longer any question of introducing any financial and administrative reforms as these departments had been placed under Mostowfi al-Mamalek and he was naturally averse to all innovation, and especially so in respect of any proposal for altering the system of finance

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1 Granville to Thomson, No. 46 (280), [illegible] 31 May 1881, FO 539/19.

2 Enfield to Tenderton, No. 309 (308), India Office, 18 June 1881, FO 539/19.

to which he had all his life been accustomed."[1]

Mirza Sa'id Khan may have been reporting to Thomson the situation as he understood it, although his dislike of Malkom and his own aversion to innovation were well known. Naser ed-Din shah, at least, continued to desire possibly urged on by his private secretary, Amin od-Dowleh, Malkom's return to Iran. On 31 January 1882, Malkom Khan called on Granville once again to say that in addition to a summons from the prime minister, he had received a message from the shah himself--"not in the form of an order, but conveying a pressing invitation"--to return at once. He had decided to start without delay in order to advise the shah on various reforms and perhaps assist in their execution.

> Malkom Khan said that one of the reforms most urgently needed was that of the finances; that by the introduction of a proper system the revenues could very easily be trebled; that Persia was at present a very poor country, but that she possessed great material resources which only required development. He did not believe that the proper staff for an improved financial administration could be found in the country itself, and it would be necessary to obtain them from abroad. If the men necessary for the purpose could not be procured from England, he should be in favour of employing Frenchmen or others.[2]

Although Malkom's remarks reflected a continuing conviction that the finances held the key to Persia's administrative regeneration, he had a particular purpose in coming to see Granville; and about this he was perfectly forthcoming. He had come, he said, to ascertain to what degree the British government was willing to interest itself in

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[1] Thomson to Granville, No. 99, 11 July 1881, FO 60/437.

[2] Granville to Thomson, No. 15 (32), Very Confidential, Foreign Office, 30 January 1882, FO 539/21.

Persia's affairs. He urged British financial assistance to help Persia build up her army and halt the Russian advance into Central Asia.[1]

In striving for British support, Malkam did not confine himself to talks with Granville. Before coming to see Lord Granville, he had also seen Sir Henry Rawlinson;[2] and on February 4 he called on Lord Hartington at the India Office. Here, he went over much the same ground he had covered in his talks with Granville. He stressed the need to assist Persia in building up her defenses and urged that the British minister in Tehran more actively encourage the shah and his ministers to undertake reform.

Malkam told Hartington that while in the past Persian leaders were reluctant to disturb existing institutions, both the shah and the more enlightened of his countrymen now realized that reform was imperative. But Persia required European assistance in effecting radical changes in her administration; in looking for this, it was natural that she should turn to England.

> H.E. concluded by saying that he was returning to Persia under the peculiar circumstances to which he had alluded, and with a serious purpose in view, but that he knew that the first question which would be put to him on his arrival would be what prospect of support he had brought with him from England. What, H.E. added, could he reply? He could only say that he brought nothing, that he came 'les mains vides,' and that under these circumstances he felt he had already failed.[3]

Hartington, however, felt unable to offer Malkam the assurances of support he sought. Two days earlier, Granville,

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1 Ibid.

2 Ibid.

3 Hartington's memorandum on conversation with Malkam Khan, dated 4 February 1882. FO 60/450.

at a second meeting with Malkam, had informed him that Britain could not extend financial assistance to Persia, but that it might be possible to help by direct communication with St. Petersburg.[1] As he made his way home in February-March 1882, Malkam must have indeed felt that he was returning to Tehran 'les mains vides.'

Malkam arrived in Tehran on March 19 and while in the capital stayed in the home of Amin ed-Dowleh,[2] another of the high officials who was counted among those who desired reform. Shortly after Malkam's arrival a committee of five consisting of Zell os-Soltan, Amin ed-Dowleh, Naser el-Molk and Nasir ed-Dowleh was formed at the shah's instructions.[3] They were charged with drawing up a report on "the general reorganization of the administrative and financial departments of the government;" and met in the home of Zell os-Soltan, who was in the capital on his annual visit.[4] The Zell at the time remarked cynically to E'temad os-Saltaneh that "In the last few days we have been meeting [to discuss] a number of the shah's commands . . . instead of discussion of governmental matters, the talk is about fruit, flowers and canaries, or the history of the period of the prime ministership of Mirza Taqi Khan and Mirza Aqa Khan."[5]

However, more serious deliberations took place at these sessions than Zell os-Soltan pretended. Thomson learned in June (probably from Malkam Khan) that frequent sessions had

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1 Granville to Thomson, No. 16 (33), . ., 2 February 1882, FO 539/21.

2 Ruznameh, p. 171. In entires over the next two months, E'temad os-Saltaneh gives us a glimpse of Malkam's activities in Tehran.

3 Thomson to Granville, No. 106, 14 June 1882, FO 60/445. The same list is given in Ruznameh, p. 180.

4 Thomson's No. 106 of 14 June 1882 cited above.

5 Ruznameh, p. 180.

been held and that the results of each days discussions had been reported to the shah in the form of a minute. When the discussions were concluded, Malkam and Amin ed-Dowleh drew up a report for the shah suggesting

> certain changes and reforms in connexion with the collection of the revenues and system of keeping the government accounts, as well as in respect to the establishment of a more effective form of government under one responsible chief minister, who should be answerable for the proper administration of each department.[1]

The shah had undertaken to adopt these recommendations, but Thomson, either reflecting Malkam Khan's views or his own conclusions, was not optimistic:

> as yet no steps have been taken to carry [the measures] into effect, nor is it likely that any important reforms will be at present introduced into the system of administration now existing in this country, as most of the Provincial Governments have been confided to the Shah's sons, under conditions which render the exercise of control on the part of the Central Government difficult.[2]

Malkam Khan took his leave of the shah in mid-June[3] and left the country in July having received a new title, a promotion in rank from minister to ambassador, an increase in salary from 12,000 tomans to 30,000 tomans, and a special assignment that required him to visit a number of European courts.[4]

For two months after his departure, nothing of significance occurred. As Thomson had reported and probably

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1 Thomson's No. 106 of 14 June 1882, cited above.

2 Ibid.

3 Kuznameh, p. 196.

4 Thomson to Granville No. 107, 15 June 1882, and No. 134, 10 July 1882, FO 60/445. His ambassadorial rank was withdrawn by Mirza Sa'id Khan. (Thomson to Granville, No. 141, 5 August 1882, FO 60/446).

Malkam himself had foreseen, no genuine changes were introduced either in the finances or in the other departments of the government. In September, however, there was another burst of activity and the shah appeared on the verge of effecting a radical transformation of the system of government.

According to 'Ieraad os-Saltaneh on September 19 the shah called all his principal officers to the palace; about 22 ministers and princes were present. The shah handed over to these persons a document, signed and sealed by himself, and sent them off to one of the halls in the palace to peruse it. When opened, it was found to contain harsh criticism of the ministers and of the lack of progress in affairs. The shah demanded a reply from his officers.[1]

A more detailed account of what is certainly the same occasion is given by Amin od-Dowleh. He writes that the shah's letter, which he himself read to the assembled princes and ministers, contained a long and bitter denunciation of the disordered state of the country. The shah recalled all the changes he had made in the organization of the government during a long reign, now appointing a powerful prime minister, now ruling himself, now leaving affairs to a council of ministers, and remarked how, at each juncture he had been told that the country was ill-run and that yet another form of administration was needed. Now once again there were similar complaints. "We thus consider our opinion as inoperative," the shah stated, "and we ask the ministers, on the basis of their considered, statesmanlike opinion, to tell us explicitly what we should do and how we should arrange affairs, so that

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1 Ruznameh, p. 196, entry for 6 21 Ca'deh 1299, pp. 216-17.

the people will be satisfied and the work of the government will assume true order."[1]

In the next two weeks there was a great flurry of meetings, discussions and royal audiences. Two days after the initial audience with the shah, on September 21, a select group of ministers met in the home of Amin od-Dowleh to consider what answer they might give the monarch.[2] On the 23rd, the dar ash-showra sat to consider the same question but could agree on nothing.[3] On October 1, the shah himself dictated several further instructions to the ministers and these were read out to them during a special audience the next day. According to E'temad os-Saltaneh, "For the ministers, there was [in them] some kind words, some threats. It was agreed that the gentlemen should have ten days grace; after ten days to give His Majesty his answer."[4] Ten days later, the reports of the ministers, presumably their proposals as to what should be done, were read to the shah,[5] and in two subsequent audiences, on 1 and 6 November the shah's assignments, orders and instructions, spelling out the latest scheme for the organization of the ministries was read out to the ministers.[6]

These documents have not yet been traced, but whatever the plan on paper, the result in practice was merely the appointment of another 'cabinet', this time of twelve men,

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1 Khaterat, p. 95.
2 Ruzenameh, entry for 8 Zi Qa'deh, p. 217.
3 Ibid., entry for 10 Zi Qa'deh, p. 217.
4 Ibid., entries for 18 and 19 Zi Qa'deh, p. 219.
5 Ibid., entry for 2 Zi Hajjeh, p. 221.
6 Ibid., entries for 19 and 24 Zi Hajjeh, p. 223 and 224.

comprising practically the same persons who had sat on Naser ed-Din shah's cabinets and councils ever since 1871.[1] The only noteworthy point in the new list was that it confirmed Mostowfi al-Mamalek's position at the head of affairs and officially recognized him as prime minister, although with the more modest title of ra'is ol-vozara; and it also confirmed the rise to power of Aqa Ebrahim Amin os-Soltan, the shah's former cup-bearer, who was now named minister of court, customs and the treasury.[2]

After all the activity, it proved something of a let-down. On the day the new rescripts were read out, E'temad os-Saltaneh noted in his diary: "The instructions of the ministers were being read. It was very laughable. In 36 years of rule, the organization of the government has been altered 360 times."[3] On the evening when the new arrangements were completed, he noted with some irony in his diary that the shah appeared to be in an expansive mood. "Since he has ordered and tidied up the work of the government, His Majesty is thinking of studying German. He has been studying French for forty years. He still employs the past tense instead of the present and the imperative instead of the negative."[4]

The decade or so after 1873 constituted a period in the reign of Naser ed-Din during which the shah sought to resume the rationalization of the administration begun by Moshir ed-Dowleh and halted by the crisis over the Reuter concession. The focus of attention during this time was on

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1 For list, see Montazam, iii, 382.
2 Ruznameh, p. 224.
3 Ibid., p. 223.
4 Ibid., p. 224.

the central organs of the state: the cabinet, the council of state and other ministerial bodies. In this process, the shah experimented with a number of different reorganizations of the council and the cabinet. At various times, he divided authority and responsibility among his officials in a number of ways.

But none of these attempts, nor the flurry of activity with which the period ended, bore any fruit. This failure was due partly to the shah's personal habits and to his autocratic tendencies, which discouraged initiative and bred timidity among his ministers. It was due, in part, to the resistance of the ministers themselves, many of whom saw in the proposals for cabinet-type government or consultative councils a threat to their independence and privileges in office. Personal enmities and faction among the ministers contributed to the failure of the attempted reforms, as did the fact that the proposed changes ran counter to deep-rooted attitudes and traditions.

The lack of success in this drawn-out effort to create a viable system of administration in a sense marked a turning point for Naser ed-Din shah. After this, he grew increasingly apathetic towards the affairs of state and the pressing problems confronting the country and increasingly indifferent to the corruption and misrule of his officials. The reversion to prime ministerial rule in 1882-3 was itself partly a symbol of this indifference. Mostowfi al-Mamalek's tenure was short, lasting only three years. But the way was being paved for the prime ministership of 'Ali Asghar Amin ed-Dowleh,[1] Aqa Ebrahim's son, during which the shah's hold

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[1] For further on 'Ali Asghar Amin ed-Dowleh see chapter V.

over his administration was to grow even more ominous than in the past.