

# **Qajar Rule in Iran: The Qajar Government Events That Changed the Fate of Iran**

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## **Abstract**

The history of each society is a futurity of ups and downs got over by its nation. The basis of their future will be made in the past, particularly if their precedent returns to the ancient times. Individual's depend on the present world, on one hand, and the past, on the other hand, represents the importance of the chronology. This article tries to study scientifically a main and decisive part of the history of Iran, namely the Qajar dynasty when it is a cause of deep and expanded changes since then. The main object of this study regarding the expanded and complicated changes in this time is to consider the role and the effect of relations between Iran and Russia in the form of the Golestan and Turkmanchy treaties in the early rule of the Qajar. The most important outcomes resulted from these two treaties are the separation of some parts of Iran, people's dissatisfaction and determining the Araxes river at the major border between Iran and Russia.

**Key words:** Qajar dynasty, Iran, Russia, Culture, Golestan treaty, Turkmanchy treaty

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## **Introduction**

The Iranian plateau with 2600000 Km<sup>2</sup> areas (about 55000 square Para sang) is a special geographical unit in Asia, and Iran with 1648195Km<sup>2</sup> is located in the Southwest of Asia and the Middle East.. Present Iran was historically referred to as Persia until 1935 when Reza Shah Pahlavi formally asked the international community to call the country by its native name, Iran. But in 1959 due to controversial debates over the name, it was announced that both could be used. The First inhabitants of Iran were a race of people living in Western Asia. When the Aryans arrived, they gradually started mingling with the old native Asians. Aryans were a branch of the people today known as the Indo-Europeans, and are believed to be the ancestors of the people of present India, Iran, and most of Western Europe. Recent discoveries indicate that, centuries before the rise of earliest civilizations in Mesopotamia, Iran was inhabited by human being. But the written history of Iran dates back to 3200 BCE. It begins with the early Achaemenids. . Cyrus the Great was the founder of the empire and he was the first to ascertain the charter of human rights. During this period the boundaries of Iran stretched from the Aegean coast of Asia Minor up to the southern borders of Afghanistan, as well as up till Egypt.

The Achaemenid Empire was overthrown by Alexander the Great in 330 BCE and was followed by the Seleucid Greek Dynasty. After the Seleucids, we witness about dozen of successive dynasties reigning over the country, Dynasties such as Parthian, Sassanid, Samanid, Ghaznavid, Safavid, Zand, Afsharid, Qajar and Pahlavi.

In 641 Arabs conquered Iran and launched a new vicissitudinous era. Persians, who were the followers of Zoroaster, gradually turned to Islam and it was in Safavid period when Shiite Islam became the official religion of Iran. Due to the inefficiency of the Qajar rulers Iran begin to decline. The growing corruption of the Qajar monarchy led to a constitutional revolution in 1905-1906. The Revolution marked the end of the medieval period in Iran, but the constitution remained a lifeless document During World Wars I and II the occupation of Iran by Russian, British, and Ottoman troops was a blow from which the government never effectively recovered. In 1979, the nation, under the leadership of Ayatollah Khomeini, erupted into revolution and the current Islamic republic of Iran was founded.

Throughout Iran's long history, in spite of different devastating invasions and occupations by Arabs, Turks, Mongols, British, Russians, and others, the country has always maintained its national identity and has developed as a distinct political and cultural entity.

### **Persian Culture**

With a long-standing and proud civilization, Persian culture is among the richest in the world. Two and a half millennia of inspiring literature, thousands of poets and writers, magnificent and impressive architecture, live customs dating back to Zoroastrians over 3000 years ago, and other unique characteristics of the nation are rivaled by only a few countries. Throughout the history, this grand treasure of Persia was gradually transferred to eastern and western nations. Iran's significant contribution into the world civilization in many respects is indispensable. Many ceremonies of the ancient Persians are the basis of western celebrations. Among the ceremonies still being held are Norouz, Charshanbeh Suri, Sizdah Bedar, Yalda Night and Haft Sin. Sitting around Haft Sin and reciting Hafez, visiting family and friends during Norouz celebration, night of Charshanbeh Suri and jumping over the bonfire in the hope of getting rid of all illnesses and misfortunes, spending Sizdah Bedar, the 13th day of the New Year, in nature, are old interesting traditions coming from the Achaemenid Empire.

Another eminent feature of Persian culture is art. In fact culture and art are two closely interwoven concepts forming the soul of human civilizations. Persian exquisite carpets, subtle soulful classic music, outstanding tile work of unique blue mosques, old influential architectural style and countless brilliant literary works are famous in the world. Persian or Farsi, is one of the world's oldest languages still in use today, and is known to have one of the most powerful literary traditions and potentials. Persian poetry with masterpieces of Saadi, Hafiz, Rumi and Omar Khayyam is well known around the world. As all Persians are quick to point out, Farsi is not related to Arabic, it is a member of the Indo-European family of languages. One more art intertwined with Persian culture, worth mentioning, is the art of cooking. Persian foods, accompanied by herbs and spices are a product of the creativity, skill and patience of many generations of cooks.

## **Qajar Dynasty**

The Qajars were a Turkmen tribe that held ancestral lands in present-day Azerbaijan, which then was part of Iran. In 1779CE, following the death of Mohammad Karim Khan Zand, the Zand Dynasty ruler of southern Iran, Agha Mohammad Khan, a leader of the Qajar tribe, set out to reunify Iran. Agha Mohammad Khan defeated numerous rivals and brought all of Iran under his rule, establishing the Qajar dynasty.

By 1794CE he had eliminated all his rivals, including Lotf 'Ali Khan, the last of the Zand dynasty, and had reasserted Iranian sovereignty over the former Iranian territories in Georgia and the Caucasus. Agha Mohammad established his capital in Tehran, a village near the ruins of the ancient city of Ray (now Shahr-e Rey). In 1796 CE he was formally crowned as Shah. Agha Mohammad was assassinated in 1797CE and was succeeded by his nephew, Fath Ali Shah. Under Fath Ali Shah, Iran went to war against Russia, which was expanded from the north into the Caucasus Mountains, an area of historic Iranian interest and influence. Iran suffered major military defeats during the war. Under the terms of the Treaty of Golestan in 1813CE, Iran recognized Russia's annexation of Georgia and ceded to Russia most of the north Caucasus region. A second war with Russia in the 1820s ended even more disastrously for Iran, which in 1828CE was forced to sign the Treaty of Turkmanchai acknowledging Russian sovereignty over the entire area lying on the north of the Aras River (territory comprising present-day Armenia and Republic of Azerbaijan). Fath Ali's reign saw increased diplomatic contacts with the West and the beginning of intense European diplomatic rivalries over Iran. His grandson Mohammad Shah, who fell under the influence of Russia and made two unsuccessful attempts to capture Herat, succeeded him in 1834CE. When Mohammad Shah died in 1848 the succession passed to his son Naser-e-Din, who proved to be the ablest and most successful of the Qajar sovereigns.

During Naser-e-Din Shah's reign Western science, technology, and educational methods were introduced into Iran and the country's modernization begun. Naser-e-Din Shah tried to exploit the mutual distrust between Great Britain and Russia to preserve Iran's

independence, but foreign interference and territorial encroachment increased under his rule. He contracted huge foreign loans to finance expensive personal trips to Europe. He was not able to prevent Britain and Russia from encroaching into regions of traditional Iranian influence. In 1856 Britain prevented Iran from reasserting control over Herat, which had been part of Iran in Safavid times but had been under non-Iranian rule since the mid-eighteenth century. Britain supported the city's incorporation in Afghanistan; a country created with the help of Britain, in order to extend eastward the buffer between its Indian territories and Russia's expanding empire. Britain also extended its control to other areas of the Persian Gulf during the 19th century.

Meanwhile, by 1881 Russia had completed its conquest of present-day Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, bringing Russia's frontier to Iran's northeastern borders and severing historic Iranian ties to the cities of Bukhara and Samarqand. Several trade concessions by the Iranian government put economic affairs largely under British control. By the late 19th century, many Iranians believed that their rulers were beholden to foreign interests. MirzaTaghi Khan Amir Kabir was the young prince Nasser o-Din's advisor and constable. With the death of Mohammad Shah in 1848, MirzaTaqi was largely responsible for ensuring the crown prince's succession to the throne. When Nasser o-Din succeeded to the throne, Amir Nezam was awarded the position of prime minister and the title of Amir Kabir, the Great Ruler. Iran was virtually bankrupt, its central government was weak, and its provinces were almost autonomous. During the next two and a half years Amir Kabir initiated important reforms in virtually all sectors of society. Government expenditure was slashed, and a distinction was made between the privy and public purses. The instruments of central administration were overhauled, and the Amir Kabir assumed responsibility for all areas of the bureaucracy. Foreign interference in Iran's domestic affairs was curtailed, and foreign trade was encouraged. Public works such as the bazaar in Tehran were undertaken. Amir Kabir issued an edict banning ornate and excessively formal writing in government documents; the beginning of a modern Persian prose style dates from this time. One of the greatest achievements of Amir Kabir was the building of Dar-ol-Fonoon, the first modern university in Iran. Dar-ol-Fonoon was

established for training a new cadre of administrators and acquainting them with Western techniques.

Amir Kabir ordered the school to be built on the edge of the city so it can be expanded as needed. He hired French and Russian instructors as well as Iranians to teach subjects as different as Language, Medicine, Law, geography, History, Economics, and engineering. Unfortunately, Amir Kabir did not live long enough to see his greatest monument completed, but it still stands in Tehran as a sign of a great man's ideas for the future of his country.

These reforms antagonized various notables who had been excluded from the government. They regarded the Amir Kabir as a social upstart and a threat to their interests, and they formed a coalition against him, in which the queen mother was active. She convinced the young shah that Amir Kabir wanted to usurp the throne. In October 1851CE the Shah dismissed him and exiled him to Kashan, where he was murdered on the shah's orders. When the Nasero-DinShah was assassinated by Mirza Reza Kermani in 1896CE, the crown passed to his son Mozaffaro-Din.

Mozaffaro-DinShah was a weak and ineffectual ruler. Royal extravagance and the absence of incoming revenues exacerbated financial problems. The shah quickly spent two large loans from Russia, partly on trips to Europe. Public anger fed on the shah's propensity for granting concessions to Europeans in return for generous payments to him and his officials. People began to demand a curb on royal authority and the establishment of the rule of law as their concern over foreign, and especially Russian, influence grew. The shah's failure to respond to protests by the religious establishment, the merchants, and other classes led the merchants and clerical leaders in January 1906 CE to take sanctuary from probable arrest in mosques in Tehran and outside the capital. When the Shah renege on a promise to permit the establishment of a "house of justice", or consultative assembly, some 10,000 people, led by the merchants, in June took sanctuary in the compound of the British legation in Tehran. In August the Shah was forced to issue a decree promising a constitution. In October an elected assembly convened and drew up a constitution that provided for strict limitations on royal power, an elected parliament, or Majles, with wide powers to represent the people, and a government with a cabinet

subject to confirmation by the Majles. The Shah signed the constitution on December 30, 1906CE. He died five days later. The Supplementary Fundamental Laws approved in 1907 CE provided, within limits, for freedom of press, speech, and association, and for security of life and property.

The Constitutional Revolution marked the end of the medieval period in Iran. The hopes for constitutional rule were not realized as Mozaffar o-Din's son Mohammad Ali Shah (reigned 1907-09CE) with the aid of Russia attempted to rescind the constitution and abolish parliamentary government. After several disputes with the members of the Majlis, in June 1908 CE he used his Russian-officered Persian Cossacks Brigade to bomb the Majlis building, arrest many of the deputies, and close down the assembly. Resistance to the Shah, however, coalesced in Tabriz, Esfahan, Rasht, and elsewhere. On July 1909CE, constitutional forces marched from Rasht and Esfahan to Tehran, deposed the Shah, and re-established the constitution. The ex-Shah went into exile in Russia.

Although the constitutional forces had triumphed, they faced serious difficulties. The upheavals of the Constitutional Revolution and civil war had undermined stability and trade. In addition, the ex-Shah, with Russian support, attempted to regain his throne, landing troops in July 1910CE. The most serious of all, the hope that the Constitutional Revolution would inaugurate a new era of independence from the great powers ended when, under the Anglo-Russian Agreement of 1907CE, Britain and Russia agreed to divide Iran into spheres of influence. The Russians were to enjoy exclusive right to pursue their interests in the northern sphere, the British in the south and east; both powers would be free to compete for economic and political advantage in a neutral sphere in the centre. Matters came to a head when Morgan Shuster, a United States administrator hired as treasurer general by the Persian government to reform its finances, sought to collect taxes from powerful officials who were Russian protégés and to send members of the treasury gendarmerie, a tax department police force, into the Russian zone. When in December 1911CE the Majles unanimously refused a Russian ultimatum demanding Shuster's dismissal, Russian troops, already in the country, moved to occupy the capital. To prevent this, on December 20 Bakhtiari chiefs and their troops surrounded the Majles building, forced acceptance of the Russian ultimatum, and shut down

the assembly, once again suspending the constitution. There followed a period of government by Bakhtiari chiefs and other powerful notables. Ahmad Shah, was born 21 January 1898CE in Tabriz, who succeeded to the throne at age 11, proved to be pleasure loving, effete, and incompetent and was unable to preserve the integrity of Iran or the fate of his dynasty.

The occupation of Iran during World War I (1914-18CE) by Russian, British, and Ottoman troops was a blow from which Ahmad Shah never effectively recovered. With a coup d'état in February 1921CE, Reza Khan (ruled as Reza Shah Pahlavi, 1925-41CE) became the preeminent political personality in Iran; Ahmad Shah was formally deposed by the Majles (national consultative assembly) in October 1925CE while he was in Europe, and that assembly declared the rule of the Qajar dynasty to be terminated. Ahmad Shah died later on 21 February, 1930CE in Neuilly-sur-Seine, France.

### **Reforms of Amir Kabir**

Amir Kabir (1807 – 1852CE), also known as Mirza Taghi Khan Amir-Nezam, also known by the titles of Atabak and Amir-e Nezam; chief minister to Naser al-Din Shah Qajar (Shah of Persia) for the first three years of his reign and one of the most capable and innovative figures to appear in the whole Qajar period. Amir Kabir served as Prime Minister of Persia (Iran) under Naser al-Din Shah. Born in Hazaveh, a county of Arak and murdered in 1852CE, he is a controversial historical figure. He is considered by some to be "widely respected by liberal nationalist Iranians" as "Iran's first reformer", a modernizer who was "unjustly struck down" attempted to bring "gradual reform" to Iran. As prime-minister he also ordered the killing of many Babis, and ordering the execution of the founder of the movement, the Báb.

### **Background and achievements**

Amir Kabir was born into a lowly household at Hazaveh in the Farahan district, situated in Markazi Province of Iran. His father, Karbalai Mohammad Qorban, entered the service of Mirza Abu'l-Qasim Farahani Qa'im Maqam of Farahan as cook, and when Mirza Bozorg was appointed chief minister to Abbas Mirza, the crown prince, in Tabriz, Karbalai Qorban accompanied him there, taking his son with him. Amir Kabir first assisted his father in performing

domestic duties in the household of Mirza Bozorg, who saw signs of unusual talent in him and had him study with his own children. After he had learned reading, writing, and some mathematics, Amir Kabir, still an adolescent, was appointed by Mirza Bozorg to supervise his stables, a function he performed with exemplary efficiency. Mirza Bozorg died in 1237H/1822 CE and was succeeded in the post of minister to the crown prince by his son, Mirza Abu'l-Qasem Qaem-maqam. Under his aegis Amir Kabir entered government service, being appointed first to the post of lashkarnevis[military registrars] for the army of Azerbaijan. In 1251H/1835CE, he was promoted to the position of mostofi-yenezam, becoming responsible for supervising the finances of the army of Azerbaijan; several years later he was put in charge of the same army's provisions, financing, and organization with the title of vizier-e nezam. During his tenure, Amir Kabir participated in many missions abroad, he spent almost four years in Erzurum, participating in the work of a commission to delineate the Ottoman-Iranian frontier and settle certain other differences between the two states. He appears to have been the most forceful member of the Iranian negotiating team, resisting attempts to exclude Mohammareh (present-day Khorramshahr) from Iranian sovereignty and to make Iran pay compensation for its military incursions into the area of Solaymaniyeh. In this he acted almost independently of the central government in Tehran, which not only failed to formulate a consistent policy vis-à-vis the Ottomans but also opposed most of Amir Kabir's initiatives.

Although a form of the treaty was concluded between Iran and the Ottoman state, the borders had still not been delineated when the Crimean War erupted and the British and Russian mediators found themselves at war and withdrew. Amir Kabir nonetheless acquired first-hand knowledge of the procedures of international diplomacy and of the aims and policies of Britain and Russia with respect to Iran. This helped him in the elaboration of his own distinct policies toward the two powers when he became chief minister. Moreover, his years in Erzurum fell in the period of the Ottoman military and administrative reforms known as the Tanzimat. Some awareness of these reached Amir Kabir in Erzurum and inspired in him at least one aspect of his policy as chief minister: the elimination of clerical influence upon affairs of state. When explaining to the British consul in Tabriz in 1265 H/1849 CE his own

determination to make the authority of the state paramount, he said, "The Ottoman government was able to begin reviving its power only after breaking the power of the mullas". Amir Kabir returned to Tabriz in 1263H/1847CE. A year later, while retaining the post and the title of vizier-e nezamhe was appointed lala-Bashi or chief tutor to the crown prince Naser-al-din, who was still only fifteen years of age. Soon after, in Shawwal, 1264 H/ September 1848 CE, Mohammad Shah died, and Naser-al-din had to proceed to Tehran and assume the throne. But his minister, Mirza Fathallah Nasir-al-molk Aliabadi, was unable to procure the necessary funds, so Naser-al-din had recourse to Amir Kabir, who made the necessary arrangements. Naser-al-din's confidence in Amir Kabir increased, and shortly after leaving Tabriz, he awarded him the rank of amir-e nezam, with full responsibility for the whole Iranian army. After arriving in Tehran, he also appointed him chief minister (shakhs-e avval-e Iran), with the supplementary titles of amir-e Kabir and atabak (u'l-qada, 1264 H/October, 1848 CE). The former title came to be his common designation; the latter, used for the first time since the Saljuq period, referred to the tutorial relationship between the minister and his young master, reflecting, perhaps, Amir Kabir's view of himself as a semi-independent agent.

His appointment as the chief minister aroused resentment in various persons who thought themselves more deserving, particularly the queen mother and other wasteful princes, who evidently resented Amir Kabir's proud and self-confident bearing and his clamp down on their excess spending and allowances. The intrigues of his opponents resulted in a mutiny of a company of Azerbaijani troops garrisoned in Tehran, demanding his removal and execution; but with the cooperation of Mirza Abu'l-Qasem Emam-e Jomeh of Tehran, who ordered the merchants of Tehran to close the bazaar and arm themselves, the mutiny was soon quelled, and Amir Kabir resumed his duties. More severe disorder prevailed in a number of cities, especially Mashhad. Toward the end of the reign of Mohammad Shah, Hamza Mirza Heshmat-al-Doleh had been appointed governor of Khorasan, but he found his authority disputed by Hasan Khan Salar, who, with the help of some local chieftains, had rebelled against the central government (1262 H/ 1846CE). Hamza Mirza abandoned Mashhad to Hasan Khan and fled to Herat. Amir Kabir sent two armies against Hasan Khan, the second of which, commanded

by Soltan MoradMirza, defeated his forces and captured him. Amir Kabir had him executed (1266 H/ 1850 CE), together with one of his sons and one of his brothers, a punishment of unprecedented severity for such local resistance to central authority, and a clear sign of Amir Kabir's intention to assert the prerogatives of the state. To order reestablished in the provinces,

Amir Kabir turned to a wide variety of administrative, cultural, and economic reforms that were the major achievement of his brief ministry. His most immediate success was the vaccination of Iranians against smallpox, saving the lives of many thousands if not millions. Faced with an empty treasury on his arrival in Tehran, he first set about balancing the state budget by attempting to increase the sources of revenue and to decrease state expenditure. To aid him in the task, he set up a budget committee headed by Mirza Yusof Mostofi-al-Mamalek that estimated the deficiency in the budget one million Iranian Toman. Amir Kabir thereupon decided to reduce drastically the salaries of the civil servants, often by half, and to eliminate a large number of stipends paid to pensioners who did little or no governmental work. This measure increased his unpopularity with many influential figures and thus contributed to his ultimate disgrace and death. At the same time he strove to collect overdue taxes from provincial governors and tribal chieftains by dispatching assessors and collectors to every province of the country. The collection of customs duties, previously farmed out to individuals, was now made the direct responsibility of the central government, and the Caspian fisheries, an important source of revenue, were recovered from a Russian monopoly and contracted out to the Iranians. The administration of the royal lands (kholesajat) came under review, and the income derived from them was more closely supervised than before. Yield and productivity, not area, were established as the basis of tax assessment for other lands, and previously dead lands were brought under cultivation.

These various measures for the encouragement of agriculture and industry also benefited the treasury by raising the level of national prosperity and hence taxability. Of particular interest is the care shown by Amir Kabir for the economic development of Khuzestan (then known as Arabestan), identified by him as an area of strategic importance, given its location at the head of the Persian Gulf, and also of potential prosperity. He introduced the planting of

sugar cane to the province, built the Naseridam on the river Karkheh and a bridge at Shushtar, and laid plans for the development of Mohammara. He also took steps to promote the planting of American cotton near Tehran and Urmia. Among the various measures enacted by Amir Kabir, the foundation of the Darolfonun, in Tehran was possibly the most lasting in its effects. Decades later, many parts of this establishment were turned into the University of Tehran, with the remaining becoming Darolfonun Secondary School. The initial purpose of the institution was to train officers and civil servants to pursue the regeneration of the state that Amir Kabir had begun, but as the first educational institution giving instruction in modern learning, it had a far wider impact.

Among the subjects taught were medicine, surgery, pharmacology, natural history, mathematics, geology, and natural science. The instructors were for the most part Austrians, recruited in Vienna by Daud Khan, an Assyrian who had become acquainted with Amir Kabir during the work of the Ottoman-Iranian border commission. By the time the instructors arrived in Tehran in 1268 H (November 1851 CE), Amir Kabir had already been dismissed, and it fell to Daud Khan to receive them. MirzaAqa Khan Nuri, Amir Kabir's successor, sought to persuade Naser-al-din Shah to abrogate the whole project, but the Darolfonun, soon became a posthumous monument to its founder. The Austrian instructors initially knew no Persian, so interpreters had to be employed to assist in the teaching; but some among them soon learned Persian well enough to compose textbooks in the language on various natural sciences. These were to influence the evolution of a more simple and effective prose style in Persian than had previously existed. Amir Kabir made a second indirect contribution to the elaboration of Persian as a modern medium with his foundation of the newspaper *Vaqaye-ye Ettefaqiyyeh*, which survived under different titles until the reign of Mozaffar-al-din Shah. A minimum circulation was ensured by requiring every official earning more than 2000 Rials a year to subscribe.

In founding the journal Amir Kabir hoped to give greater effect to government decrees by bringing them to the attention of the public; thus the text of the decree forbidding the levying of *soyursatwas* published in the third issue of the paper. He also wished to educate its readers on the world's political and scientific developments;

among the items reported in the first year of publication were the struggles of Mazzini against the Habsburg Empire, the drawing up of the Suez Canal project, the invention of the balloon, a census of England, and the doings of cannibals in Borneo. All of the measures enumerated so far had as their purpose the creation of a well ordered and prosperous country, with undisputed authority exercised by the central government.

This purpose was in part frustrated by the Ulema, who throughout the Qajar period disputed the legitimacy of the state and often sought to exercise an independent and rival authority. Amir Kabir took a variety of steps designed to curb their influence, above all in the sphere of law. He sought initially to supersede the Sharia courts in the capital by sitting in judgment himself on cases brought before him; he abandoned the attempt when he realized that the inadequacy of his juridical knowledge had caused him to pronounce incorrect verdicts. Then he established indirect control over the Sharia courts by giving prominence to one of them that enjoyed his special favor and by assigning the *divan-Khana*, the highest instance of jurisdiction, a more prominent role. All cases were to be referred to it before being passed on to a Sharia court of the state's choosing, and any verdict the sharia court then reached was valid only if endorsed by the *divan-khaneh*. In addition, any case involving a member of the non-Muslim minorities belonged exclusively to the jurisdiction of the *divan-Khana*. Not content with thus circumscribing the prerogatives of the Sharia courts, Amir Kabir took stringent measures against Sharia judges found guilty of bribery or dishonesty; thus Molla Abd-al-Rahim Borujerdi was expelled from Tehran when he offered to settle a case involving one of Amir Kabir's servants to the liking of the minister. Amir Kabir also sought to reduce clerical power by restricting the ability of the ulema to grant refuge (*bast*), in their residences and the mosques under their control, to criminals and others pursued by the state. In 1266 H/ 1850 CE, *bast* was abolished, for example, at the *Masjed-e Shah* in Tehran, although it was restored after the downfall of Amir Kabir.

In Tabriz, prolonged efforts were made to preserve *bast* at various mosques in the city, and recourse was even had to the alleged miracle of a cow that twice escaped the slaughter house by running into the shrine known as *Boqa-ye Saheb-al-amr*. The immediate instigators of the "miracle" were brought to Tehran, and

soon after the Emam-e Joma and Shaykh-al-Islam of Tabriz, who had reduced civil government in the city to the virtual powerlessness, were expelled. Less capable of fulfillment was Amir Kabir's desire to prohibit the Taziyeh, the Shiite "passion play" enacted in Moharram, as well as the public self-flagellation that took place during the mourning season. He obtained the support of several Ulema in his attempt to prohibit these rites, but was obliged to relent in the face of strong opposition, particularly from Isfahan and Azerbaijan.

Amir Kabir took a benevolent interest in the non-Muslim minorities of Iran, largely to further his desire of strengthening the state. While in Erzurum he had learned of the fashion in which the European powers intervened in Ottoman affairs on the pretext of "protecting" the Christian minorities, and there were indications that Britain, Russia, and France hoped for similar benefits from the Assyrians and Armenians of Iran. He moved therefore to remove any possible grievances and hence any need for a foreign "protector." He exempted the priests of all denominations from taxation, and gave material support to Christian schools in Azerbaijan and Isfahan. In addition, he established a close relationship with the Zoroastrians of Yazd, and gave strict orders to the governor of the city that they not be molested or subjected to arbitrary taxes. He also forbade attempts made in Shushtar to convert forcibly the Sabean community to Islam. The foreign policy of Amir Kabir was as strikingly innovative as his internal policies. He has been credited with originating the policy of "negative equilibrium," i.e., Refusing concessions to both of the rival powers pressing on Iran, Britain and Russia, and avoiding alignment with either of them. He abrogated the agreement whereby the Russians were to operate a trade center and hospital in Astarabad, and attempted to put an end to the Russian occupation of Ashuradeh, an island in the southeastern corner of the Caspian Sea, as well as the anchorage rights enjoyed by Russian ships in the lagoon of Anzali. In the south of Iran he made similar efforts to restrict British influence in the Persian Gulf, and denied Britain the right to stop Iranian ships in the Gulf on the pretext of looking for slaves. It is not surprising that he frequently clashed with Dolgorukiy and Sheil, the representatives of Russia and Britain in Tehran. In order to counteract British and Russian influence, he sought to establish relations with the powers without direct interests in Iran, notably Austria and the United States. It may finally be noted that he set up a

counter-espionage organization that had agents in the Russian and British embassies.

### **Constitutional Revolution**

When Nasser al-Din Shah Qajar was assassinated by Mirza Reza Kermani in 1896CE, the crown passed to his son Mozaffar-e-din. Mozaffar-e-din Shah was a moderate and kind, but also not a very effective ruler. Royal extravagance and the absence of incoming revenues exacerbated financial problems. The Shah quickly spent two large loans from Russia, partly on trips to Europe. Public anger fed on the Shah's propensity for granting concessions to Europeans in return for generous payments to him and his officials. People began to demand a curb on royal authority and the establishment of the rule of law as their concern over foreign, and especially Russian, influence grew. The Shah's failure to respond to protests by the religious establishment, the merchants, and other classes led the merchants and clerical leaders in January 1906 CE to take sanctuary from probable arrest in mosques in Tehran and outside the capital. When the Shah reneged promise to permit the establishment of a "house of justice", or consultative assembly, 10,000 people, led by the merchants, took sanctuary in June in the compound of the British legation in Tehran. In August the Shah, through the issue of a decree promised a constitution. In October an elected assembly convened and drew up a constitution that provided for strict limitations on royal power, an elected parliament, or Majles, with wide powers to represent the people, and a government with a cabinet subject to confirmation by the Majles. The Shah signed the constitution on December 30, 1906 CE, but refusing to forfeit all of his power to the Majles, attached a caveat that made his signature on all laws required for their enactment. He died five days later. The Supplementary Fundamental Laws approved in 1907CE provided, within limits, for freedom of press, speech, and association, and for security of life and property. The hopes for constitutional rule were not realized, however.

### **The Qajar Class Structure**

In the Qajar era, as in previous periods, there continued to be a fundamental division between a narrow stratum of courtiers, state officials, tribal leaders, religious notables, landlords and great

merchants, at the top, and the vast majority of peasants, tribes people, and laborers in agriculture, traditional industries and services, at the bottom. Recognition of this binary division is evident in the oft-cited distinction in the Qajar sources between the nobles and notables (a'yan VA Ashraf), on the one hand, and the commoners or the masses (avam-al-nas or ra'iyat), on the other. The use of such terms of contrast as khavasvia Avon (the elite and the masses), aghniya VA foqara (the affluent and the poor), and Aqva VA zu'afa (the powerful and the meek), moreover, indicate an implicit awareness of the three main dimensions of inequality, i.e., Social status, material resources, and power, respectively. Among those with privilege and power at the top and the masses there were several "middling strata", including local notables, the headmen of urban neighborhoods and villages, ordinary landowners and merchants, master artisans and shopkeepers, and the like.

After the ruler, members of his court, and major governors, the leading religious leaders enjoyed the highest social prestige, followed by other high state officials, tribal chieftains, great merchants, master artisans, and petty landed proprietors. This ranking is reflected in the period's official decrees and ceremonies, manuals of titles, genealogies, urban histories and chronicles. An especially revealing document, which reflects quite accurately the prevailing image of the social order in the late Qajar period, is the electoral law (Nezam-name-ye entekhabat), enacted on 19 Rajab 1324H/12 August 1906CE. The purpose of the law was to set forth the basic procedures for electing deputies to the first session of the new national assembly (majles-e Dar-al-shore-ye Melli). Instead of applying a simple "one man, one vote" rule, the law defined the electorate in terms of the following six distinct "classes" (tabaqas): - princes and the Qajars - nobles and notables (a'yan VA Ashraf) - ulma (religious leaders) and theology students (tollab) - merchants (tojjar) - landed proprietors and farmers (mallakin VA fallahin) and master artisans and shopkeepers (asnaf), and allotted each class a certain number of votes. In the case of the capital (to which 60 of a total of 156 deputies were allotted), the law set specific quotas for the number of deputies to be elected by each class, including four deputies each for the "princes and the Qajars" and the ulma ; 10 deputies each for the "merchants" and "landed proprietors and farmers"; and 32 deputies to be chosen by members of various

specific crafts and trades. Perhaps due to the inherent vagueness of the "nobles and notables" category, it was dropped from the apportionment list in Tehran, and, as a result, its members (mainly the governing notables) voted under the category of "landed proprietors and farmers". The law limited the right to vote to men over the age of 25 and restricted it further to those among them who belonged to one of the aforementioned categories. Thus, the vast majority of the population who fell outside of these social categories (including the masses of peasants, tribesmen, labourers, apprentices and foot-boys in the bazaar, etc.) were not enfranchised by the law and in effect not recognized as "citizens." The privileged strata in Qajar Persia included princes and tribal chieftains, governors and men of the sword, bureaucrats and men of the pen, the ulama and prominent Sadat (the descendants of the prophet). Not only were these elements exempted from taxation and were often granted benefices, they were remunerated from government revenues which were extracted in the main from the cultivators of land. These remunerations in the form of salaries, pensions, and subsidies comprised the bulk of state expenditure in the last decades of the 19th century. Thus, for example, of the total government budget of 39.6 million qeransin 1888-1889CE, 26.8 percent was allocated to the Shah's court and harem, princes of the royal household, subsidies to Qajar tribes, and pensions to nobles; 45.7 percent of the armed forces; and 27.5 percent for the men of the pen, including salaries (7.3 percent) and pensions (20.2 percent) of bureaucratic officials and the ulama. The available budget accounts for other years show that the pensions of the Ulama and the Sadat accounted for some 6 percent of the total annual expenditure. Numbering literally in the thousands, the Qajar princes descended from two distinct lines.

The majority were the descendants of Fath Ali Shah (1797-1834CE), whose harem housed 160 wives who bore him 60 sons and 48 daughters who reached maturity. It is estimated that at the time of his death he left some 700 children and grandchildren. The second line consisted of the 26 sons and 22 daughters of Abbas Mirza (1788-1833CE) and their descendants, who formed a most powerful branch of the royal lineage. Following Safavid customs, the suffix Mirza was added to the first names of the Qajar princes and prominent princes were addressed by the title nawwab. Qajar princes were stratified

according to their distance from the sovereign, their fathers' position, their mothers' family background, and their own achievements.

They ranged from the powerful princes who were ranked only next to the Shah, to the middle-rank princes who held no official position and lived off their more affluent relatives or acquaintances, to those who occupied such relatively low status jobs as clerks at the telegraph office, scribes, entertainers, and the like, to those who lived in poverty. The condition of the princesses was no less precarious: "They have been forced by destitution to marry persons of very inferior condition; and one lady in particular had taken for her husband a man who had been a cobbler." In spite of such differences in their social standing, Qajar princes exhibited, at least on occasion, a modicum of group solidarity through their collective actions. A dramatic example of such solidarity occurred in Tehran on 27 July, 1888CE; when some 200-300 princes formed a lynching crowd and burned the headman of the Sangalaj quarter for arresting, killing, and burning one of their kind, Shahzada Jalil Mirza.

In the course of the Constitutional Revolution, many privileged princes refused to join the political associations (anjomans) of other classes and formed their own anjomans on the other side; many middle-rank princes (some of whom were among the emerging intelligentsia) supported the cause of the Constitutionalists. On another occasion, when the anti-Constitutionalist princes refused to assemble and elect their representatives to the new Majles, as they were required to do by the newly enacted election laws, Mozaffar-al-Din Shah summoned them to the court and instructed them personally to choose their representatives. Qajar princes also made a collective attempt to establish a school for poor children of the Qajar clan in this period.

The Shi'i religious establishment in Qajar Iran consisted of a wide spectrum of groups and educational, cultural, and political functions, and whose socioeconomic positions ranged from the highest to nearly the lowest strata of society. At the apex of the religious hierarchy were the most knowledgeable jurisprudent (mojtahed-e a'lam) and other jurists (mojtaheds), including such eminent olama as Aqa Mohammad Baqer Behbahani (d. 1801 CE), the leader of the Osuli school and the renewer of Shari'a at the turn of the 13th/19th century; Shaikh Mortaza Ansari (d. 1864 CE), who was

generally acknowledged as the most eminent jurist of the time and who became the main mojtahed; and Mirza Hasan Shirazi (d. 1894 CE), in whose name the edict against the Tobacco Concession was disseminated in December, 1891 CE.

In addition to these celebrated figures, there were other religious leaders who served as patrons of provinces and districts (Ulama-yebelad, molla-yewalayad). Often acting as intercessors and spokesmen for the common people, these clerics provided an important political linkage between the rulers and the ruled. More or less equal in status with the latter group, but lacking its political independence and popular base were the clerics who were appointed by the state to such official positions as leaders of Friday prayers (Emamjoma), chief provincial judges (Shaykh-al-Eslam), custodians (motawalli) of certain state-controlled religious establishments and charitable endowments (awqaf).

There were also positions that were often occupied by the upper-middle and middle level Ulama, including mollaBashi (head of mollas), nezam-al-olama (a governmental position), Sadr-e Diwan-Khana and nayeb-al-Sadr (chief and deputy chief of justice department), and kaateb-e darbari (the palace orator). Often these positions tended to be hereditary, as, for example, was the case of the Emamjom'as of Tehran and the Emam Jom'as and Shaykh-al-Eslams of Esfahan, Tabriz, and Shiraz, who had occupied their offices since late Safavid times and Shiraz, who had occupied their offices since late Safavid times. At the lower levels of the Ulams hierarchy were teachers in the religious seminaries (madasas) and a large number of neighborhood mollas who acted as prayer leaders (pishnamaz, Emam-e jama`at) of the neighborhood mosques in the urban centers. The latter, while not necessarily distinguished as scholars, were expected to be just (`adel), acted as trustees of the people, and some of them were in turn entrusted by the leading mojtahedsto collect religious taxes and charitable contributions on their behalf. And, finally, there were the "men of the pulpit" (Ahl-e menbar), including preachers (vo'az), and reciters of martyrdom verses of Emam Hosayn (Roza-khan). Though viewed with some ambivalence by the leading olama, popular religion flourished in the Qajar era in part thanks to the shahs' patronage of religious festivals and rituals. A prime example was Takiyya-ye Dawlat, an edifice constructed by Naser-al-Din Shah as the major auditorium for

passion plays during the commemoration of the martyrdom of Imam Hussein. Similar rituals were organized in other major cities by the governors and the leading princes and notables in their private takiyahs. Merchants and affluent bazaaris, too, sponsored religious ceremonies in which hundreds of tollab, Sadat, dervishes, and the poor were fed.

In terms of their socioeconomic position and political affiliations, the Ulama could be divided into three fairly distinct strata: - those who were affiliated with the royal court; - those who possessed considerable landed property or were closely associated with the provincial landowning classes; and - those who were connected with the urban middle and lower classes. The prime examples of those in the first group are Hajj MirzaZayn-al-AbedinZahir-al-Eslam (d. 1903CE) and his son, Hajj Mirza Abu 'l-Qasem (d. 1927 CE), from the hereditary line of the leaders of Friday prayers (Emamjom'as) of Tehran, who married Naser-al-Din Shah's and Mozaffar-al-Din Shah's daughters, respectively. Many members of this clan became wealthy landowners and leading figures in national politics, enjoying a lavish lifestyle symbolized, among other things, by their use of the carriage as means of transportation around the city.

Not surprisingly, they stood on the side of the reigning monarchs during both the Tobacco Rebellion of 1890-91 CE and the Constitutional Revolution of 1905-1911 CE. The second stratum of the Ulama in socioeconomic terms was composed of local magnates who did not hesitate to use their religious and juridical authority to advance their personal wealth and political influence. Using the power and privileges of the office of religious courts, they forged close relationships with the governing notables and other powerful elements in the area. These clerics participated eagerly in state ceremonies, paid visits to the Shah, the viziers, and the governors, and were in turn visited by them. They were involved in day-to-day politics of the cities, at times threatening the governing notables with mob actions that they could easily instigate -- especially against the religious minorities. Some became involved in money lending (with interest rates as high as 40 to 50 percent), hoarded large supplies of grain for a higher profit, and were active in land speculation and urban real estate. For example, Hojjat-al-Eslam Mohammad-Baqer Shafiqi (d. 1844 CE), who became a grand jurist, rose from poverty to

affluence in the course of his career. He amassed an enormous network of properties, including 400 caravansaries, 2,000 shops, numerous villages in Esfahan, Borujerd, Yazd, and Shiraz. His residence consisted of several large units in which his seven sons and their families lived, and had an entourage of 100 persons.

The third group consisted of mostly pious mojtaheds and middle-rank clerics in the major cities, who were affiliated neither with the court nor with the landowning classes, and whose social and economic bases of support were the urban bazaars. Their sources of livelihood were the charitable contributions and religious taxes paid by the bazaaris and mid-level landowners. Their favourite means of transport was the large white donkey. Aqa Sayk Hadi Najm-Abadi (d. 1902) of Tehran, Hajj Fazel Mojtahed Khorasani (d. 1923CE), Mirza Mohammad Taqi Hojjat al-Islam (d. 1894CE), and Aqa Sayyed Mohammad-Baqer Dorca'i of Esfahan, known widely for their knowledge, piety, and asceticism, may be cited as examples of this stratum. In addition to the above strata, the ranks of the "men of the turban" (arbab-e amamem) included in every city at large "crowd of mollahs, who lived by their wits, and had little of a priest but the name. They practiced astrology, wrote letters and contracts for those who were ignorant of penmanship, and contrived by these means to prolong a miserable existence. Nothing could be lower than the character of these people; their hypocrisy, profligacy, and want of principle, were the subject of stories, epigrams, and proverbs without end." By many accounts, the majority of the religious students (tollab) at the religious centers were semi-illiterate and unscrupulous men who lived off the income from religious endowments (awqaf) and other charitable contributions from the community.

### **Golestan and Turkmanchy Treaties**

Imperial Russia had just sworn in a new tsar, Alexander I, in 1801 CE and the empire was very eager to control neighboring territories as the tsar was determined to expand.

A few years previously in Persia, Fath Ali Shah Qajar also became the new shah after the assassination of his uncle, Mohammad Khan Qajar in 1797 CE. Mohammad had, during his reign, killed off all of his enemies in the regions of present-day Georgia and Azerbaijan and claimed the areas to rightfully belong to

Persia. Simultaneously Russia formally annexed the region of Georgia, allowing unrestricted travel and trade between the regions and Russia, furthering its public claim on the land".<sup>1</sup> "Persia was trying to align with France in 1801 CE to better position itself in case of war with Russia, yet those attempts fell through. Ironically, Fath Ali Shah instead brokered a deal with Britain that provided Persia with military support from Indian-British troops in exchange for preventing any European country from entering India".<sup>2</sup>"With the alliance, Persia entered into the first Russo-Persian War against a militarily pre-occupied Russia, which was heavily invested in the Napoleonic Wars. Although Persia entered the war mainly for the goal of recapturing the majority of the Caucasus, Azerbaijan, and Georgia, Fath Ali Shah had heard about the atrocities being committed by Russian Commanders in Georgia, the commanders ruling through massive extortion and mal-administration".<sup>3</sup>

Numerically, Persian forces had a considerable advantage during the war: a ratio of 5 to 1 over their Russian adversaries. However, the Persian forces were technologically backwards and poorly trained - a problem that the Persian government did not recognize until a far later juncture. "Despite these crippling disadvantages, fighting continued in northern Persia, Azerbaijan and in regions of Georgia. Persia was so enraged at Russia as to declare a jihad upon them, demanding that its people unite to fight the war against them".<sup>4</sup>

Persia was actually losing the war and asked for military and financial aid from France's Napoleon (with which they had a France-Persian Alliance), yet France's relations with Russia were more important to them after the two countries signed the Treaty of Tilsit in 1807 CE, resulting in France leaving Persia unassisted. The Battle of Aslanduz on 31 October 1812 CE was the turning point in the war, which led to the complete destruction of the Persian army, thus

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<sup>1</sup>. Martin Sicker, "*The Islamic World in Decline: From the Treaty of Karlowitz to the Disintegration of the Ottoman Empire*", (Pager Publishers, 2000) p. 98

<sup>2</sup>. Nikki R. Keddie, "*Modern Iran: Roots and Results of Revolution*", (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006) pp. 32-39

<sup>3</sup>. David M. Lang "*Griboedov's Last Years in Persia*", *American Slavic and East European Review*, Vol. 7, No. 4 (Dec., 1948), P. 317

<sup>4</sup>. Op.cit, Martin Sicker pp. 106-109

leaving Fath Ali Shah with no other option but to sign the Treaty of Gulistan".<sup>5</sup>

According to Cambridge History of Iran, even when rulers on the plateau lacked the means to affect suzerainty beyond the Aras, the neighboring Khanates were still regarded as Iranian dependencies. Naturally, it was those Khanates located closest to the province of Azarbaijan which most frequently experienced attempts to re-impose Iranian suzerainty: the Khanates of Erivan, Nakhchivan and Qarabagh across the Aras, and the cis-Aras Khanate of Talish, with its administrative headquarters located at Lankaran and therefore very vulnerable to pressure, either from the direction of Tabriz or Rasht. Beyond the Khanate of Qarabagh, the Khan of Ganja and the Vali of Gurjistan (ruler of the Kartli-Kakheti kingdom of Southeast Georgia), although less accessible for purposes of coercion, were also regarded as the Shah's vassals, as being the Khans of Shakki and Shirvan, north of the Kura river. The contacts between Iran and the Khanates of Baku and Cuba, however, were more tenuous and consisted mainly of maritime commercial links with Anzali and Rasht. The effectiveness of these somewhat haphazard assertions of suzerainty depended on the ability of a particular Shah to make his will felt, and the determination of the local khans to evade obligations they regarded as onerous.

The wars in 1803CE yielded no results, in fact, both parties put their forces to the test by these primary wars. These wars finished during four months of winter, but they opened fire again by Russia attack to the influential place in Iran. It lasted 10 or even more years. Both parties were so tired, and especially Iran which was faced with the lack of forces, was looking for an excuse to end the war. Finally, after these useless wars from 1803 CE to 1813 CE which lasted more than 10 years, Tehran resorted to Britain .England interfered and a treaty known as Golestan was signed between Iran and Russia. "Golestantreaty was signed in Garbage suburbs in 11 chapters and one introduction on 12 October, 1813 CE by the intercession of the British ambassador, Sir Gar Ouzli, Russia agent, Yermilouph as the commander of Georgia forces and Iran agent, Abolhasan Khan

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<sup>5</sup>. William R. Polk, " *Understanding Iran: Everything You Need to Know, From Persia to the Islamic Republic, From Cyrus to Ahmadinijad*", (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), pp. 75-77

Shirazi ".<sup>6</sup> The basis of this treaty was the amendment of Statukouo international law. It meant that those parts occupied by Iran and Russia belonged to themselves. Other contents are:

- Georgia states and cities, Dagestan, Baku, Darband, Shervan, Garbage, Shaky, Gandzha, Meghan, and a great part of Tallish were transferred to Russia.
- Iran had no right to navigate in the Caspian Sea and thus many facilities were provided for Russian traders.
- Russia was charged to help each Fat Ali Shah's child who was appointed as successor".<sup>7</sup>

Golestantreaty resulted in ending the war in Caucasia. Caucasians had no fanaticism and partisans and were willy-nilly satisfied with one of the two governments. As a result, this treaty was a great promise for Caucasians and it made all pleased. But it did not determine the borders of two countries truly. Therefore, restarting the fire was possible because of disagreement among agents, and it caused Caucasians to go in fear. Consequently, the only interest of Golestan treaty was a temporary unstable peace between Iran and Russia for 13 years, namely till 1896 CE.

Even until today, Iran officially sees this and the succeeding Treaty of Turkmenchay as one of its most humiliating treaties ever signed. The treaty is also regarded by Iranians as the main reason why Fath Ali Shah is seen as one of Iran's most incompetent rulers in memory. "The scholars in Azerbaijan point out that the Karabakh Khanate, where the treaty was signed, had pursued an independent foreign policy as early as 1795 CE, when Ibrahim Khalil Khan, the Wali of Qarabagh, fearing for his independence, warned Sultan Selim III of Agha Muhammad Khan Qajar's ambitions to subdue Azerbaijan and later Qarabagh, Erivan and Georgia. In the same year Muhammad Khan, the Hakim of Erivan, also wrote the Sultan is alerting him to Agha Muhammad's "aggression" and seeking Ottoman

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<sup>6</sup>. Publishing House of Documents, "*Documents of Iran Relations with Caucasia*", (Tehran: publications of Foreign Ministry, 1993), p104

<sup>7</sup>. Mohammad Reza Nassiri, "*Historical correspondence of Iran*", (Tehran: Key Han publications, 1987), p.202

protection".<sup>8</sup> Russian imperial historians maintain that Russia's absorption of the Transcaucasus territories delivered their population from constant Iranian and Ottoman invasions, and the Christian nations of the Caucasus were liberated from Muslim repression, ushering in the years of peace and relative economic stability. Very vital to the signing of the treaty was the agreement made by Fath Ali Shah with Britain. With their defeat in the Russo-Persian War, the Shah understood that another attack by the Russians was close to inevitable. Britain saw the war as unwinnable for the Persians and used this to strengthen their foreign affairs. Using their new-found diplomatic connections with the British, Persia established the Treaty of Defensive Alliance in 1812 CE. This promised that Britain would "offer a defensive alliance against further Russian encroachments". "It essentially had terms stating that Persia would provide defence against any European army from entering India (which stationed a majority of British troops) and in return, Britain would provide military and financial aid in case of another Russian attack".<sup>9</sup>

The treaty did not answer vital questions such as whether the Persian army would be disarmed or be able to regroup. It was known to both sides that Persia would strike again because they considered the regions rightfully theirs and were furious towards Russia's treatment of the land and people. "The war was becoming costly in terms of troops and finance, so the Treaty of Gulistan led to over a decade of nominal peace (1813-1826 CE) between Russia and Persia, mainly for the clause regarding trade: both governments saw much potential with it and used it to their advantage. Permanent diplomatic missions were set up in Persia as well as Russia, in order to keep trade open.<sup>10</sup> It was a period of tense stability, though, as both countries understood that the treaty was written very vaguely and that nothing was written about provisions to the military mainly to prevent Persia from trying to regain the regions of Georgia or the Caucasus, thus greatly leaving open the possibility of another future war. According to Prof. Svante Cornell, in 1812 CE Russia ended a war with Turkey and

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<sup>8</sup>. F.Kazemzadeh, "*From Nadir Shah to the Islamic Republic*", (Cambridge University Press, 1991), pp. 330-338

<sup>9</sup>. Prof. Svante Cornell, "*Small nations and great powers: A Study of Ethno political Conflict in the Caucasus*", (Richmond: Curzon Press, 2001), p 37

<sup>10</sup>. Ann K. S. Lambton, "*Persia: The Breakdown of Society. The Central Islamic Lands from Pre-Islamic Times to the First World War*", (Cambridge University Press, 1970), pp. 435-452

went on the offensive against Iran. This led to the treaty of Gulistan in 1813 CE, which gave Russia control over large territories that hitherto had been at least nominally Iranian, and moreover a say in Iranian succession politics. The whole of Daghestan and Georgia, including Mingrelia and Abkhazia, were formally ceded to Russia, as well as eight Azeri Khanates (Karabakh, Ganja, Sheki, Kuba, Shirvan, Talysh, Baku, and Derbent). However as we have seen, the Persians soon challenged Russia's rule in the area, resulting in a military disaster. Iran lost control over the whole of Azerbaijan, and with the Turkemenchai settlement of 1828 CE Russia threatened to establish its control over Azerbaijan unless Iran paid a war indemnity"

"The British helped the Iranians with the matter, but the fact remained that Russian troops had marched as far as south of Tabriz. Although certain areas (including Tabriz) were returned to Iran, Russia was in fact at the peak of its territorial expansion"<sup>11</sup> As another result of Persia's losses in Russia, the two treaties of Gulistan and Turkemenchai also divided Azerbaijani and Talysh people from their brethren in Iran and the wider Iranian cultural world. The Treaty of Gulistan left the conflict open between the two countries, thus being weak from the start".<sup>12</sup>Russia's main priority before the war was to focus on the wars being fought with Napoleon, which explains the significantly small amount of troops he dedicated for the Russo-Persian War.<sup>13</sup> The treaty of Gulistan was mainly a way for both countries to "gain a breath" so that the Russo-Persian War could end and they could focus on other issues.

After the Treaty of Gulistan was signed, Persia started to rapidly build up its army once more, as Fath Ali Shah was fully devoted to regaining the territories lost in the war. Fath Ali Shah ordered his military commander, Abbas Mirza to start training troops in 1823 CE, three years in advance of the second Russo-Persian War, which was three times as much military preparation than he spent for the first Russo-Persian War. The clergy in Persia also publicly announced that the jihad against Russia was not over. In

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<sup>11</sup> .op.cit, MartinSicker,pp. 114-122

<sup>12</sup> . Ali AsgharShamim,"*Iran in the Qajar Dynasty*",(Tehran :Modaber publications, 2000), p.174

<sup>13</sup>.Publication Unit of documents,*Guidance and Characteristics of bilateral treaties between Iran and other countries*, (Tehran:Publications of Foreign ministry, 1990), p.421

1826 CE Persia attacked once again on the territories lost to Russia .The second Russo-Persian War lasted two years and Persia

Performing poorly in the war, Persia lost, leading to the signing of the Treaty of Turkmenchay. Russia was so pleased with Golestan treaty during the 10 years war, but the king of Iran who lost a great part of Caucasia, could never stand the contents of this treaty. Therefore, he sent Haj Mirza Abolhasan Khan Shirazi to Russia in 1817 CE. Russian Tsar listened to Iran's claims about left parts in Caucasia and in the reply said, our agents did not get the occupied parts by force, but the local governors have accepted Russia government with the excellence of desire and because Georgians are Christian, so their allegiance to Russia as compared with Iran is superior. In tracing, Russian Tsar sent General Yermlouph as the commander to Iran. In late 1817 CE Russian ambassador attended before the king of Iran and presented Tsar's suggestions. Making a permanent consular in the north of Iran for Russia and determining borders between Iran and Russia exactly were among the suggestions. But these negotiations had no result. While discussions were not finished, Russia attacks Iran military garrisons in the northwest by the order of General Alexi Petrovich Yermlouph began in 1826 CE. And in this way they start to fire once more after 13 years.

"During the second war, Iran agents were repeatedly sent to negotiate with the General Commander of Russian forces in Caucasia and Russian Court. But none of them could attend in the capital of Russia. The second war was not long. It finished sooner because Iran equipments were not enough to defend against so many Russian forces. Their weakness for continued civil and external wars aggravated the situation, too. On the other hand, Russia did not obtain a so much position from the wars. Thus, all the above mentioned factors caused to sign a Turkmanchy treaty".<sup>14</sup>

A meeting was held in Turkmanchy village which was the resting place for Russian soldiers' .Abbas Mirza, Mirza Abolghasem

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<sup>14</sup>.Jami Ghuzanlou,"*The 10-year war between Iran and Russia*", (Tehran: Tehran Publications,1983), p.165

Ghaem Magham, Asef Aldolleh, and Haji Mirza Abolhasan Khan Shirazi behalf Fath Ali Shah and Evan Paskovich as the commander of Russian forces for Russian Tsar wrote a treaty with 16 chapters and one annexed commercial treaty in 9 chapters. It was signed by Iran and Russia agents on February 10, 1828 CE. Russia showed his intentions evidently in this treaty and advantages accruing to this government in which they could never obtain in any European wars.

According to this treaty, Armenia and Azerbaijan were transferred to Russia.

- Araxesriver channel was determined as the border of two countries.
- Russian citizens in Iran were exempted from subjecting to Iran criminal law.
- Navigation in Caspian Sea was restricted to Russia.
- Iran cannons, guns, munitions and castles in Caucasia were transferred to Russia.
- Complete independence of Russia to establish a business agency and a consulate in Iran was recognized.
- Russia supported Abbas Mirza's successor and agreed to recognize his monarchy after accession.<sup>15</sup> Russia agents inserted some contents into this treaty to make Russia protectorate and hold special ceremonies for the entrance of their ambassadors to Iran. According to the supplement contents, Iranian governors and agents should make Russian political agents welcome everywhere in the beginning of their entrance to Iran borders and Iranian ministers should go to meet them while getting the capital and then they came to the king. Turkmanchy treaty was signed between Iran and Russia in 9 chapters in French. Now one Russian volume is available. After the imposing the treaty with Iran and so many advantages accruing to Russia, they chose apparently a friendly approach to Iran and expanded their political and military power little by little throughout Caucasia and then started to invade regions between the Aral and

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<sup>15</sup>.op.cit,*Guidance and Characteristics of bilateral treaties between Iran and other countries*,p .465

Caspian Sea and a great area of Axus , namely Kharazm and Northern Khorasan.

### **Conclusion**

The wars between Iran and Russia as well as Golestan and Turkmanchy treaties are gloomy pages of Iran's history in the Qajar dynasty. Losing the rich and populous territories such as southern Caucasia, Georgia, and Armenia that is irreparable economically and militarily took Iran a great knock. By signing Turkmanchy Russia had political influence in Iran. The Qajar kings did not have a political understanding even as a usual governor, and could not take up a suitable position against other countries' rulers by clear analyses of international events and colonial competitions. From the beginning of the Qajar, Iran was as an instrument in the political complications without a correct understanding of itself in this world. Iran's political and military retardation as well as the lack of social sensation made the work more difficult. The changes resulted from the later of Nazarene as the fourth king of Qajar, were not deep and did not have enough effect to compensate. The Qajar is counted among dissipated years in the history of Iran whereas this period needed civilization, industry, and great changes in governing. What Qajar kings put first was coronation guarding, pleasure and enjoying from the poor labor. They fell Iran into decadence by their wrong policies in terms that Europe was developing day by day and prepared the way for visible and invisible long-lasting foreigners' influence of Iran. These kings not only did not have any understanding of colonial policies nature, but sometimes they accompanied them and took a main step to provide their interests. The best examples are Golestan and Turkmanchy treaties that are so dishonouring for Iranians.

According to these treaties, losing part of Iran during the unwanted wars was as the most important irreparable event in the history of Iran. And now this period of history is gazed with eager eyes.