Khomeini's millenarian vision and the Iranian Revolution (Ayatollah Khomeini).

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KHOMÉINÍ’S MILLENNARIAN VISION AND THE IRANIAN REVOLUTION

by

Gurbeen Bhasin

A Thesis
Submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research
through the Department of Political Science in
Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the
Degree of Master of Arts at the
University of Windsor

Windsor, Ontario, Canada

1994

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THIS STUDY IS
DEDICATED TO ALL THE IRANIANS
WHO BROUGHT ABOUT A REVOLUTION
IN HOPE TO ATTAIN
POLITICAL, SOCIAL, RELIGIOUS, AND CULTURAL SALVATION.
ABSTRACT

KHOMEINI’S MILLENARIAN VISION
AND
THE IRANIAN REVOLUTION

Gurbeen Bhasin

The Iranian Revolution is an historical quagmire and anomaly which has left behind it a legacy of perplexing questions. There are primarily two reasons for the rise of these questions: the rapid pace at which the Revolution occurred and its religious elements. Although there were signs of social and political discontent in Iran during the early and mid-1970s, the rapid pace at which the infamous Pahlavi dynasty was overthrown and replaced by an Islamic republic is astounding. The Iranian Revolution is puzzling as those who opposed Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi’s reign and brought about its collapse, were equipped only with religious slogans and moreover with their desire for change.

The findings of this thesis suggest that the Pahlavi dynasty was perceived by many Iranians as oppressive. This resulted in mass discontent that was conducive to the rise of an Iranian Islamic movement. Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini’s millenarian ideas of Islamic salvation via the establishment of an Islamic republic, which may have otherwise fallen upon deaf ears, were in this situation considered a viable and appealing alternative to the
Iranian way of life under the reign of the Pahlavi dynasty. Khomeini promised a return to the "golden age" of the Prophet Mohammed's reign which exemplified the ideal Islamic society.

The conclusions of this thesis have been developed by an in-depth examination of:

i) millenarian theory,

ii) the modernization and westernization policies introduced and undertaken by the Pahlavi dynasty which were perceived by many Iranians as alienating and oppressive, and

iii) the rise of Khomeini and the popularization of his millenarian ideas.

These three factors were conducive to the rise and the augmentation of the Iranian Islamic movement which resulted in the Iranian Revolution under the guidance of Khomeini's charismatic leadership.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Any errors of fact or interpretation in this thesis are exclusively my own.
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INTRODUCTION

The Iranian Revolution is often considered an historical anomaly. Although there were signs of social and political discontent in Iran during the early and mid-1970s, the rapid pace at which the Pahlavi dynasty was overthrown and replaced by an Islamic republic is astounding.

This thesis will explain this rapid transformation by arguing that the Pahlavi dynasty, especially Mohammed Reza Shah Pahlavi's regime, was conducive to the development of an Islamic movement. This movement was initiated by Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini and resulted in the Iranian Revolution. Millenarian theory will be utilized for this purpose. Khomeini's millenarian speeches, especially his prediction of impending salvation, indicated that he envisioned a perfect social system based on Islamic principles. This paper will demonstrate how the perceived deprivation and alienation that many experienced during the Shah's regime led discontented Iranians to seek a better life. They desired a life that would allow them to return to their heritage, culture, and religion.

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1 In this thesis, Mohammed Reza Shah Pahlavi will be referred to simply as the Shah and his father Reza Shah will be referred to as Reza Shah.

2 This study has relied on translations of Khomeini's speeches. As a result, only the limited number of Khomeini's speeches translated in English have been utilized.
Although the Shah's regime instituted and promoted a program of modernization, westernization, and raised living standards, many Iranians struggled emotionally, socially, and politically with the Pahlavi dynasty. This thesis will explore what prompted Iranians to revolt, not simply against the Shah, but against what he symbolized. Furthermore, the alternative that Khomeini presented, and its vast appeal to Iranians will be studied. This thesis will explain why Iranians chose the Islamic way of life that Khomeini presented over the modern and western way of life advocated by the Shah.

This study will be limited in its scope to avoid repetition of areas of the Iranian Revolution that have been studied by other scholars.³ It will focus primarily on millenarian theory, and will study Iranian history under the Pahlavi dynasty in light of this theory. The perception of deprivation and/or alienation, important causes of millenarian movements, are central to the argument presented in this thesis. This thesis contends that the perceived deprivation and alienation of Iranians inspired by millenarian rhetoric, led to the formation of an Islamic movement, which evolved into the Iranian Revolution.

Chapter I will review the literature on millenarian theory. It will outline the origins of millenarian movements, study the role of the charismatic leader in millenarian movements, examine

³ See, for example, Mohsen Milani's *The Making of Iran's Revolution: From Monarchy to Islamic Republic* (1988) and Jerrold Green's *Revolution in Iran: The Politics of Countermobilization* (1982), who both consider economic, social, and political reasons for the Iranian Revolution.
millenarian salvation, consider the reactionary and revolutionary nature of such groups, and finally, consider the correlation between religion and politics in millenarian movements.

Chapter II will study Iranian history under the Pahlavi dynasty. It explores the modernization and westernization that occurred during the reigns of Reza Shah and his son. In addition to advancing the modernization policies adopted by his father, the Shah embraced and promoted western ideals that led to perceived deprivation and alienation amongst Iranians. This chapter primarily assesses how Iranians perceived the modernization and westernization policies instituted by the Pahlavi dynasty. Perceived deprivation and alienation, which are key elements of millenarian theory, help to explain the emergence an Islamic movement in Iran.

Chapter III will study Khomeini, his leadership, and his vision of salvation. Khomeini’s vision offered the restoration of Islam and the traditional Iranian way of life. Iranians therefore aspired to make this vision a reality. The reactionary and revolutionary nature of Iranian Revolution will be examined. The relation between religion and politics will also be considered. Finally, some pivotal events in the Iranian Revolution will be discussed.
CHAPTER I:
MILLENNARIANISM

This chapter will examine millenarian theory. Several definitions of millenarianism will be explored. The origins of millenarian movements will be studied, along with the integral functions that their charismatic leaders play in their development. The elements of millenarian salvation will be analyzed, as will the reactionary and/or revolutionary nature of such movements. The religious and/or political characteristics of millenarian groups will also be studied. These factors are pertinent to the roots of the Iranian Revolution and Khomeini’s pivotal role in inspiring Iranians to revolt against the Shah’s regime.

Millenarian theory provides an ideal framework for the study of the social origins of the Iranian Revolution. Millenarians focus on the attainment of salvation. Millenarian leaders present a vision of salvation that motivates their followers to make this vision a reality. In Iran, Khomeini’s millenarian ideas and political ideology inspired Iranians to oust the monarch and establish the Islamic Republic of Iran. The perceived alienation and deprivation that existed in Iran during the reign of the Pahlavi dynasty, compounded with Khomeini’s millenarian beliefs and speeches, and his charismatic leadership, gave rise to the Revolution, which toppled the traditional monarchical system.

Prior to considering the characteristics of millenarianism, it is essential to distinguish millenarian movements from other
popular social movements. Norman Cohn, one of the first scholars to analyze millenarianism, provides three precise distinctions.

First, Cohn suggests that millenarians believe that they know the 'end of history'. They believe their vision of society represents the final stage of history.

It is characteristic of this kind of movement that its aims and premises are boundless. A social struggle is seen not as a struggle for specific, limited objectives, but as an event of unique importance, different in kind from all other struggles known to history, a cataclysm from which the world is to emerge totally transformed and redeemed.¹

Because millenarians believe that they know the end of history, they often aspire to alter society absolutely. This attempted restructuring of society can lead to totalitarianism. Totalitarianism may arise as a result of this type of restructuring because the leader would attempt to shape the emerging 'new society' in his/her visions of what an ideal society ought to be.

Second, Cohn contends that millenarian movements are comprised of members who exist in "an unorganized, atomized population, rural or urban or both" and who lack "the material and emotional support afforded by traditional social groups".² He suggests that millenarian movements attract individuals who are marginalized by society and have no sense of belonging to the society they seek to destroy. They have nothing to lose and everything to gain.

² Ibid., p. 282.
Finally, Cohn posits that the leaders of millenarian movements differ from the leaders of other popular social movements. The prophets of millenarian movements are generally intellectuals:

Unlike the leaders of the great popular risings, who were usually peasants or artisans, prophetae were seldom manual workers... more usually they were intellectuals or half-intellectuals - the former priest turned freelance preacher was the commonest type of all.³

The prophetae⁴ that Cohn refers to have another distinct qualification: "a personal magnetism which [enables them] to claim, with some show of plausibility, a special role in bringing history to its appointed consummation".⁵ In contrast to leaders of other social movements, millenarian leaders play a specific role in bringing history to its "end". They make possible the creation of the anticipated ideal society.

For the above-mentioned reasons, millenarian movements are distinct from other popular social movements. As will be shown during the course of this thesis, the Iranian Revolution possessed these three distinctly millenarian characteristics.

The term millenarianism is derived from the Latin words mille and annus, which together mean a period of a thousand years. Millenarian beliefs originated from Jewish apocalyptic literature and the Revelation of St. John. In Christian apocalypticism, Christ is expected to reappear and rule for a millennium. Christ


⁴ Prophetae is the plural of prophetae. Cohn used these terms to refer to pseudo-prophets or the leaders of millenarian movements.

⁵ Cohn, 1957, p. 285.
is anticipated to return in the guise of a warrior. In this guise he will vanquish the devil, and hold him prisoner. Christ will then build the Kingdom of God and reign over his disciples for a thousand years:

Those saints who remained steadfast and gave their lives for their faith shall be raised from the dead and serve as his royal priesthood. At the end of this period Satan will be finally let loose again for a short while and will be finally destroyed. The victory will be followed by the general resurrection of the dead, the last judgement and final redemption.6

This is a Christian version of the millennium, but many non-Christian, non-western, and non-religious millenarian movements exist. Peter Worsley, for example, discusses non-Christian and non-western millenarian movements in The Trumpet Shall Sound: A Study of Cargo Cults in Melanesia.

Millenarian movements are characterized by their aspirations to attain a particular type of salvation. The visions of salvation and the method by which it can be achieved vary, but, as Cohn has noted, all such movements share some common characteristics.

1) DEFINITIONS

Yonina Talmon has provided a widely employed, succinct, and cohesive definition of millenarianism. Norman Cohn, Peter Worsley, Michael Barkun, Anthony Wallace, and Michael Adas have also studied millenarianism in depth, and their understandings of the subject

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will be provided along with those of Talmon. Talmon's explanation of millenarianism, especially her criteria of salvation, will be utilized as a basic theoretical framework in this thesis. A number of elements that Talmon notes, but does not emphasize, will also be stressed. For example: the role of the charismatic leader, the reactionary and/or revolutionary nature of millenarian movements, and the political and/or religious character of such movements.\footnote{Although Talmon alludes to these additions, she does not address them in detail. These elements are, however, essential to the understanding of the Iranian Islamic movement that resulted in the Iranian Revolution.} The social origins of millenarian movements, and the role and impact of millenarian leaders will also be emphasized as they are pertinent to the rise of the Iranian Revolution.

A) \textit{Talmon's Definition of Millenarianism}

According to Talmon, millenarianism is a term used "to characterize religious movements that expect imminent, total, ultimate, this-worldly, collective salvation".\footnote{Talmon, 1968, p. 349.} She elaborates her definition by adding:

\begin{quote}
The most important feature of millenarianism seems to be its composite, "intermediate" nature. It combines components which are seemingly mutually exclusive: it is historical as well as mythical, religious as well as political, and most significant, it is future-oriented as well as past-oriented. It is precisely this combination of a radical revolutionary position with traditionalism that accounts for the widespread appeal of millenarianism and turns it into such a potent agent of change.\footnote{\textit{Ibid.}, p. 360.}
\end{quote}
The intermediate nature of millenarianism that Talmon refers to is instrumental in understanding the extensive appeal of such movements. The appeal of millenarian movements lies in their versatility. Millenarian beliefs are a junction between the past and the present; between the mythical and the historical; between religion and politics; between finite human life and eternal salvation; and between traditional ideas and new ideas. Millenarian movements provide answers to questions that individuals may have about the inter-connection and inter-relationship of various elements of life. Talmon suggests that the intermediate nature of millenarianism is palatable because it promises salvation and it encompasses every aspect of life.¹⁰

Millenarian salvation, according to Talmon, is total, imminent, ultimate, this-worldly, and collective.¹¹ Total salvation is expected to demolish existing society completely and in its place create a perfect society for millenarians. Imminent salvation refers to the impending nature of salvation. Ultimate salvation alludes to the achievement of a permanent salvation. This-worldly salvation implies that salvation for the "Chosen People"¹² will occur in the here and now, during the life-time of the millenarians. Finally, collective salvation refers to the

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid., p. 349.

¹² The term "The Chosen People" refers to the tendency of millenarians to believe that they are the selected group that will attain salvation. It also alludes to Jewish theology.
millenarian belief that all the members of their group have been chosen to achieve salvation together.

a) TOTAL

Millenarian salvation is envisioned as total; it implies a complete change to the existing society. It is anticipated that it will bring a new found perfection to life, and create the ideal society. Every facet of life will be transformed. For example, some feminist theologians who are

...celebrants of the Goddess base their vision of a feminist society on the natural harmony they believe exists between women and the earth. They herald a new day when the natural human allegiance to the generative, anti-hierarchical love of the Goddess will awake from its long slumber and overthrow the patriarchal social structures that are represented by paternal images of God.\textsuperscript{13}

The salvation that is envisioned by these feminist theologians will see the complete destruction of patriarchal society and its replacement by matriarchy. This transformation will affect every aspect of life.

b) IMMINENT

The imminent nature of millenarian salvation suggests simply that it is approaching soon. In essence, salvation is expected to be attained in the lifetime of the believers. The Rastafari cult of Jamaica, for instance, lives near the coast "so that they will be on hand when the ship or plane which is to take them to Ethiopia

arrives". In anticipation of its impending arrival, numerous followers of millenarian movements have disposed of their material possessions and endured a life of poverty. The Rastafari live in the "dungle" - a dirty, dangerous, and disease-infested ghetto. Sheila Kitzinger argues that

...the Rastafari, both as a religious cult and as a protest organization, have arrived at the extreme point of socio-economic rejection by the dominant society - implicit not only in the conditions of living, in extreme squalor and poverty, but also in the geographical location of their camps on wasteland, frequently at the edge of the sea. In part, this has been an active rejection on the part of their own assertion that they will have none of Jamaican society.  

The Rastafari cult expects to be emancipated from Jamaican society and from its destitute state, with its return to Africa, which is viewed as "the land of milk and honey".

An example of a people destroying its sustenance in the anticipation of prophecy fulfillment is presented in Worsley's discussion of the Eskimo and nineteenth century Bantu millenarian movements. In their expectation of the millennium, the Bantu destroyed their cattle and crops.

Southern Bantu died in their thousands in the nineteenth century through killing off their cattle and destroying their crops in response to a prophet's appeal; in this century, Eskimos in Greenland became so convinced of the imminence of the millennium that they stopped hunting and ate into their stores of food.  


In fact, numerous millenarians have died while in 'trances' of fervor expecting the impending millennium.

...in order to hasten their entry into the Promised Land, people have actually killed one another or committed suicide. In Crete, in the fifth century A.D., a band of Jews drowned themselves in their millenarian enthusiasm; in Baffin Land, in this century, Eskimos sacrificed two men to hasten the day; and a group of four hundred Guiana Indians massacred one another in order to be reborn in white skin.17

These examples depict the unquestioning belief of the followers in the preaching of their leader and the claims of what the forthcoming prophecy will deliver. However, the belief of the followers can be shaken with the failure of the awaited prophecies.

With the expectation of imminent salvation comes the possibility of prophecy failure, which threatens the legitimacy of the prophet. Martha Lee and Thomas Flanagan outline typical responses to prophecy failure: postponement of the date; reinterpretation of the event (the prophecy has actually been fulfilled or at least partially fulfilled; the faithful have somehow misunderstood God's providential plan; further fulfillment will occur in the future), membership purges; proselytism; de-eschatologizing; resurgence of millenarian expectations; and falling away.18 It should be noted that prophecies of imminent salvation may have numerous consequences if they are left

17 Ibid.

unfulfilled. Prophecy failure may even bring the demise of a millenarian movement.

In light of this, it can be speculated that millenarian movements that are long-lived are those that are vague about how salvation will be attained and those that thrust salvation into the future. Barkun affirms that

...all millenarian movements by definition look to the total transformation of society at some future time. So long as the movement makes only general kinds of predictions... the world becomes "filled with omens and portents, events ambiguous enough to support prophecies that are ambiguous in themselves." The ambiguous nature of these prophecies makes it difficult for them to fail, thereby keeping their followers interested and awaiting salvation for longer periods than those movements with definite prophecies.

c) ULTIMATE

Ultimate salvation is viewed as the establishment of a perfect, irrevocable, and permanent society. Ultimate salvation is realized in this world. Some groups, however, tend to leave the details of this salvation vague, while they affirm that to achieve salvation, millenarians will suffer. "The prophets proclaimed that their followers' tribulations and struggles would usher in an age

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19 Michael Barkun, *Disaster and the Millennium*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1974), p. 120.
of bliss in which the faithful would preside over societies without injustice, illness, or conflict."\(^{20}\)

Those who envision ultimate salvation as this-worldly often believe that the prophet will control the entire world because salvation will affect the world as a whole. In studying the totalitarian Bolshevik and Nazi movement (both of which have millenarian characteristics), Hannah Arendt suggests that the

...method of infallible prediction, more than any other totalitarian propaganda device, betrays its ultimate goal of world conquest, since only in a world completely under his control could the totalitarian ruler possibly realize all his lies and make true all his prophecies. The language of prophetic scientificity corresponded to the needs of masses who had lost their home in the world and now were prepared to be reintegrated into eternal, all-dominating forces which by themselves would bear man, the swimmer on the waves of adversity, to the shores of safety.\(^{21}\)

These movements expect that when global salvation arrives, the perfect society will come into being, and The Chosen People will be eternally emancipated.

Vittorio Lanternari, in his book entitled The Religions of the Oppressed, summarizes the character of ultimate salvation. He states that "prophetic messages... urge expectation of a complete change in human conditions and an eschaton involving the 'absolute' end of all evil and the achievement of a 'supreme' good".\(^{22}\)


Ultimate salvation is perceived by millenarians as the ideal society emerging from the millennium, which is expected to destroy the existing society that can be perceived by millenarians as oppressive.

Many millenarian movements envision ultimate salvation as the return of a past golden age that is viewed as a "land of milk and honey". This golden age, according to some Christian millenarian movements, is attained upon the arrival of the messiah.

It will be a just world, where the poor are protected, and a harmonious and peaceful world, where the wild and dangerous beasts have become tame and harmless... Deserts and wastelands will become fertile and beautiful... Freed from disease and sorrow of every kind, doing no more iniquity but living according to the law of Yahweh now written in their hearts, the Chosen People will live in joy and gladness.\(^23\)

Worsley noted that the Baining of New Britain had a similar vision of the golden age, with the exception of impending resurrection in the golden age. He suggests that the golden age would be defined by

...the imminent resurrection of the dead. The mountains would collapse into the valleys to form a great plain covered with fertile gardens and fruit trees which would require no cultivation. Dead pigs and dogs would come back to life, but native skeptics and Europeans were to die in the earthquake.\(^24\)

A return to the golden age is desired by millenarians as they are often socially, politically, and economically oppressed by the existing system.

\(^23\) Cohn, 1957, p. 20.

\(^24\) Brenningmeyer, p. 48; Holtker, 1941, p. 940; and Laufer, p. 216, as cited by Worsley, 1957, p. 99.
d) THIS-WORLDLY

This-worldly salvation means that millenarians anticipate that salvation will occur on this earth, in the here and now, as opposed to the after-world, or after death. As noted above, the Rastafarians await salvation in this lifetime, and assume that they will realize it in Africa.²⁵

Kitzinger posits that it is not surprising that a variety of revitalization movements are "based on the triumphant conviction that heaven is not so far away, but is here on earth, attainable by believers in this body and in this life, [as in the Rastafarian case] in the land from which their fathers were forcibly deported as slaves".²⁶ The urgency that the Rastafari cult expresses with regard to its repatriation and return to Africa reflects the fact that they expect to acquire salvation only in the homeland of their ancestors.

Cohn provides another example of a millenarian sect aspiring this-worldly salvation. In his discussion of the "Drummer of Niklashausen", Cohn outlines the image of the awaited salvation that Bohm propheced. Bohm predicted that salvation would be based on 'natural law', in that the denizens of the millennium would live off the land. Furthermore, a classless society would be established, taxes eradicated, and all forms of authority abrogated. Essentially, "tributes of all kinds would be abolished forever... All would live together as brothers, everyone enjoying

²⁵ Kitzinger, 1969, pp. 245-246.
²⁶ Ibid., p. 245-246.
the same liberties and doing the same amount of work as everyone else."\textsuperscript{27} Hence, the world would be a perfect haven for the Chosen People.

e) COLLECTIVE

Millenarians envision collective salvation. They believe that their group, as a whole, has been selected to attain salvation. As has been noted above, millenarians tend to originate from social strata that perceive themselves to be economically, socially, and politically alienated and/or deprived. According to Barkun, "most millenarian movements appear intimately associated with well-defined population groups: culturally homogenous people inhabiting clearly bounded areas". Because millenarians originate from specific social enclaves, their perception of how salvation will be attained is also similar.

Millenarians anticipate collective salvation following numerous disasters.

Those who regard the millennium as imminent expect disasters to pave the way. The present order, evil and entrenched, can hardly be expected to give way of itself or dissolve overnight. [Disaster] is the very cause of the millenarian commitment itself. Men cleave to hopes of imminent worldly salvation only when the hammerblows of disaster destroy the world they have known and render them susceptible to ideas which they would earlier have cast aside.\textsuperscript{28}

Disaster is to be faced and conquered collectively in order for the Chosen People to attain salvation.

\textsuperscript{27} Cohn, 1957, p. 228.

\textsuperscript{28} Barkun, 1974, p. 1.
i. Deprivation and/or Alienation of the Collective

Millenarians perceive themselves as marginalized, deprived, and alienated in social, political, and economic matters. Cohn asserts that millenarian movements can be comprised of

"...the populations of certain technologically backward societies which are not only overpopulated and desperately poor but also involved in a problematic transition to the modern world, and are correspondingly dislocated and disoriented..."  

To these groups, the millennium presents hope and comfort. Looking forward to salvation, their challenging lives become tolerable.

The millennium for the impoverished is when "an age of bliss will begin in which pain, disease, ultimately death, violence and strife, want and hunger will be unknown and in which the earth will yield its fruits ten-thousand fold". Moreover, to those who have faith in this salvation "temporary or eternal, such a kingdom [is] worth fighting for".  

ii. Social Classes/Tribes/Groups

Most millenarian theorists, such as Barkun, Cohn, Worsley, and Kitzinger, contend that millenarian movements result from a bonding and retaliation of those who believe that they are socially marginalized and oppressed. That bonding would most likely take

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30 Ibid., p. 22.
31 Ibid.
32 It ought to be noted, however, that the value of the existing system is that it is instrumental in hastening the apocalypse, thereby hastening the anticipated salvation.
place in a social setting that is atomized and enclosed rather than open and cosmopolitan. Rural settings are therefore comparatively more conducive to millenarian movements than urban settings.

Agrarian life is much more likely to produce small, naturally 'compacted' populations. Hence its society is correspondingly more vulnerable to the disintegrative effects of famine, epidemic, market fluctuation, invasion, and the like. In this we can see a clue to the prevalence of extreme decremental relative deprivation.\(^{33}\) There is a feeling that a way of life is being lost, that accustomed ways of doing things are under attack, and nothing will be as it once was.\(^{34}\)

It seems likely that individuals from rural settings would be more traditional than their urban counterparts, because of their 'compacted' populations. It can be therefore speculated that changes to the traditional way of life, that may be readily accepted in urban settings, may cause frustration and seem threatening to the traditional way of life of those from rural settings. In light of this, millenarian movements that advocate a return to a past golden age or a traditional way of life, are more likely to succeed in rural settings.

Worsley asserts that millenarian beliefs are recurrent and popular because of their ability to entice those who perceive themselves to be oppressed and wretched. They are:

...an integral part of that stream of thought which refused to accept the rule of a superordinate class, or of a foreign power, or both... This anti-authoritarian attitude is expressed not only in the form of direct political resistance, but also through the rejection of

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\(^{33}\) Decremental and relative deprivation will be explored in detail later in this chapter under the sub-heading "Origins of Millenarian Movements".

\(^{34}\) Barkun, 1974, p. 69.
the ideology of the ruling authority. The lower orders reject the dominant values, beliefs, philosophy, religion etc. of those they are struggling against, as well as their material economic and political domination.\textsuperscript{35}

These subjugated groups long for a just society which they believe will be concomitant with the millennium. They therefore place their dreams on the impending salvation. In this way, they hope to be compensated for the disasters with which they have been burdened.

iii. Millenarian Socialization

Barkun posits that the impoverished believe in the millennium because of their disaster-filled environment. If their environment was not calamity-ridden, then millenarian ideas of salvation would not gain prominence.\textsuperscript{36} The destitute, dwelling in a hopeless atmosphere, cling to claims of emancipation from their present milieu.

As has been noted, those awaiting the millennium, however, often assume that salvation will be realized after they have withstood numerous disasters. The nature of this eschatology is disaster-oriented, and because of this millenarians are socialized to expect the millennium after enduring calamities. Millenarians place their hopes on the prediction that the end of the existing society will occur in a violent and conclusive manner, ushering in the anticipated salvation.

\textsuperscript{35} Worsley, 1957, pp. 225-226.

\textsuperscript{36} Barkun, 1974, p. 1.
Groups that perceive themselves as marginalized hope to alter their situation by adopting a millenarian belief system or by being part of such movements. Barkun emphasizes that:

Millenarian ideologies ring changes on existing cultural themes, for example, the myth of a lost golden age. To this extent, socialization provides access to the cultural materials out of which the chiliastic doctrine can be fashioned. Socialization allows the potential convert to understand and react to the traditional elements of the new doctrine and places him in the proper state of knowledgeability.\(^{37}\)

An individual’s traditional understanding of salvation may permit him/her to accept millenarian preaching and believe in it.

B) Other Authors and Their Views of Millenarianism

Worsley’s definition of millenarianism does not differ from Talmon’s. He, however, emphasizes the behavioral aspects of millenarian groups. Worsley suggests that millenarian movements tend to deviate from accepted societal norms and break long-standing taboos in an effort to destroy the existing society and replace it with an anticipated ideal society.\(^{38}\) Millenarians strive to overthrow existing social, religious, economic and/or political belief systems\(^{39}\), and replace them with a new and distinct belief system.


\(^{38}\) Worsley, 1957, p. 250.

\(^{39}\) Not all millenarian movements aim to alter each of these factors, some may simply have religious or political motivations. For example, Jehovah’s Witnesses do not have a political agenda, nor does Earth First! have religious motives.
The new system provides hope to those who have lost faith in the existing establishment, because they believe that they have been deprived by it and/or alienated from it. The envisioned new system furnishes a sense of belonging to those who seek to establish it. It is, therefore, a system chosen, not imposed.

Another commonly accepted notion of millenarianism is provided by Michael Barkun. Barkun contends that millenarian movements "anticipate the complete destruction of [the] existing social, political, and economic order, which is to be superseded by a new and perfect society". This contention sheds light on the millenarian belief that there must be a violent and total destruction of the old order before the creation of a new and perfect society can take place. Complete destruction must occur as any remnants of the old order will tarnish the establishment of the new order. The new order is viewed as salvation that can only be attained following the annihilation of the society that preceded it. Barkun's delineation of millenarianism stresses the revolutionary nature of such movements, and attributes these characteristics to the desire for rapid change.

Norman Cohn understands millenarianism in a similar manner to Talm, Worsley, and Barkun. In his definition of salvation, however, he substitutes the concept of 'miraculous salvation' for Talm's idea of ultimate salvation: "miraculous [salvation], in the sense that it is to be accomplished by, or with the help of,

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40 Barkun, 1974, p. 18.
supernatural agencies". This difference is essential to understand Cohn’s definition of millenarian salvation. The miraculous nature of salvation suggests that the millenarian movement cannot accomplish salvation by itself without the aid of supernatural beings. The miraculous nature of salvation in Cohn’s definition is a reflection of the kind of millenarian movements Cohn analyzed. These were based on the prophecy cited in the Christian New Testament Book of Revelation by St. John. This prophecy understands salvation to be the consequence of miraculous events. The Christian millenarian movements that Cohn analyzed, therefore, had miraculous content in the salvation that they anticipated.

2) THE ORIGINS OF MILLENARIAN MOVEMENTS

The rise of millenarian movements can be attributed to a myriad of factors. This discussion, however, will consider two primary causes of millenarian movements, the perception of alienation and/or deprivation. Perceived political, social, economic, and/or spiritual alienation and/or deprivation are the root causes of millenarian movements.

A) ALIENATION

The term alienation has been defined in numerous ways. Marx defined alienation as the worker’s distance from the product that

\footnote{Cohn, 1957, p. 1.}
he/she creates. He stated that the proletariat is estranged from the means of production and from the product that its labor manufactures. Marx suggested that the capitalists (or the owners of the means of production) met the demands of their growing desires "[b]y reducing the worker’s need to the barest and most miserable level of physical subsistence, and by reducing his activity to the most abstract mechanical movement".\textsuperscript{42} This mechanical movement deprived the workers of any creative input in their labor or pride in its end product. The labor that workers must do in order to sustain themselves is specified to a point where the laborer loses sight of the creation in its entirety, hence, the laborer is a minute mechanical part of the production of goods. Marx explored the attitude of the owners of the means of production towards the workers, and the manner in which the owners deprive and alienate the proletariat:

...by counting the lowest possible level of (existence) as the standard, indeed as the general standard - general because it is applicable to the mass of men, he [the capitalist] changes the worker into an insensible being lacking all needs, just as he changes his activity into a pure abstraction from all activity. To him, therefore, every luxury of the worker seems to be reprehensible, and everything that goes beyond the most abstract need - be it the realm of passive enjoyment, or a manifestation of activity - seems to him a luxury.\textsuperscript{43}

Marx concluded that workers in a capitalist system are not considered of any more value than their ability to perform simple


\textsuperscript{43} Ibid.
mechanical skills. The treatment that they receive from the capitalists therefore alienates them from the basic pleasures that life has to offer.

Although the Marxian definition of alienation is widely employed, in the context of this thesis the term alienation is not simply used in a Marxian sense. Here, alienation implies economic, political, religious, and cultural estrangement from the prevailing political and economic regime. Specific groups perceive themselves as alienated from the means of production, from the political apparatus, and furthermore from the increasing secularization of the governmental systems which is insensitive to particular religious and/or cultural needs. It seems likely that these groups would find it difficult to identify with the governing forces that are meant to represent them, and vice versa. The perceived political, economic, and/or religious alienation thus binds individuals to form movements that are "deliberate, organized, conscious effort by members of a society to construct a more satisfying culture".  

Millenarian movements can also be a consequence of cultural alienation. Cultural disintegration is an outcome of rapid social change and continued exposure to extremely disparate belief systems. The encroaching culture infiltrates the traditional group and undermines traditional norms and values. This results perhaps in the indigenous people feeling alienated from their own culture.

Inasmuch as these traditional values are internalized and are an integral part of personal identity, the disintegration if the traditional system results in serious self-alienation. When the alien culture is that of a more prestigious upper class or that of a colonial ruling class, it is often - willingly or unwillingly, consciously or unconsciously - acknowledged as superior. This engenders the nagging feeling of inferiority and even self-hatred.  

The penetration of alien values and beliefs diminishes the viability of the penetrated traditional culture. It becomes vulnerable to new ideals that de-value its beliefs. This infestation of new values may alienate the rapidly changing society from its indigenous culture by undermining its traditional norms and values. It seems likely that with the introduction of modernization and westernization, traditional cultures and their members may experience alienation and/or deprivation of a sort.

Modernization can be defined as the infiltration of technological and economic developments into every aspect of society, resulting in the transformation of the traditional way of life. "Modernization is generally taken to mean the social transformation of a nation; development necessarily implies some degree of modernization, though modernization may not be accompanied by expansion in total output (economic development)." Economic and social transformations occur in the "relatively nonmodernizing societies" through contact with the "relatively modernized societies". Marion Levy notes that:


[t]he patterns of the relatively modernized societies once developed, have shown a universal tendency to penetrate any social context whose participants come in contact with them. ...The patterns always penetrate; once the penetration has begun, the previous indigenous patterns always change; and they always change in the direction of some of the patterns of the relatively modernized societies. 47

It can be concluded then, that the greater the level of modernization of societies, the greater the similarity between such societies. Modernization alters a traditional society via the introduction of technology to enhance economic development, whereas westernization alters a society via the imposition of inherently Western values.

Westernization, as defined by Von Laue, is the imposition of the values of the Western (that is U.S. and British) minority on those they have conquered or colonized. He states that "[i]n creating an interdependent world through conquest, colonization, and expanding opportunities for all, the Western minority imposed its own accomplishments as universal standards to which all others, had to submit". 48 The Western minority encourages and promotes the use of its values that underlie such phenomena as democracy, capitalism, and privatization.

This thesis will attempt to show how through modernization and westernization the Pahlavi dynasty caused many Iranians to feel


alienated and/or deprived. Reza Shah attempted to modernize Iran by altering the educational and legal systems, unveiling Iranian women, and by constructing roads and railways. The Shah attempted to westernize Iran by introducing his version of democracy, advancing a two-party governmental system, and allowing women to vote.

B) DEPRIVATION

The perception of social, religious, cultural, and/or economic deprivation, and a strong desire to change that situation, can instigate the rise of millenarian movements. In Why Men Rebel, Ted Robert Gurr contends that deprivation yields rebellion. Deprivation, or social dissatisfaction, may be an outcome of rising political, social, and/or cultural expectations and the inability of capabilities to meet these expectations. Gurr posits that "men are quick to aspire beyond their social means and quick to anger when those means prove inadequate, but slow to accept their limitations".49 Barkun applies a similar definition of deprivation to the rise of millenarian movements.

Barkun explores the role of deprivation in causing millenarian movements. Barkun contends that there are two types of deprivation, relative and decremental. Relative deprivation "involves an essentially subjective individual judgement, and only

where many individual judgements of life conditions coincide is it possible to anticipate social action".  

...relative deprivation provides a simple and logical answer to the origin of many forms of individual and social discontent, and it is small wonder that an idea at once so broad and so flexible should eventually have been applied to millenarianism. As the gap widens between what an individual perceives to be his legitimate expectations on the one hand and the means for satisfying them on the other, he becomes progressively discontented. The continuation of this discontent, where it simultaneously affects many individuals, produces collective social and political violence.

Taken to the extreme, relative deprivation and discontent may result in social and political upheaval. This result depends on the collective nature and the cohesive organization of those who believe they are deprived and discontented. If those who perceive themselves as deprived cannot mobilize, a social movement, let alone political and social upheaval, is highly unlikely.

Those who experience relative deprivation may have the desire to better their situation. Their circumstance can no doubt be remedied by the impending salvation that millenarian movements promise.

Barkun expands the definition of individual relative deprivation to suit a group setting. He postulates that:

...[m]illenarian movements seem to result most often from situations of decremental deprivation. Decremental deprivation occurs when the expectations of a group concerning its overall well-being remain basically

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50 Barkun, 1974, p. 35.

51 Ibid., 1974, p. 34.
unchanged, but its perceived capabilities for realizing these expectations decline.\textsuperscript{52} Decremental deprivation may occur when groups with traditional values and belief systems are introduced to rapid industrialization, exposed to westernization or are colonized. Some learn to adjust, adapt, and assimilate. Some, however, reject the new belief system and as a result feel marginalized socially, politically, and/or economically. "The small businessman, the family farmer, and the elite landowner in a developing country have all found themselves in this predicament. Extremist movements have been prominently associated with a fall into marginal statuses."\textsuperscript{53} Anthony Wallace suggests that millenarian or revitalization movements\textsuperscript{54} result from numerous individuals interested in altering their current "mazeway" as these no longer reduce their stress. Wallace's term "mazeway" is used to define the necessity of "every person in society to maintain a mental image of the society and its culture, as well as of his own body and its behavioral regularities, in order to act in ways which reduce stress at all levels of the system".\textsuperscript{55} Wallace outlines the method in which society is transformed by a millenarian, or as he refers to it, a revitalization movement.

\textsuperscript{52} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 35.
\textsuperscript{53} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 36.
\textsuperscript{54} Wallace and Porterfield choose the term "revitalization movements" rather than "millenarian movement-", but the difference between the two terms is negligible.
\textsuperscript{55} Wallace, 1956, p. 266.
Wallace contends that there are five stages in the structure of the revitalization process in cases where the full course is actualized. This structure consists of five somewhat overlapping stages:

1. Steady State; 2. Period of Individual Stress; 3. Period of Cultural Distortion; 4. Period of Revitalization [in which occur the functions of mazeway reformulation, communication, organization, adaptation, cultural reformulation, and routinization], and finally, 5. New Steady State.\(^{56}\)

Wallace’s framework of the revitalization process has been widely employed, as it delineates every step of how a stable society is transformed by individuals who are discontented with their situation and desire to alter it.\(^{57}\)

3) THE CHARISMATIC LEADER OR PROPHET

The role of the charismatic leader or prophet in millenarian movements is pivotal to this thesis. The term "charismatic leader" implies that a leader’s characteristics and message appeal to various social groups and that he/she is capable of mobilizing these groups to form a specific movement. Weber proposes that

\(^{56}\) Wallace, 1968, p. 268.

\(^{57}\) Amanda Porterfield, for example, employs Wallace’s framework of the development of revitalization or millenarian movements in her study of the feminist theology movement. Porterfield suggests that if equality between the sexes existed, that women would not feel the need for such a movement. Currently, women are discontented with their social and political status because they feel unequal. "Only when social structures are stressed by disequilibrating forces, and only when individual members of the society are forced to choose between shoring up existing mazeways or adapting new ones, will a revitalization movement arise." (Porterfield, 1967, p. 238.)
charismatic leaders emerge naturally when an established bureaucracy is confronted with historical crises and extraordinary needs that cannot be overcome with the conventional weapons of legality. This charismatic leader does not necessarily hold political office or have professional qualifications in the political field, however, he/she possesses charisma. Weber defines charisma as:

...a certain quality of an individual personality by virtue of which he is considered extraordinary and treated as endowed with supernatural, super human, or at least specifically exceptional powers or qualities. These are such as are not accessible to the ordinary person, but are regarded as of divine origin or as exemplary, and on the basis of them, the individual concerned is treated as 'leader'.

Followers often view the charismatic leader as a possessor of extraordinary spiritual and heroic qualities. Charisma requires for its existence social confirmation, that is, social acceptance and recognition of the leader. Charismatic leaders are able to articulately voice the fears, grievances, desires of their followers, and guide and help in their followers' struggle and quest for emancipation from the perceived oppressive bureaucracy or existing system. A charismatic leader may at times be revered as a prophet.

The term "prophet" is more specific and has numerous connotations. "A prophet is a person who believes and is able to convince others that he or she has special contacts with

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59 Ibid.
supernatural forces by means of dreams, visions, and special revelations."\textsuperscript{60} Prophets are sometimes considered divine, and that is how their message is legitimiz. A prophet "promises his followers salvation, expressed through millenarian visions, which vary according to the cultural idiom in which he works".\textsuperscript{81} Millenarian prophets also, according to Cohn, play a specific role in bringing history to its "end". They also are generally intellectuals, and possess a personal magnetism.\textsuperscript{62} Prophets provide hope to those who have lost it in their existing societies.

In the wake of what Wallace terms the "individual stress period", (the collapse of one's traditional mazeway) and the subsequent "cultural distortion period", some disgruntled groups may turn to individuals who provide a doctrine of hope and salvation to free them from the existing system, which they may perceive as evil and oppressive. Barkun suggests that a "doctrine is not simply 'in the air'; it must be fashioned by an individual, and where that individual is not present, that doctrine will not appear spontaneously".\textsuperscript{63} Furthermore, Barkun asserts that

\begin{quote}
...no matter how gifted an individual, his claim to charismatic leadership in the end rests upon the willingness of others to accept it: charisma is not something one possesses, but rather shorthand for extraordinary qualities which followers impute. Only if
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{60} Adas, 1979, p. xx.

\textsuperscript{61} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{62} Cohn, 1957, pp. 284-285.

\textsuperscript{63} Barkun, 1974, p. 86.
others see in an individual the fulfillment of pressing desires will they choose to honor his qualities.\footnote{Ibid., p. 88.}

In short, the leader's position and role is determined by his/her followers. The doctrine the leader postulates can only mobilize groups if they are sensitive to it, believe in it, and adhere to it.

Both Weber and Barkun note that the charismatic leader can only be legitimate and proficient if his/her followers recognize the leader and offer their support for the leader's message. This relationship between the leader and his/her followers is essential in understanding the mobilization of perceived atomized or marginalized groups to form a millenarian movement. Such groups can only be mobilized if they believe that they are The Chosen People or the collective that will achieve the salvation that the leader conveys in his/her message.

According to Richard Dekmejian and Margaret Wyszomirski, there are three steps within the charismatic life-cycle. The first step is entitled "performance-message", in which "the self-revelation of the potential charismatic [leader] is effected through heroic performance and its concomitant message".\footnote{Richard Dekmejian and Margaret Wyszomirski, "Charismatic Leadership in Islam: The Mahdi of Sudan" in Comparative Studies in Society and History (Vol. 14, 1972), p. 197.} The second step is the proclamation of the leader's "personal qualities" to his followers, or to the disgruntled in general.

...[I]n his own milieu, the potential charismatic [leader] is an outstanding personality, endowed with
great dynamism, sensitivity, and resourcefulness. These personal gifts become instrumental in imparting to his followers the values and maxims of the message.\textsuperscript{66}

The third and final step in this cycle is the leader's "opportunity to propagate and perform" his message effectively to his followers, in order to destroy the existing system.\textsuperscript{67} In this final stride to bring to life the vision of salvation that the millenarian prophet professes and the ideal society for the followers, emotions are charged and social upheaval becomes imminent.

4) THE REACTIONARY/REVOLUTIONARY CHARACTER OF MILLENARIAN MOVEMENTS

Millenarian movements can be both reactionary and revolutionary. They can be reactionary in terms of their perception of being socially, politically, and/or economically alienated and/or deprived. They can also be reactionary towards the infiltration of foreign ideas and/or modernity that results in the rapid social change of their traditional way of life. The reactionary character of millenarian movements can evolve into a revolutionary uprising in an effort to topple the existing system to create the ideal society for millenarians.

\textsuperscript{66} Ibid., p. 198.

\textsuperscript{67} Ibid.
i. Reactionary Millenarian Movements

Millenarian movements may be referred to as "fundamentalist" movements. Bruce Lawrence, an authority on fundamentalism and its causes, proposes that the roots of fundamentalism lie in millenarianism. He contends that fundamentalists can be understood as those who "protest as moderns against the heresies of the modern age." He distinguishes between the terms modernism, modernization, and modernity. Modernism is defined as "a species of pure spirit, evolving in accord with its own autonomous artistic and intellectual imperatives." Modernization can be understood as "that complex of material structures, derived from technological innovations and abetted by capitalist initiatives, that launches a process sustained by its own momentum". Lawrence defines modernity as

...the emergence of a new index of human life shaped, above all, by increasing bureaucratization and rationalization as well as technical capabilities and global exchange unthinkable in the premodern era.

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69 According to Lawrence, "[f]undamentalism is the affirmation of religious authority as holistic and absolute, admitting of neither criticism nor reduction; it is expressed through the collective demand that specific creedal and ethical dictates derived from scripture be publicly recognized and legally enforced". (Lawrence, 1989, p. 27).

70 Ibid., p. ix.


72 Lawrence, 1989, p. 27.
Although Lawrence gives importance to modernization and modernism, he posits that modernity "is the cipher symbolizing the technological surplus of our era." He asserts that modernity is essential to interpret fundamentalism, as "[w]ithout modernity there are no fundamentalists, just as there are no modernists." Lawrence argues that the battle between modernists and fundamentalists can be traced back to the battle between universalism and monadism. "Universalism claims all as ultimately one. Monadism sees all as provisionally many." This difference is essential to understanding the cleavage between fundamentalism and modernism. Lawrence declares:

Both modernists and fundamentalists claim the mantle of universalism. They differ in their interpretations of what is meant by universalism. The modernists, invoking scientific method, posit it as the discovery of universal principles that operate throughout all periods in all human societies. They also agree to argue among themselves about which category is ascendant: is it universals, or is it self-contained isolates, i.e., monads? But in the debate only empirically observable and testable data count. The fundamentalists, by contrast, declare themselves to be advocates of universalist norms. Their norms are not discoverable. They have been revealed once and for all. They are codified in Holy Writ. They require assent not debate. They are understood by faith not by reason.

The modernists' views are generally held and promoted by those in the West, be it the United States, Britain, or France. It is

73 Ibid., p. 2.
74 Ibid.
75 Ibid., p. 40.
76 Ibid., pp. 40-41.
77 Ibid., pp. 43-47.
because modernism is flourishing that antimoderism, or fundamentalism, exists. Fundamentalism, which rises from millenarianism, can be seen as a reaction against modernity.

Reactionary millenarian movements may emerge when groups that perceived themselves as oppressed by belief systems that are imposed on them, react in order to change their perceived social status. Perceived political, economical, spiritual, and/or social oppression and/or deprivation can result in millenarian movements seeking emancipation.

The introduction of western ideas may appeal to some who are interested in altering their native culture by adopting western values. Others, who are content with their native culture and traditional way of life, may resent the implications of imposed western belief systems. When those in power embrace western values, other groups who may be opposed to the penetration of these values, may feel as though they are being politically, socially, religiously, and/or economically marginalized. Lanternari postulates that:

...the messianic movements of modern times constitute one of the most interesting and astonishing results of the cultural clash between populations in very different stages of development. Indeed, not only do these movements reveal the reactions of people affected by this clash; they also serve the interests of the more advanced civilizations by tearing down barriers erected by Western colonialism and ethnocentrism.⁷⁸

Their reactions may be passive or, in situations of organized mass discontent, revolutionary.

⁷⁸ Lanterneri, 1963, p. 301.
Reactions to the infliction of unwanted ideas and beliefs include the breaking of societal taboos.\textsuperscript{79} Groups adopt peculiar practices, some more detrimental than others, showing directly or indirectly their dissatisfaction with the existing system. In his study of the sociology of the "Free Spirit" Cohn argues that all dissident movements of the Middle Ages can be understood "only in the context of the cult of voluntary poverty".\textsuperscript{80} These groups felt that by sacrificing worldly goods, they would ward off temptation put forth by the devil and that it was a privilege "to descend into the poverty-stricken masses".\textsuperscript{81}

Some millenarians violate social norms by passive indifference to them. The Rastafari, for instance, are apathetic to the Jamaican way of life. They are "as complete non-participants in Jamaican society as possible, and refuse to join unions or other associations, or, of course, to vote, since they say they are only temporary sojourners in Jamaica..."\textsuperscript{82} It seems highly unlikely that this indifference will result in a revolutionary movement. An aggressive reactionary millenarian movement, however, can evolve into a revolutionary movement provided it can mobilize followers adequately and sustain their vigor.

\textsuperscript{79} Worsley, 1957, p. 250.

\textsuperscript{80} Cohn, 1957, pp. 156-157.

\textsuperscript{81} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 157.

\textsuperscript{82} Kitzinger, 1969, p. 247.
ii. Revolutionary Millenarian Movements

Movements that may start simply by violating social norms, can develop into full-fledged revolutionary movements. This undoubtedly depends on the movement’s ability to mobilize enough followers who believe that the only way to bring about the millennium is to bring a violent end to the perceived existing "evil and oppressive" system. The image of society after salvation motivates believers to cling to the "prophet and nascent social movement", which offers "...a protective shelter, a refuge from a world of decay, deprivation, and increasing isolation".\textsuperscript{83} Millenarian movements "provide a locus of stability, certainty, and confidence in times of bewildering and disruptive change, and a sense of vision and purpose for a future that otherwise appeared perilous and uncertain".\textsuperscript{84} The vision and hope for the impending and liberating salvation must be sustained in order to yield change. Barkun states that

...commitment to the new order must be maintained, past allegiances severed, the world unambiguously divided into good and evil realms. A number of radical legal consequences flow from these desires: first, the construction of a new competitive rule system; second, rejection of the incremental change associated with conventional rules systems; third, the search for a basis of legitimacy that does not share in the corruption of the old order.\textsuperscript{85}

Since the followers believe in the bliss that salvation will bestow upon them, they are inspired to bring about the millennium as soon

\textsuperscript{83} Adas, 1979, p. 113.

\textsuperscript{84} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{85} Barkun, 1974, p. 117.
as possible. Should the leader of the movement predict a revolutionary demise of the old order, the followers, if so motivated, will revolt.

Cohn provides an example of a revolutionary millenarian movement. In his study of the "The Messianic Reign of John of Leyden", Cohn notes how a particular millenarian movement believed that their leader, Bockelson, "was to be king of the whole world, holding dominion over all kings, princes and great ones of the earth. He was to inherit the sceptre and throne of his forefather David and was to keep them until God should reclaim the kingdom from him." Acting upon this belief, Bockelson was anointed the king of New Jerusalem and reigned over his followers. Bockelson isolated New Jerusalem and proceeded to rule as a tyrant. This violated social norms as neither the creation of New Jerusalem nor Bockelson’s tyranny were in accordance with the established legal system. The authorities of the Upper and Lower Rhine determined that a blockade was necessary to dislodge Bockelson and dismantle the unlawfully created New Jerusalem. Most of these millenarians died of starvation, as a consequence of the blockade.  

86 Cohn, 1957, p. 271.
87 Ibid., pp. 271-280.
5) RELIGION AND POLITICS

Although millenarian movements are generally both religious and political in character, there are movements that are specifically either political or religious. These are, however, rare and few in number. Jehovah's Witnesses, for example, are religious, while the radical environmental movement Earth First! is predominately political in nature. For the most part, "[m]illenarian movements inhabit that border area where the religious and political fuse and interpenetrate such that it no longer serves a useful analytic purpose to hold them separate. To exclude the one or the other diminishes the phenomena." The religious and/or political nature of millenarian movements may offer believers either one or both forms of deliverance upon the arrival of the millennium because the promised salvation is expected to alter the existing system. Therefore, the mass attraction to both religious and political millenarian movements is greater than if the leaders only preached and prophesied about one form of liberation.

6) THE IRANIAN ISLAMIC REVOLUTION

This thesis considers the Iranian Revolution as a primarily political millenarian movement, which utilized distinctly religious symbols. Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini's Islamic movement was principally concerned with the overthrow of the Pahlavi dynasty,

\[83\] Ibid., pp. 44-45.
which would lead to the creation of the ideal Islamic society. Khomeini referred to the Shah as the "the corrupter" and demanded the end of his reign:

Under the canopy of a pharonic [corrupt] rule that dominates and corrupts society rather than reforms it, no faithful and pious person can live abiding by and preserving his faith and piety. Such a person has before him two paths, and no third to them: either be forced to commit sinful acts or rebel against and fight the rule of false gods, try to wipe out or at least reduce the impact of such a rule. We only have the second path open to us. We have no alternative but to work for destroying the corrupt and corrupting systems and to destroy the symbol of treason and the unjust among the rulers of peoples. This is a duty that all Muslims wherever they may be are entrusted – a duty to create a victorious and triumphant Islamic political revolution.89

It can be speculated that in comparison to ousting the Shah, the establishment of an Islamic government, based on the Shar‘iah,90 was of secondary importance, although the symbols used by Khomeini would indicate otherwise.91 The symbols of the Iranian Revolution were religious and included verses from the Qu‘ran and the veiling of Iranian women, whereas the actions were political. In short, it can be argued that religion was the means by which Iranians were motivated and mobilized by Khomeini for political ends.

Millenarian theory is applicable to the rise of the Iranian Revolution in a number of ways. The origins of this revolution are


90 The Shar‘iah is Islamic law, as outlined in the Qu‘ran.

embedded in an environment that may have been perceived as politically and/or culturally oppressive and that may have perpetuated mass feelings of marginalization, deprivation, and/or alienation, especially in the rural regions of the nation. Khomeini was the charismatic leader of this religious and political revolution that eventually toppled the Pahlavi dynasty. Khomeini was both the political savior and a religious prophet for many Iranians who were in all likelihood disenchanted with Pahlavi regime. Furthermore, Khomeini anticipated a salvation that was total, imminent, ultimate, this-worldly, and above all, collective.

It can be argued that the Iranian supporters of Khomeini understood salvation as the era following the successful 1978-79 revolution. For the purpose of this thesis, the aftermath of the Iranian Revolution will be considered as both political and religious salvation that Khomeini’s followers anticipated. Political salvation was attained by the overthrow of the Pahlavi dynasty and the dislodging of the Shah’s pro-western administration. Religious salvation was accomplished with the establishment of Khomeini’s Islamic regime which governed the new Islamic Republic of Iran under the authority of the Shar’iah.
CHAPTER II:

IRAN AND THE PAHLAVI DYNASTY

This chapter will show that the reforms introduced by the Pahlavi dynasty altered the traditional way of Iranian life, and thereby led to the alienation of Iranian people from their government. The purpose of this chapter is not to objectively evaluate these reforms, rather to suggest how they may have been perceived by Iranians as threatening to their traditional way of life. To show the extent of the reforms introduced to Iranian society by the Pahlavi dynasty, this chapter will begin with a brief outline of Reza Shah’s modernization and secularization policies. It will then examine the Shah’s regime and his attempt to westernize Iran. Both monarchs promoted modernization, the former by way of an attempted disassociation from external super powers, and the latter by relying on Western intervention and aid. By exploring the modernization and westernization that occurred during the Pahlavi dynasty, this chapter will show how the Iranian culture was politically, religiously, economically, and socially altered. It seems likely that these changes to the traditional Iranian way of life may have been perceived as oppressive, thereby leading some Iranians to feel alienated from the monarchs in question. These reforms and the manner in which they may have been perceived, allowed for the rise of Khomeini’s popularity.
Reza Shah initiated Iran's journey towards modernization. Modernization, as defined in Chapter I by Adas, is the adaptation of "the agents, ideas, and artifacts of alien, but dominant, cultures". Modernization implies the transformation of an indigenous culture in order to accommodate alien, yet dominant values.

Reza Shah's son and successor, the Shah, continued to modernize Iran. He, however, embraced Western institutions and their concomitant goals. The Shah advocated democracy and the creation of a Western-style laissez-faire economy which may have appeared threatening to some Iranians because it indicated a drastic departure from their traditional social values and structures. Although the reforms that the Shah introduced were supported by some, they were rejected largely by those Iranians who sanctioned Khomeini's visions of establishing an Islamic republic.

It is likely that the Shah's reign may have been considered corrupt and oppressive by many Iranians, especially those Iranians who desired political a liberation that the Shah did not allow for. It will be argued that the perceived religious, political, and/or cultural oppression felt during the Shah reign created a social environment conducive to the development of an Islamic movement. This movement was fostered by Khomeini's millenarian visions and eventually resulted in the Iranian Revolution. Modernization and

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westernization were perceived as threatening to the traditional Iranian way of life, and those Iranians who felt threatened most likely supported Khomeini’s millenarian visions.

The relationship between modernization, westernization, and millenarianism is central to this chapter. Modernization and westernization bring about significant changes in a traditional society. Attempts to transform society from its traditional ways to those of a modern or western society, challenge the native culture in many ways. The introduction of a new educational system or new infrastructure, or for example, new roads and ports, may have been perceived as a threat to the indigenous culture in question. This threat to cultural identity may cause a millenarian reaction, as it did in the case of Iran. A millenarian reaction may result from the desire to establish (or return to) an era which symbolizes (or symbolized) political, social, and/or religious liberation.

1) REZA SHAH PAHLAVI’S REIGN (1926-1941)

Iran was monarchical for over two and half millennia (529 B.C. -1979), prior to the fall of the Shah. The Qajar dynasty (1785-1926) was unsuccessful in consolidating Iran, then a feudal society, under the control of a central government. That society was characterized by its agriculture-based economy and the

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harmonious co-existence of the government and clergy." All of this changed, however, during the reign of the Pahlavi dynasty.

The Pahlavi dynasty held power in Iran from 1926 to 1979. Reza Khan, later known as 'Reza Shah the Great', ruled Iran from 1926 to 1941. He attempted to modernize Iran. As noted above, modernization is the political, social, economic, and/or religious modification of a traditional society as the result of accommodating alien ideas and standards. According to Robertson, modernization is characterized by political reform:

...the political system moves from having only a few, all-embracing, authoritative posts, a tribal chieftain, perhaps, to highly specific and task-specialized roles in a modern bureaucratic and governmental system. At the same time, changes in social conditions, especially communications and education, are seen as steadily increasing the capacity of a system to maintain and apply complex modern politics oriented to satisfy as many different political interests as possible.\(^4\)

Reza Shah consolidated the central government's power by expanding the bureaucracy and extending its influence into numerous areas of Iranian life. He also aspired to secularize Iran by reducing the power and influence of the clergy. He attempted this by modifying the educational and judicial systems, and by enhancing the roles of women by attempting to unveil them and educate them. He also modernized Iran by building new infrastructure, including ports, roads, and railways.


To consolidate his power over Iran, Reza Shah banned the existing news publications and replaced them with government daily newspapers, and prohibited opposition parties. These actions succeeded in unifying Iran because the central government became the central source of political power and it also controlled the national information services.

In his efforts to consolidate his power, Reza Shah also relied on the support of 'three pillars': the army, the developing government bureaucracy, and court patronage. Reza Shah relied most heavily on the army for support. Throughout his reign, he increased the budget for the development of the armed forces.

As the annual defense budget increased more than fivefold from 926 to 1941, and as the conscription law extended its reach into the population - first into the villages, later into the towns, finally into the nomadic tribes - the armed forces grew from five divisions totalling 40,000 men to eighteen divisions totalling 127,000 men. By increasing the size of his army, Reza Shah may have hoped to increase his perceived political prowess and strength, both domestically and internationally. Reza Shah depended primarily on the armed forces because they were Iran's defence against foreign intervention, especially that from Soviet and British sources.

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They were also employed to 'neutralize' domestic opposition.\(^9\)

The government bureaucracy was Reza Shah's second pillar of support, and as such, it too experienced extensive growth and change.

[Reza Shah] gradually transformed the haphazard collection of traditional mustawfis, hereditary mirzas, and central ministers without provincial ministries into some 90,000 full-time government personnel employed in the ten civilian ministries of Interior, Foreign Affairs, Justice, Finance, Education, Trade, Post and Telegraph, Agriculture, Roads, and Industry.\(^10\)

The expanding bureaucracy increased the control of the central government over Iran. The bureaucracy was the instrument by which Reza Shah accomplished rapid modernization throughout the country. This rapid growth and extended reach of the bureaucracy may be attributed to Reza Shah's desire to emulate a secular governmental system, such as that of France.\(^11\) By expanding the bureaucracy, Reza Shah was able to accomplish numerous tasks that led to the modernization of Iran.

Court patronage was Reza Shah's third pillar of support. Through court patronage Reza Shah appropriated a vast amount of fertile land.

This property financed the establishment of royal hotels, casinos, palaces, companies, charities, foundations, and led to a proliferation of court positions, salaries, pensions, and sinecures. The court thus grew into a

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\(^10\) (name of author unavailable), "The Number of Government Employees", Khvandaniha, 19 September 1947, as cited in Abrahamian, 1982, p. 137.

\(^11\) It will be shown later that Reza Shah modelled the Iranian Civil Code after the French Code Civil.
wealthy landed-military complex offering lucrative posts, favors, and futures to those willing to serve the Pahlavi dynasty.\textsuperscript{12}

Through court patronage Reza Shah gained financial control by amassing a great deal of wealth. With the support of the military, bureaucracy, and court patronage, Reza Shah monopolized political, social, and financial power over Iran.

A) \textbf{Reza Shah's Modernization Efforts}

Reza Shah attempted to modernize Iran in a number of ways. He changed the country's infrastructure, created new factories, altered the educational system, tried to unveil and educate Iranian women, altered the legal system, and attempted to secularize Iran.

Vast alterations to the country's infrastructure were made by Reza Shah that would better facilitate trade and commerce by increasing mobility. New roads and ports were constructed. The 850-mile Trans-Iranian Railroad was built. Electricity was introduced in most cities across Iran and the use of telephones and radios increased.\textsuperscript{13} These changes that were introduced modified the Iranian way of life significantly and may have been perceived as a threat to the traditional Iranian way of life.

Concomitant with the initiation of infrastructural changes, the government increased its economic control. The government established a financial base by building numerous factories.

\textsuperscript{12} Abrahamian, 1982, p. 137.

"[T]he state financed and managed hundreds of new factories: By 1940, more than 200 industrial plants with employment exceeding 60,000 had been created."\textsuperscript{14} The establishment of these factories is significant because the state gained economic power and it was able to monitor and determine the employment of many of its citizens. As the bureaucracy increased, it permeated Iranian society at various levels, disrupting the traditional Iranian way of life. As a result of the power that the government had over the employment of its citizens, it could demand political support. It seems likely that such governmental control was perceived as domineering, undesirable, and an infringement on personal freedom.\textsuperscript{15} There were, however, more direct changes that were inaugurated during Reza Shah’s reign that may have been perceived as threatening to the traditional Iranian way of life. The introduction of a national education system and the attempted unveiling of Iranian women were perhaps chief among these.

Reza Shah’s introduction of a national educational system directly modified the traditional Iranian way of life, particularly because he initiated "a system of compulsory education for girls as well as boys".\textsuperscript{16} This had important consequences. It severely decreased the power of the ulama (clergy), who were the customary educators and who, in accordance with Islamic tradition, believed

\textsuperscript{14} Ibid., p. 45.

\textsuperscript{15} Ibid., pp. 45-49.

that only boys ought to be formally educated.\textsuperscript{17} Furthermore, to increase secularization and establish national standards for the new educational system, Reza Shah employed new educators. These were individuals who had been formally educated in universities and taught in a secular manner, in comparison to the clergy who emphasized Islamic matters in their teachings. The new secular educational system promoted the (traditionally unheard of) formal education of women.\textsuperscript{18} This policy shows Reza Shah’s commitment to the modernization of Iran, especially with regards to the transformation of the conventional role of Iranian women.

In addition to promoting the education of women, Reza Shah was also noted for unveiling Iranian women. Until his reign, it was customary for Iranian women to wear veils in public, following the Islamic dress code for women. Reza Shah openly discouraged the public wearing of veils in 1936. He took direct action to repress this longstanding tradition. The growing bureaucracy aided Reza Shah in his attempt to unveil Iranian women. "Veiled women were harassed by the police, forcing many women into virtual exile as they refused to appear unveiled in public".\textsuperscript{19} Many women may have interpreted this unveiling as a liberation, but some women, (especially those in rural communities may have wanted to live in accordance with the shar’iah), may have been offended by Reza Shah’s insensitivity to the matter. These women may have

\textsuperscript{17} Bakhsh, 1986, pp. 20-24.

\textsuperscript{18} Ibid., p. 90.

\textsuperscript{19} Milani, 1988, p. 62.
considered this action to be oppressive because they were being forced to be modern.

The issue of unveiling became a point of contention between Reza Shah and the ulama, who were staunchly against such female liberation. Reza Shah took a firm stand against the ulama on the unveiling dilemma. When the Shah’s wife appeared publicly unveiled, the ulama condemned the action by claiming that it was ‘un-Islamic’. The ulama feared that the Queen’s public unveiling would encourage other traditional Iranian women to follow her un-Islamic example.\(^{20}\) Reza Shah made it apparent, however, that he strongly supported the unveiling of women. His reaction to the ulama’s condemnation of his wife’s public unveiled appearance, was violent. It is said that the angered Shah went to Qom (Iran’s religious center) and "hit one of the ulama with a metal bar he carried so hard the bar was bent".\(^{21}\) Like many of Reza Shah’s other policies, the unveiling of women thus lessened the authority and power and influence of the ulama.

Reza Shah also reformed the legal system. Historically, the ulama controlled the religious courts which were separate from the secular state courts. This created jurisdictional conflicts. Reza Shah replaced the religious courts with the new draft Penal Code of 1926 and the draft Civil Code of 1928. The latter was based on the

\(^{20}\) Ibid.

first ten articles of the French Code Civil.\textsuperscript{22} This is significant because Reza Shah attempted to model the Iranian legal system after that of a Western nation.\textsuperscript{23}

Reza Shah also secularized the judiciary, effectively removing the ulama from its ranks.

In 1936, the secularization of the judiciary was further emphasized by legislation that required judges to hold a degree from the Tehran Faculty of Law or from a foreign university; any judge not holding such a degree was required to pass an examination in order to continue in the employ of the ministry, and many of the ulama left the judiciary at this point.\textsuperscript{24}

This action further eroded the traditional power of the ulama. During Reza Shah's reign, the ulama lost control of the educational system, the authority to dictate that women abide by Islamic law, and the judicial system.

B) Anglo-Soviet Intervention in Iranian Affairs

For political reasons, Reza Shah attempted economic nationalization. He primarily aspired to strengthen Iran against foreign economic intervention and domination. Iran had been a battle ground for British and Soviet conflicts. To protect Iran

\textsuperscript{22} Savory, 1978, p. 92.

\textsuperscript{23} The first six articles of the French Code Civil "embodied doctrinal opinions or philosophical assertions rather than enactments of a legislative nature". Articles 7 to 515 deal with "the distinction between Frenchmen and foreigners, the status of foreigners residing in France; with certificates of civil status and domicile". Jean Brissaud, "France" in A General Survey of Events, Sources, Persons, and Movements in Continental Legal History, (Boston: Little, Brown, and Co., 1912), p. 285.

\textsuperscript{24} Savory, 1978, p. 92.
from such intrusions, Reza Shah wanted to nationalize the economy, thus enabling Iran to bargain with foreign powers rather than submitting to them.

Historically, Iran had suffered foreign intervention and domination by the British and the Soviets. This limited the powers of the ruling class. Under the reign of Reza Shah, Iran continued to suffer extensive Anglo-Soviet intervention. British interests in Iran were of an economic and geo-strategic nature. Britain was primarily interested in Iran for its lucrative oil fields and as a 'gateway to India', its prize colony. Soviet interests in Iran were mainly geo-strategic. The U.S.S.R. did not want its southern borders exposed to British military, economic, and political penetration.²⁵

Reza Shah’s nationalization efforts, which consisted of the consolidation of the manufacturing industries and the creation of government factories, had only limited success. These nationalization efforts gave the British and Soviet governments reason to deploy military force against Iran, to protect their vested interests. The British and Soviet governments hoped to maintain their control over Iran and as a result of Reza Shah’s consolidation and nationalization efforts, the British and Soviet governments possibly felt that their influence in Iran was being threatened.²⁶ In any case, in 1941 Reza Shah was accused of being


pro-German or pro-Nazi and was forced to abdicate in favor of the crown prince.\textsuperscript{27}

It can be speculated for a number of reasons that the public acquiesced to Reza Shah's rule and therefore did not revolt against him. First, Reza Shah's modernization efforts, (for example, the reformation of the educational and legal systems), were introduced gradually and were thereby accepted with inconsequential public resistance. Second, Reza Shah was able to gain control over Iran by forming a strong central government. This enabled him to challenge foreign domination and intervention (save the time when he was forced to abdicate) rather than accommodate foreign powers, (as the Shah was later to do). This legitimized his rule over Iran because he was not perceived as a 'Western puppet'. Finally, Reza Shah did not employ repressive instruments such as the Sazeman-e Ettala'at va Amniyate Keshvar (SAVAK)\textsuperscript{28} to oppress internal adversaries and control Iranian society.\textsuperscript{29} Reza Shah's efforts to protect Iran from foreign influence legitimized his rule.

\textsuperscript{27} Ibid., p. 63.

\textsuperscript{28} SAVAK was the Iranian intelligence and security agency established by the Shah with U.S. and British assistance, in 1953-1954, to counter domestic opposition. The role of the SAVAK and its effects on Iranians will be discussed later, in detail.

\textsuperscript{29} He did, however, eliminate political opposition by prohibiting the existence of political parties and implementing such legislation through the military.
2) THE SHAH’S REIGN (1941-1979)

With the abdication of Reza Shah in 1941, the Shah assumed the throne at the age of twenty-two. The Shah continued his father’s modernization efforts but also espoused Western goals and institutions. Westernization, as defined in Chapter I, is the imposition of Western ideas, norms, and standards as universal. Von Laue contends that the international political system:

...has been built on universalized Western terms, on Western accomplishments in institutions and command over nature. It forms an external and still superficial framework of human existence, within which incompatible cultures, religions, and political ambitions clash, often geared for war. 30

The Shah attempted to westernize Iran by establishing a pseudo-democratic government that incorporated universal suffrage and instituted a laissez-faire economy. By implementing the White Revolution in an effort to establish his envisioned ‘Great Civilization’, which will be discussed below, he furthered these goals. In this process, the Shah alienated many Iranians as he significantly altered their traditional way of life. For example, he altered the political system to emulate traditionally Western systems, he reformed the economic system to make it compatible with Western values, and most significantly, he relied heavily on SAVAK (which will be discussed in detail below) to counter domestic opposition. This alienation was one of the causes of the Iranian Revolution.

When the Shah came to power, the public lacked confidence in the Pahlavi dynasty because of Reza Shah's inability to defend his regime, and Iran, against Soviet and British forces. As a result of this lack of confidence and unconsolidated leadership, many opposition parties emerged and openly challenged the Shah's authority. Open opposition parties were new to Iran, as under Reza Shah all opposition was prohibited.\footnote{Laing, 1977, pp. 44-57.}

The Shah's government was, therefore, initially weak and "it was not until 1947 that the Shah, with the aid of U.S. military assistance and the U.S.S.R.'s abandonment of Azarbaijan and Kurdistan, finally regained control of the whole country."\footnote{Nima, 1983, p. 11.} Notably, the Shah gained national power only as a consequence of decisions made by the U.S.S.R. and the U.S. This illustrates the extent to which the Shah and Iran were influenced by, and susceptible to, international powers.

An attempt to assassinate the Shah brought an abrupt end to what remained of any sort of political freedom that existed in Iran. In February 1949, Fakr Arai attempted to kill the Shah by firing five bullets at point-blank range, but managed only to wound the Shah's face and shoulder.\footnote{Mohammed Reza Shah Pahlavi, \textit{Answer to History}, (New York: Stein and Day, 1980), p. 82.} This gave the Shah the opportunity to retaliate against the opposition and try "to re-establish [a]
monarchical military dictatorship". Martial law was proclaimed, the adversarial leaders were arrested, and a number of newspapers were prohibited. The Shah ensured that the government bodies, (namely the Parliament, Senate, and the Legislature), had no leverage and could not challenge decisions that he made. The Shah "turned on the Parliament, and, by convening a 'managed' Constituent Assembly gained the right, by unanimous vote, to dismiss the majlis [Parliament] whenever he wished". These decisions and their resulting actions allowed the Shah to gain absolute political power.

The Shah considered the failed assassination attempt to be a political victory as he was able to reduce the level of domestic opposition. He postulated that, "[p]olitically, the failed attempt produced positive results: the Tudeh party was outlawed". By prohibiting the Tudeh party, the Shah quashed his most challenging opposition in hope to gain absolute political power.

The Tudeh and the National Front were primarily interested in the establishment of democracy and the nationalization of Iranian oil. The Shah appeared determined to 'neutralize' these publicly-supported parties and politicians such as Dr. Mohammed Mossadeq and Ayatollah Sayyed Abol Kashani. His goal, however, remained

34 Nima, 1983, p. 34.
35 Ibid.
36 Pahlavi, 1980, p. 82.
37 Ayatollah is a title accorded to the most revered Shi'a clergy members. The Arabic/Persian definitions provided in this thesis are extracted from Hamid Algar’s annotations of: Ayatollah
unaccomplished. The Shah's prohibition of these parties forced the remnants of the Tudeh party and the National Front to form 'underground' enclaves which continued to be heavily and privately supported by public.\textsuperscript{39} The Tudeh party continued to thrive as an underground network and even managed to publish its periodicals secretly. Its members "set up clandestine presses and continued to print Mardom, Zafar, and Ramz. They encouraged sympathizers in the military to establish a secret network in the armed forces".\textsuperscript{40}

The Shah under-estimated the strength of the underground National Front and the Tudeh parties and, in addition, over-estimated his public backing:

In a matter of months, various sections of the radical and liberal opposition headed by Mossadeq, some social democratic organizations, a small religious group led by Ayatollah Kashani, and various nationalist groups joined forces to form the National Front. Their platform included two basic demands: democratic rights and an end to foreign domination symbolized by the nationalization of the oil industry.\textsuperscript{41}

The National Front combined with the previously established Tudeh Party and created a significant urban rebellion against the Shah in 1950-51.

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\textsuperscript{38} Abrahamian, 1982, p. 317.

\textsuperscript{39} This can be concluded from the fact that as a result of the coalition between the National Front and the Tudeh, led by Dr. Mohammed Mossadegh, the Shah was stripped of his powers in 1951.

\textsuperscript{40} \textit{Ibid}., p. 318.

\textsuperscript{41} Nima, 1983, p. 34.
A) Mossadeq’s Challenge

The Shah’s supreme authority was challenged by Mossadeq, leader of the underground National Front Party. In April of 1951, a majority vote in Parliament recognized Mossadeq as Prime Minister.42 This significant political position allowed Mossadeq to express his views at a national level.

Mossadeq’s political views differed vastly from those of the Shah. He wanted to initiate constitutional changes that would limit the Shah’s authority and vest governing power in the legislature, thereby making Iran a constitutional monarchy. He advocated non-alignment with foreign powers and, above all, the nationalization of the Iranian oil industry. As he and the National Front grew in popularity, he was able to accomplish most of these objectives, at least temporarily. “By May of 1951, Mossadeq as a result of the [vast amount of public] support for the Tudeh and the National Front was able to strip the Shah of the [authoritative] powers he had fought for and gained since 1941.”43

The Shah made a number of attempts to evict Mossadeq from office, but these attempts were unsuccessful due to the popularity of Mossadeq’s policies.

People from all walks of life, including workers, professionals, students, and civil servants, participated in the large demonstrations that characterized those

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43 Nima, 1983, p. 34.
fateful days. ...After five days of mass demonstrations and bloodshed, the Shah gave in..." 44

The Shah fled Iran on August 17, 1951, and Mossadeq became the new head of state.

Mossadeq's victory, however, was short-lived. During his brief administration, Mossadeq faced a number of challenges, not the least of which was holding together the loose coalition he led. In fact, in that he failed. The National Front fragmented, and many of its prominent leaders began to oppose Mossadeq. The Tudeh Party, which was more highly organized than the National Front, and had an extensive military network, began to seek state power for itself in order to further its own leftist agenda. This caused a major split in the Tudeh-National Front coalition.

The royalists took advantage of this political turmoil. It provided them with the opportunity to execute a strategy to restore the Shah that they had established with the help of the American Central Intelligence Agency (C.I.A.), and the British Intelligence Agency (referred to as the S.I.S.). 45

The overthrow of the government was engineered in part by Kermit Roosevelt, a CIA officer who later became vice-president of Gulf Oil. Mossadeq was removed from office through the joint efforts of high-ranking Iranian officers and a fraction of the clergy, along with well-


paid thugs, all of whom were financed, equipped, and supported by the U.S. government.\textsuperscript{46}

In the latter half of 1953, Mossadeq was ousted by a staged coup d'etat, covertly organized by the Shah's supporters inclusive of both the C.I.A. and the S.I.S.

There were two reasons for U.S. interest in Iran and the Shah. First, the U.S. was promised Iranian oil shares and profits by the British should the Shah resume power. Second, the U.S. was pursuing an Iranian alliance owing to the latter's geo-strategic importance, namely its shared border with the U.S.S.R. It was therefore in the best interest of the U.S. to reinstate a pro-Western leader such as the Shah, rather than leave Mossadeq in power, who advocated non-alignment policies and had nationalized Iranian oil.

Although Parsa suggests that the 1953 coup d'etat was entirely organized and funded by the U.S. government, Simpson, amongst others, such as Keddie\textsuperscript{47}, notes that the S.I.S. also played a significant role in the ouster of Mossadeq.\textsuperscript{48} "Kermit Roosevelt used British S.I.S. contacts in the [Iranian] police, the armed forces, and the Bazaar, and welded them together into a royalist


\textsuperscript{47} Keddie, 1981, pp. 127-140.

\textsuperscript{48} See, for example, Mansoor Moaddel, \textit{Class, Politics, and Ideology in the Iranian Revolution}, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), p. 34. Moaddel states that Mossadeq was ousted by a coup d'etat engineered by both the U.S. and Britain.
coalition." The coup d'etat of August 19, 1953, concluded Mossadeq's brief rule of Iran. With the help of Britain, the U.S., and the royalists, the Shah recovered his throne and retained power for another twenty-five years.

As a result of the successful coup d'etat, the Shah was indebted to the U.S., and consequently became a geo-strategic western ally during the Cold War. This benefitted both the U.S. and Iran. Iran gained a prominent trading partner and could import technology to improve its industries and armed forces. The U.S., on the other hand, profited from having a geo-strategic ally that would allow it to set up military bases bordering on the Soviet Union. The U.S.-Iranian relationship was therefore strengthened, especially politically and economically as a result of the Shah resuming power.

Milani notes a number of implications of the extensive U.S. intervention in returning the Shah to his throne. First, the use of western backing brought into question the legitimacy of the Shah's rule; from that point onwards the Shah was considered by many Iranians to be an American puppet. Second, Iranians realized that henceforth no government, even one with as much popular support as Mossadeq's, could last without foreign approval and

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50 Ibid., pp. 69-70.
support.\textsuperscript{51} Who truly ruled Iran? It did not seem to many that it was really the Shah who was in control.

As early as 1954, the Shah began accepting large-scale military and economic aid from the U.S., in return for renegotiating Iranian oil rights in such a way that U.S. interests would now share in what had previously been an exclusive British domain.

A new consortium was established in which US capital now had a share. BP retained 40\%, Shell acquired 14\%, CFP 6\%, and the remaining 40\% was divided among the five main companies and a group of smaller US firms.\textsuperscript{52}

By reinstating the Shah and removing Mossadeq, the U.S. and Britain had gained much with respect to their oil interests. As opposed to Mossadeq, who was concerned primarily with nationalizing Iran's oil, the Shah adhered to, and accommodated, the interests of the U.S. and Britain. The Shah wanted to be a good ally of the U.S. and Britain to further Iranian modernization and economic development.\textsuperscript{53} To consolidate his domestic power the Shah turned on the opposition parties.

The Shah's new regime persecuted the National Front and Tudeh party leaders and members. Opposition parties were outlawed, and many of their leaders, including Mossadeq, were imprisoned.

Dr. Fatemi, Mossadeq's foreign minister, was executed. With the imprisonment of many of its leading members, the National Front [coalition of both the National Front and

\textsuperscript{51} Milani, 1988, p. 76.

\textsuperscript{52} Halliday, 1979, p. 142.

the Tudeh Party] was unable to maintain a strong stand against the Shah.54

Altogether, approximately 5,000 members of the National Front and Tudeh were imprisoned and by 1957 the underground network of the opposition parties was almost completely destroyed.55 As a result of these actions, the Mossadeq administration faded into obscurity. It seems likely that Iranian citizens felt that they could not choose who was to be their leader; with the help of foreign powers, their leader would be selected for them.

The Shah took nearly a decade to consolidate his authority in a newly centralized political system. To ensure that the opposition was entirely crushed and would not have the opportunity to re-organize, the Shah became increasingly repressive. At this time, the preliminary motions to build SAVAK began.56

With the stifling of both the National Front and the Tudeh Party, the sole source of resistance was the clergy, "whose spearhead was the fiery mullah57 and theologian Ayatollah


55 Ibid.

56 The C.I.A., S.I.S., and Israeli Mossad aided the Shah in the task of constructing the new intelligence and security agency. The Shah hoped that the activities of SAVAK would thwart any remaining political opposition. The activities and effects of SAVAK will be discussed in detail below. [Robert Graham, Iran: The Illusion of Power, (London: Croom Helm, 1978), p. 68.] Graham also notes that established one year later the Imperial Iranian Inspectorate was intended as a special watchdog body for the Shah and also had the responsibility of surveying SAVAK.

57 Mullah is the title accorded to a respected member of the clergy.
Khomeini". Khomeini had risen to preeminence in Qom, Iran's holy city, as early as 1941, due to his popular book Kashf al-Asrar. His candid and effectual expression of rebellious, anti-Shah views made him prominent. At this time no forceful action was taken to eliminate or neutralize the threat that Khomeini posed. Instead, the Shah focused on westernizing Iran.

B) The Shah's Westernization Efforts

The Shah attempted to create a political system that superficially resembled those of the Western democracies. In reality, however, he had absolute political power. "Political parties were banned and replaced by two puppet parties, the Melliyun (Nationalist) and the Mardom (People's) parties, headed by loyal lieutenants of the Shah." These parties were created to provide the nation with an apparently democratic two-party system. These parties, however, were under the guidance and leadership of the Shah and posed no actual political threat to his position.

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59 Kashf Al-Asrar literally translated to "A Warning to the Nation". This book "is essentially a detailed, systematic critique of an anti-religious tract, but it also contains numerous passages that are overtly political and critical of the Pahlavi rule". Algar, 1981, Introduction, p. 15.

60 Graham, 1978, p. 68.

Staged elections added to the mask the Shah employed to disguise his dictatorship. In 1960, for example, Parliamentary elections were held under the strict surveillance of the local police. Eqbal, the Prime Minister at the time, "was accused, justifiably so, by his archrival Alam [head of the opposition party] of rigging the elections". This charge and subsequent conviction resulted in Eqbal's resignation and brought into question the validity of the Iranian electoral process whose parties were under the control of the Shah.

The Shah made superficial attempts to institute a social basis for his administration. His hopes and efforts to strengthen his social base were, however, plagued by the perilous economic predicament that threatened Iran in 1960. The Shah tried to rectify the situation by implementing harsh economic changes, which in turn increased his unpopularity.

These were agrarian reforms, austerity measures including a wage freeze, a reduction of budgeted expenditure, and the shelving of certain over-ambitious infrastructural projects. The economic crisis and austerity measures hit hardest at the working class and the traditional classes of the bazaar. These measures alone could not remedy the economic crisis and they were probably not supported by the public.

By 1961 the number of strikes had increased from only three in 1955 to 1957 to over 20, of which the teachers' strike was the most significant indicator of the

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62 Milani, 1988, p. 80.
intensity of anti-government feeling, leading as it did to bloody confrontations with the army and the SAVAK.\footnote{64}

It seems, however, that the Shah could not manage this situation. He once again required international assistance, especially financial, to combat the strained economic situation in Iran. "The combination of deficit financing, the depletion of foreign reserves and a very poor harvest forced the regime to seek emergency foreign aid from the U.S. and the International Monetary Fund [I.M.F.]."\footnote{65}

To receive this foreign assistance, the Iranian government had to "implement a systematic programme of socio-economic reforms"\footnote{66} to fulfil the I.M.F. requirements.

These changes were encompassed in what later became known as the 'White Revolution'. The White Revolution of 1963 both modernized and westernized Iran. It transformed Iran from a semi-feudal state to a rapidly modernizing state. Farmayan summarizes the six points of the White Revolution:

1) the Land Reform Law,\footnote{67} 2) a law nationalizing the

\footnote{64} Ibid.

\footnote{65} Ibid., pp. 37-38.

\footnote{66} Ibid., p. 38.

\footnote{67} The land reform that the Shah inaugurated was an issue of contention and confrontation between his regime and the religious leaders of the day. Jack Miklos argues that the land reform was in fact at the heart of the Iranian Revolution. The Shah made the land reform the "key to an economic-social program that was to shake the very foundations of traditionalism and set Iran in a path that even now, in spite of the appearance of regression under the banner of fundamental Islamism, is probably irreversible. The Shah had already taken the lead in 1950 by launching a program of distributing Imperial estates to the peasantry. This was conceived as a pilot project, to be emulated by more comprehensive legislation that would affect the majority of Iranian land
country's forests, (3) a law permitting the sale of state-owned factories to the private sector to provide finances for the land reform program, (4) a law requiring that 20% of the net profits of factories and industrial establishments be shared with the workers, (5) a law to amend election procedures toward the establishment of universal suffrage, and (6) a law providing for a nationwide literacy corps. 68

These reforms may have been interpreted as pro-Western by many Iranians because they were implemented under I.M.F. and American pressure. They may have also been perceived as threatening to the traditional nature of Iran's feudal economy. These changes may have been perceived as threatening because they resembled a drastic departure from traditional Iranian values and also because some changes may have reflected the Western economic system and its values.

Iran traditionally had an agriculture-based economy. With economic development, however, Iran saw a major shift of population from agricultural to non-agricultural activity. At the beginning of this century, approximately 90% of the Iranian work force was employed in agriculture. By 1946, this percentage decreased to 75%, by 1966 it decreased to 47%, and by the late 1970s, only 40%


68 Farmayan, 1971, p. 103.
of the Iranian labor force employed in the agricultural sector.\textsuperscript{69} This decrease was partly due to the introduction of new technology. It caused an influx of population to Iran’s major cities, in search of jobs and higher living standards.

...[T]here was no denying that there was a widening gap between the standards of living in the cities and in the countryside, where there had been little improvement in the food situation and in some areas standards had declined. In the heart of the cities there were thousands of new arrivals living in slums and forming a destitute and unemployed proletariat.\textsuperscript{70}

The cities had more jobs to offer than the countryside, but the migrants from the countryside dwelled in shanty-towns on the outskirts of Iran’s urban centers.

According to Brun and Dumont, the agrarian reforms of the White Revolution and the resulting modernization, "faithfully [obeyed] the logic of the capitalist mode of production".\textsuperscript{71} The Shah’s implementation of a capitalist system may have been considered a form of westernization because some Iranians may have identified capitalism with the West. Brun and Dumont analyze these reforms from a Marxist perspective and conclude that the Iranian mode of production followed capitalist principles. This mode of production was achieved in Iran by:

1) Separation of producers from means of production. This is done in several stages: the abolition of the old

\textsuperscript{69} Fred Halliday, "Iran: Trade Unions and the Working Class Opposition" in MERIP Reports, (October 1978, No. 71), p. 7.

\textsuperscript{70} Thierry Brun and Rene Dumont, "Iran: Imperial Pretensions and Agricultural Dependence" in MERIP Reports, (October 1978, No. 71), p. 16.

\textsuperscript{71} Ibid.
order of property-owners; the distribution of land to
small property holders; the pressure (obligation) of the
latter to cede the land to agricultural companies or
rural cooperatives. 2) Liberation of laborpower by the
above measures... 3) Creation of a national market
integrated into the world market guaranteeing the
movement of capital without restrictions, especially in
the direction of the highly profitable sector of
agribusiness.\textsuperscript{72}

The agrarian reforms were only one element of the Shah's
modernization and westernization process. To implement the other
reforms of the White Revolution, the bureaucracy had to be
increased significantly.

The bureaucracy in Iran grew as a result of the Shah's
ambitious westernization and modernization efforts. The number of
technocrats increased in order to manage the large industrial state
that the Shah attempted to create.

By the mid-1960s there were well over 150,000 civil
servants; by the late 1970s they had increased to over
560,000. The state bureaucracy accounted for as much as
a third to a half of all full-time employees in the urban
areas, at least in the major cities.\textsuperscript{73}

This growth in the bureaucracy was a prerequisite for the creation
of the Shah's "Great Civilization", which he defined as "an effort
toward understanding and peace which [would create] the perfect
environment in which everyone [would be able to] work".\textsuperscript{74} It
seemed necessary that the bureaucracy should permeate every aspect
of daily life, because it was responsible for implementing the

\textsuperscript{72} Ibid., pp. 16-17.
\textsuperscript{73} Nima, 1983, p. 44.
\textsuperscript{74} Pahlavi, 1980, p. 176.
changes needed in order to establish the anticipated Great Civilization.

The Shah's plan for the Great Civilization was intended to modernize Iranian life and turn Iran into one the most advanced global economic powers. According to the Shah,

...all the elements indispensable to modernization sprang up: universities, school groups, professional institutes, hospitals, roads, railroads, dams, electric plants, pipelines for gas and oil, factories, industrial, cultural, artistic and sports complexes, cooperatives, metropolitan areas, and new villages.75

The Shah's intentions may have been to develop Iran into a Great Civilization, however, through this modernization process many Iranian traditions were lost, such as the diverse heritage of the Persian language.

According to Baraheni, the Shah also attempted to erode Persian culture by trying to significantly alter the Persian language. He 'purged' it of its Arabic and Turkish elements, which eliminated approximately forty percent of its vocabulary.76 He also enforced the use of Persian throughout Iran, and through SAVAK, implemented strict censorship and publication guidelines. In order to increase the use of Persian, the use of native languages was decreased by forcing Iranians to speak Persian rather than any other native language. Reza Baraheni writes that "...millions of native Iranian children born to Azarbaijani,

75 Ibid.

Kurdish, and Arab parents do not have even one school in which they can study everything in their native languages". 

Language and literature are the crux of cultural identity and with these substantial changes, it seems likely that many Iranians felt that traditional Iranian culture and heritage was challenged, not by modernization or westernization, but in this case by the Shah. It also seems likely that these measures were not popular with the public.

Although the Shah's intention may have been to modernize and westernize Iran, he may have alienated many Iranians in the procedure and he may have also been seen by them as a threat to their religious and cultural traditions. Those elements alone may have been sufficient to initiate an anti-monarchical movement, but through the SAVAK, the Shah added to them the element of repression, virtually guaranteeing his downfall.

C) SAVAK

As discussed above, SAVAK had been created by the Shah in 1954 with American, British, and Israeli advice. It was intended as a means to penetrate and neutralize insurgent civilian groups. It was "...a permanent counterespionage agency, attached to the Prime Minister's office and trained in the use of F.B.I. techniques". 

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77 Ibid.

78 Hurewitz, "Iran in World and Regional Affairs" in Yar-Shater, (ed.), 1971, pp. 132-33. The U.S. hoped that SAVAK would be used to uncover Communists, but, as Hurewitz notes "the Shah used it to hold all political opponents in check".
The SAVAK soon became an integral factor of Iranian political, economical, and cultural life. Through its auspices, the Shah implemented the Iranian way of life that would best fit his image of the Great Civilization. SAVAK agents held key positions in factories, owned the press, censored all forms of media, questioned suspected patrons of the opposition forces, and controlled what was to be taught in schools, universities, and colleges.\textsuperscript{79}

In \textit{The Crowned Cannibals}, Baraheni writes of his experiences as a Professor and a renowned Iranian intellect. He was imprisoned by the SAVAK, and his ordeal was similar to those of other distinguished Iranian writers. In his words:

\begin{quote}
The government encourages sexist or lukewarm mystical literature, but if you speak about life in the streets of Tehran today, you go to jail. Almost all the prominent writers and poets of the country have suffered incarceration and torture at the hands of the SAVAK agents in recent years.\textsuperscript{80}
\end{quote}

Baraheni discusses the extensive censorship that existed under the reign of the Shah. It was an extremely lengthy procedure to publish any material as no books or articles could be published without being reviewed by the SAVAK. It was also difficult to obtain scholarly publications because of the SAVAK's extensive censorship.\textsuperscript{81}

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{79} \textit{Ibid.}

\textsuperscript{80} Baraheni, 1977, p. 10.

\textsuperscript{81} \textit{Ibid.}
\end{flushleft}
During the 70's, Amnesty International reported extensive human rights violations against Iranian prisoners who were arrested and convicted by SAVAK.

Detailed and accurate information on those arrested is hard to obtain, but it is certain that many have been sentenced to death, and executed after trials before a military tribunal without independent evidence or witnesses being heard and without effective defense. SAVAK's operations extended beyond Iran's borders. In a pamphlet on Iran, Amnesty International stated that one of SAVAK's main objectives was to subject Iranian students studying abroad to surveillance. "Amnesty International is aware of instances in which students have been arrested and imprisoned upon their return to Iran, presumably because of their participation in political activities while abroad." 

3) SUMMARY

In summation, four inter-related components contributed to the general perception amongst Iranians that the Shah's administration was illegitimate and repressive. These elements were:

1) The Shah was restored to his throne as a result of the U.S. and British intervention of 1953. He had lost power in 1951 due

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84 Most authors, for example Nima and Milani, have suggested that there was Israeli intelligence, Mossad, involvements as well, in aiding the U.S. and Britain in restoring the Shah to power, however, they have admitted to not having tangible evidence.
to the public's support of the leaders of the National Front and the Tudeh. The Shah's need for Western assistance to regain power called into question the legitimacy of his reign.

2) The intimate relationship between the Shah and the West was discomforting to Iranians as they were unsure who was in charge of the nation. This further called into question the legitimacy of his reign. The Shah was often portrayed as a puppet of the U.S. This close link with the U.S., and the Shah's emphasis on westernization, may have alienated him from much of Iranian society, with the exception of the ruling elite. He lost touch with traditional Iranian values and thus introduced new Western ideas in haste, to a populace unwilling to embrace them.

3) The Shah's regime may have been seen as repressive because it prohibited political emancipation and focused entirely on economic development and expansion, modernization, and westernization. Moreover, with the suppression of publicly supported political parties and the clergy, some Iranians may have felt deprived of their basic freedoms (such as that of freedom of speech) which may have made the Shah appear even more repressive.

4) Finally, the Shah's leadership may have been perceived as oppressive as a result of the foreign assistance in the creation of SAVAK and its awesome strength in controlling or neutralizing the opposition. The Shah's regime was renowned for repressing demonstrations and strikes in a violent and bloody fashion, which may have led to some Iranians believing that the Shah would not
tolerate any political challenge. This again deprived the public of any political expression.

For the above-mentioned reasons, the Shah's regime may have been perceived as illegitimate and/or repressive. It seems likely that these factors, in addition to an enticing millenarian vision of salvation, were the catalysts that sufficiently motivated Iranians to overthrow the Shah and bring an end to the Pahlavi reign. In order for the public to be so motivated, however, a charismatic leader and an image of Iran after the overthrow of the Shah was needed. Ayatollah Khomeini provided both of these elements.
CHAPTER III:

KHOMEINI'S POLITICAL IDEOLOGY

This chapter will study Khomeini's ascension to religious and social prominence in Iran. It will also examine the role of Khomeini as the leader of the Iranian Islamic movement that eventually led to the Iranian Revolution. This chapter will attempt to show that the Iranian Revolution was not just a popular social movement but an uprising motivated by Khomeini's millenarian theology and possessed all of the unique characteristics laid out in Norman Cohn's seminal work *The Pursuit of the Millennium*. By employing Cohn's framework, outlined in Chapter I, this chapter will show how Khomeini's millenarian theology incited, propelled, and provided guidance for the Iranian Revolution. A brief overview of the principal events of the Iranian Revolution will show the power that Khomeini's millenarian theology had in inspiring Iranians to overthrow the Shah and establish an Islamic republic.

Khomeini's theology promoted a return to traditional Iranian and Islamic values. His program sought to purge Iranian society of its Western influences. This highly nationalistic and patriotic approach regarded the prophet Muhammed's reign as the "golden age".1 Khomeini declared:

...God, Exalted and Almighty, by means of the Most Noble Messenger (peace and blessings be upon him), sent laws that astound us with their magnitude. He instituted laws and practices for all human affairs and laid down injunctions for man extending from even before the embryo is formed until after he is placed in the tomb. In just the same way that there are laws setting forth the duties of worship for man, so too there are laws, practices, and norms for the affairs of society and government. Islamic law is a progressive, evolving, and comprehensive system of law.²

Khomeini envisioned the establishment of a society, like Muhammad’s kingdom, that practiced Islamic laws.

In his article "Revitalization Movements", Anthony Wallace discusses the nativistic nature of some millenarian movements. Nativistic movements desire to return to a past "golden age" that represents the strength of their culture. Khomeini’s movement fits this description, as he attempted to "expel the persons or customs of foreign invaders or overlords"³, in order to establish an Islamic republic that would function under the auspices of the Shar’iah and resemble Muhammad’s kingdom.

The function of millenarian or revitalization movements is to develop a new cultural system that satisfies the needs of those who are discontented with the existing culture. Wallace employs the term "mazeway" to describe how individuals perceive themselves and their society. As noted in Chapter I, Wallace suggests that it is

² Ibid., pp. 20-30.

the system. The person does, in fact, maintain such an image.4

He argues that environmental stress motivates individuals to alter their mazeway. In accordance with Wallace's theory, it can be argued that Iranians' perception of their society was altered by Khomeini. His theory would suggest that under the Shah, most Iranians were unable to cope with the stress of adapting to his rapid westernization and modernization policies. The alternative culture that Khomeini presented, in the form of a re-established past golden age, may therefore have seemed appealing to many Iranians.

Wallace contends that individuals under constant stress realize that their established mazeway does not reduce their level of stress. The only way to reduce individual stress, according to Wallace, is to alter the existing mazeway. Revitalization movements promise their followers emancipation from their existing culture by the formation of new and more satisfying one, which can only be accomplished by altering the mazeways of those concerned. "Changing the mazeway involves changing the total Gestalt of his self image of self, society, and culture, of nature and body, and of ways of action."5 Wallace goes on to state that "[t]he effort to work a change in mazeway and 'real' system together so as to

4 Ibid., p. 266.

5 Ibid., p. 267. In the case of Iran, the alternative that Khomeini presented was one that would change Iranian society in its entirety. The definition that Wallace provides of the total change of self, society, and culture can therefore be applied to the goal of the Iranian Revolution. The Iranian Revolution aspired to change society completely, by way of social and political upheaval.
permit more effective stress reduction is the effort at revitalization; and the collaboration of a number of persons in such an effort is called a revitalization movement".6

Khomeini’s theology and the Iranian Revolution fit Wallace’s framework. The Iranian Islamic movement can be seen as a response to the pressures of modernization and westernization, and as a result provided new mazeways for the Iranians who needed change in order to reduce their individual stress. The Iranian Revolution was an attempt to destroy the old pro-Western way of life and replace it with a new Islamic and anti-Western society.

1) KHOMEINI’S BACKGROUND

Ruhollah Mussavi Khomeini was born in 1902 into a religious family. He went to Iraq in 1920 to study in order to become a mullah7 under the auspices of Sheikh Abdul Karim Ha’eri Yazdi, a popular mujtahed8. When Ha’eri moved to Qom, Khomeini followed him in order to continue his religious studies. In 1926, Khomeini attained the status of mujtadeh. He stood apart from the other clergy in Qom:

From the beginning, Khomeini showed special talent in the studies of erfan (gnosticism). At twenty-seven, he wrote a book in Arabic which dealt with gnosticism. His interest in gnosticism and in poetry, neither popular

6 Ibid., p. 267.

7 This term is accorded to learned Muslim leaders.

8 This term is used to refer to an authority respected for his independent judgement on religious matters.
among the mullahs in Qom, set the young Khomeini apart from the vast majority of his colleagues. Khomeini was also more prominent than the other members of the clergy because his works were frequently published. He had written approximately twenty-five books, not including his speeches and declarations, by the time of the Iranian Revolution.

Cohn suggests that the leaders or "prophetae" of millenarian movements are often charismatic intellectuals. They are therefore unlike the leaders of other popular uprisings, who are usually of the working class. Khomeini was both an intellect and a highly revered Shi’a leader. He reached the highest possible position of authority within the Shi’a hierarchy.

In March of 1961, with the death of Ayatollah Borujerdi who was the leading Marja’-e Taqlid, there was a vacuum of authority within the Shi’a hierarchy. Khomeini was one of the leading candidates for this position not only because he had the appropriate religious qualifications, but because he "superseded his rivals in political efficacy, vociferous opposition to the Shah, and the ingenuity to attract popular support". He was

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11 This term literally means 'source of imitation'. In this context it is the title ascribed to the highest living religious authority in Shi’ism. Followers accept and obey his judgement and opinions as if they were divine.

12 Milani, 1988, p. 89.
also willing to directly criticize and confront the Shah's regime, which was a unique quality to have at that time.\textsuperscript{13}

In his new role as \textit{Marja'-e Taqlid}, Khomeini claimed that political authority was necessary to implement the \textit{shar’iah}, and suggested that according to Islam it was the responsibility of the \textit{caliph}\textsuperscript{14} to fulfil that imperative:

The prophet, had he not appointed a \textit{caliph} to succeed him, would have been considered to have failed to convey his message...
In truth, the social laws and regulations need an executor... The legislative authority must be followed by an executive authority which is the only authority that can bring to people the fruits of just legislation.\textsuperscript{15}

The executor of the \textit{shar’iah} was therefore ordained with divine powers. The successors of the prophet were the \textit{Imams}.\textsuperscript{16} This


\textsuperscript{14} This term is accorded to the direct successor of the Prophet Mohammed.


\textsuperscript{16} "\textit{Imam}" was a title that prior to the Iranian Revolution was used primarily in reference to the twelve leaders recognized by Shi’ites as the legitimate rulers of Islam between A.D. 630-874. Imams are understood to be direct descendants of the House of Mohammed, the prophet of Islam. An Imam must be elected by the \textit{umma} (refers to the entire Islamic community, without territorial or ethnic distinction) or by must be appointed by the previous \textit{Imam}. (J.S. Ismael and T.Y. Ismael, "Social Change in Islamic Society: The Political Thoughts of Ayatollah Khomeini" in \textit{Social Problems}, (Volume 27 #5, June 1980, p. 604.) They further note the role of the \textit{Imam}. "He was to pledge to perform his duties, and the community was to pledge its allegiance and obedience. The role of the \textit{Imam} was to protect the faith, adjudicate among people, punish transgressors, appoint honest men, and to lead a medium path
title implies infallibility. (Following the Iranian Revolution, Khomeini was also referred to as Imam).

In a sermon entitled "The Necessity for Islamic Government", Khomeini assured Iranians that in an Islamic government those entrusted with the responsibility of conducting public affairs would incur no special benefits or services. He stated that members of the government would "have no privileges over the ordinary citizens in benefiting from the public income and wealth; all have an equal share". It seems likely that this statement was made to assure the many Iranians who were his followers that Islamic government would be just and credible, unlike the Pahlavi dynasty, which engaged in "all forms of usurpation and embezzlement of public wealth". Khomeini assured his Iranian followers of the just nature of Islamic government. This was particularly important so that the people would have faith in it and in the individual (himself) who promised to deliver it. Moreover, Khomeini also declared that he would "spend the rest of [his] life in the path of God, which means serving [Muslims]". This quality, his religious status, and his charisma made him an ideal candidate for the leadership of the anticipated Islamic republic. Algar notes that


18 Ibid.

in December of 1978, Khomeini was unofficially ‘elected’ to be the leader of the Iranian opposition to the Shah:

Imam Khomeini received a "vote of confidence" informally, from the numerous demonstrators throughout 1978 in which he leadership was invoked, and formally, from the first article of the declaration approved by a gathering of three million people in Tehran on December 10, 1978... 20

Many of Khomeini’s followers believed him to be an Imam. With this new status, Khomeini understood himself to be the divinely appointed leader of the Iranian people.

2) KHOMEINI’S CONFLICT WITH THE SHAH

Khomeini’s hostility towards the Pahlavi regime began during Reza Shah’s reign:

...during [his] years as a young hojatolislam21... Reza Shah’s secularization inflicted heavy damage to the power and fortunes of the ulama. Khomeini crystallized the essence of his opposition to Reza Shah’s modernization program in his first major overtly political treatise, Kashfol Asrar (Secrets Discovered), published in 1941. 22

Secrets Discovered included a number of Khomeini’s public declarations against Reza Shah’s modernization efforts. 23 His candid criticism of the Pahlavi dynasty, when few others were willing to challenge the monarchy, made him popular. It


21 This term refers to the ‘proof of submission’ of a cleric or an Islamic scholar to the Islamic faith.

22 Milani, 1988, p. 89.

23 See, for example, Khomeini’s speeches and declarations in Islam and Revolution: Writings and Declarations of Imam Khomeini, translated and annotated by Hamid Algar, (Berkeley: Mizan Press, 1981).
established him as the voice of the dissident clergy and many of those who perceived themselves as oppressed by the monarch. His extensive Islamic education and highly respected position in the Shi'a community and clergy further increased that popularity.

As early as 1941, Khomeini had protested ardently against the Pahlavi dynasty. At this time, however, he did not encourage Iranians to overthrow the monarchy. In fact, he favored cooperation between the clergy and the monarch, for the establishment of a government to be managed by both.

We do not say that government must be in the hands of the faqih [expert jurisprudent]; rather we say that government must be run in accordance with God's laws, for the welfare of the country and the people demands this, and it is not feasible except with the supervision of the religious leaders.\(^24\)

In a government administrated by both the clergy and the monarch, "...everyone in the country would join together in harmony, and the country would move forward with the speed of light".\(^25\) Furthermore, "...through the joint efforts of all the people, the educated and the masses alike, the country would attain a state unparalleled in the world".\(^26\)

According to Khomeini, this collaboration between the clergy and the monarch, and subsequent legislation in accordance with the shar’iah, would establish an ideal society in Iran:


\(^{25}\) Ibid.

\(^{26}\) Ibid., p. 171.
It is in contrast with the government of God that the nature of all existing governments becomes clear, as well as the sole legitimacy of Islamic government. The duty of our government, which is among the smaller states in the world, is to conform to this legitimate government by making the laws passed by the Majlis a kind of commentary on the divine law.

Khomeini also suggested that this government would be legitimized by divine authority: "It will become apparent that the law of Islam is the most advanced in the world, and that its implementation will lead to the establishment of the Virtuous City." The creation of this Virtuous City that Khomeini envisioned, however, would not be attained until the Shah was ousted in January of 1979. It seems likely that the Shah had no intentions of establishing a cooperative with the clergy and ruling Iran according to the shar'iah. In fact he intended to modernize and westernize Iran with the introduction of the White Revolution.

After the Shah introduced the White Revolution, which Khomeini vehemently opposed, the Ayatollah decided that the link between the monarchy and the clergy would no longer be a viable solution to the problems that existed in Iran.

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27 Ibid.

28 According to Algar, the Virtuous City, also referred to as Madina-yi Fazila, is a designation for the ideal political order that originated in Greek thought but was also used by Muslim philosophers.


Khomeini and his supporters opposed the White Revolution because they deemed it 'un-Islamic'. Khomeini specifically contested the Shah's land reforms. Furthermore, he resisted the enfranchisement of women, which was also granted by the White Revolution.\(^{31}\) "It was a reactionary position, but he expressed it with passion and he attracted a large following, especially among the urban poor suspicious of the Shah's efforts to modernize and bitter at their exclusion from the benefits of oil money."\(^{32}\)

As has been noted, Khomeini had become the prominent spokesperson for the dissident clergy and their followers, who were most likely seeking not only a Shi'a way of life, but also political and spiritual deliverance from the Shah's un-Islamic rule and a return to power. Khomeini's ideas, voiced in his effective speeches, became increasingly popular. He quickly became popular as a result of his eloquent, yet forceful speaking, especially at mosques and large religious gatherings. His "shrewd political judgement became clear when he avoided over-emphasizing the clergy's objection to women's suffrage, equal rights, and so on, but attacked the regime over issues [that is the land reform] that were clearly unpopular among the mass of the urban population".\(^{33}\)

\(^{31}\) As discussed in Chapter II, both these alterations were considered by Khomeini and his supporters to be more of the Shah's modernizing and westernizing techniques.


\(^{33}\) Ibid.
Khomeini was also celebrated as the spokesman for many other anti-monarchical groups. He attracted both rebellious students and established bazaars.\textsuperscript{34} His message was appealing to virtually anyone seeking to alter the status-quo, especially by limiting the power of the monarch.

As Khomeini became an increasingly prestigious and renowned figure, he posed a growing threat to the Shah and his six-point plan, the White Revolution, which was to be put to a national referendum. Prior to the January 1963 vote, Khomeini was arrested for distributing pamphlets that asserted that the Shah's land reforms were contrary to Islam, which guaranteed the right to own unlimited private property.\textsuperscript{35}

Khomeini's arrest caused a number of political uprisings. For example, in March:

\ldots theological students at Qom held public demonstrations that resulted in the arrest of their leaders and the occupation of mosques, shrines, and theological schools by members of security police.\textsuperscript{36}

This was the beginning of a string of arrests for Khomeini, and subsequently, a string of political uprisings.\textsuperscript{37}

\textsuperscript{34} This term is ascribed to the Iranian merchant class and specifically to those who owned small businesses.

\textsuperscript{35} Nima, 1983, pp. 41-42.


\textsuperscript{37} For example, there were political uprisings in April, June, and October of 1963. For further information, see Nima's (1983) Index of the Chronological Events of the Iranian Revolution.
While Khomeini was detained, the Shah proceeded with the referendum to authenticate the White Revolution. "To legitimize this revolution a national referendum was held with the predictable result that 99.9% of votes were cast in favor." This enormous majority vote has been widely disputed. After the referendum, the White Revolution was enacted. As discussed above, the implementation of the White Revolution caused cultural, economic, and social changes in Iran.

One of the significant economic changes that occurred was the Shah's decision to begin trading with Israel. Much to the dismay of the ardently anti-Israeli clergy, the Shah commenced to openly sign contracts with Israel. In a speech addressed to the Shah, on June 3 of 1963, Khomeini advised him not to enter into pacts with Israel, for he would eventually end up de-throned, like Reza Shah. Khomeini said:

Let me give you some advice, Mr. Shah! Dear Mr. Shah, I advise you to desist in this policy and acts like this. I don't want the people to offer up thanks if your masters should decide one day that you must leave. I don't want you to become like your father.

Khomeini advised the Shah not to implement policies that could result in his downfall and subsequent de-throning.


This advice was later considered to be a prophecy by both Khomeini and his followers. It was fulfilled in 1979, when Khomeini returned to Iran following the Iranian Revolution:

How much you [the Shah] talk about the West, claiming that we must measure Islam in accordance with Western criteria! What an error! ...In this very madrasa [school], I once gave some advice to the Shah; he didn’t listen to me. On the afternoon of ‘Ashura, I told him not to do anything that would cause the people to throw him out; he didn’t listen to me, and the people did throw him out."42

Khomeini indicates in this speech that if the Shah had paid heed to his warnings, that maybe the Iranian Revolution would not have occurred.

In June of 1963, after his warning speech to the Shah, and immediately following Moharram43, Khomeini was arrested in Qom. Khomeini’s detention resulted in riots and strikes in Qom, Shiraz, Tehran, Tabriz, and Isfahan.44 In response to those public insurgencies, the Shah was forced to deploy the army to manage the protesters and calm the rebellion that seemed to be spreading

41 Khomeini states in "Anniversary of the Uprising of Khurday 15" (June 5, 1979, in Algar, 1981, pp. 268-274) because the Shah had not listened to his advice of June 3, 1963, he had been ousted, thereby fulfilling the prophecy that Khomeini made. Algar, a supporter of Khomeini, also contends that the ouster of the Shah was a fulfillment of the prophecy that Khomeini had made. (p.309, n. 25)

42 Khomeini, "Anniversary of the Uprising of Khurday 15", June 5, 1979, in Algar (1981), p. 272. The Shah eventually lost power in Iran, but in a different manner than did his father. Reza Shah was forced to abdicate (due to foreign intervention and domination), but the Shah was evicted by his own subjects.

43 Moharram is the most holy holiday of Shi’a Muslims.

through the nation, especially in the urban centers. The eventual confrontation "lasted for three days and an estimated 3,000 demonstrators were murdered on the streets of Tehran alone".\textsuperscript{45} The message to the public was clear: the army would support the Shah's regime whenever necessary. With his military-backed administration and through SAVAK, the Shah was able to extinguish all evident domestic opposition.

3) KHOMEINI'S EXILE

Khomeini's eventual exile was the result of his zealous campaigning against one of the Shah's pro-American policies. In October of 1964, the monarch announced that "legal immunity was granted to American personnel for all offenses committed in Iranian territory".\textsuperscript{46} Khomeini denounced this policy fervently because he perceived it to be a violation of Iranian sovereignty and independence. He proclaimed that this action proved the Shah's commitment to pleasing to the U.S. At this time, Khomeini's made his last speech in Iran. It was entitled "The Granting of Capitulatory Rights to the U.S." and outlined succinctly the nature of the salvation that would be attained by Iranians upon the establishment of an Islamic government headed by the Iranian clergy.

\textsuperscript{45} Nima, 1983, p. 42.

\textsuperscript{46} Algar, 1981, Introduction, p. 18.
If the religious leaders have influence, they will not permit this nation to be the slaves of Britain one day, and America the next.

If the religious leaders have influence, they will not permit Israel to take over the Iranian economy; they will not permit Israeli goods to be sold in Iran - in fact, to be sold duty-free!

If the religious leaders have influence, they will not permit the government to impose arbitrarily such a heavy loan on the Iranian nation.

If the religious leaders have influence, they will not permit such misuse to be made of the public treasury.

If the religious leaders have influence, they will not permit the Majlis to come to a miserable state like this; they will not permit the Majlis to be formed at bayonet-point, with the scandalous results we see.

If the religious leaders have influence, they will not permit girls and boys to wrestle together, as recently happened in Shiraz.

If religious leaders have influence, they will not permit people's innocent daughters to be under young men at school; they will not permit women to teach at boys' schools and men to teach at girls' schools, with all the resulting corruption.

If the religious leaders have influence, they will strike this government in the mouth, they will strike this Majlis in the mouth and chase these deputies out of both its houses!

If the religious leaders have influence, they will not permit a handful of individuals to be imposed on the nation as deputies and participate in determining the destiny of the country.

If the religious leaders have influence, they will not permit some agent of America to carry out these scandalous deeds; they will throw him out of Iran.  

After this speech, Khomeini was exiled. He was: "swooped upon by the Iranian police, put aboard a plane at a military airport, and taken to Turkey, where, with the cooperation of Turkish authorities, he was kept under house arrest".  

Khomeini was then exiled to Iraq for fourteen years and later, briefly, to France.

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48 Zonis, pg. 44
It can be speculated that had the Shah detained Khomeini in Iran, he may have been at least moderately able to control his activities. However, by deporting him, the Shah lost most of the control he had over Khomeini’s actions. On the other hand, if the Shah had kept Khomeini in the country he faced the risk of having to manage other political insurgencies as he did in June of 1963.

Khomeini’s exile did not stop the infiltration of his revolutionary anti-monarchical ideas and messages into Iran. In fact, it made his revolutionary ideas even more popular. His anti-Shah, anti-U.S., and anti-Israeli speeches became more desirable to Iranian dissenters, and they flowed throughout the country covertly.⁴⁹

4) KHOMEINI’S POLITICAL AND RELIGIOUS DOCTRINE

To Iranians who were opposed to the monarchy, Khomeini presented an alternative.

Notwithstanding his physical absence from the country, he was present in the hearts of his countrymen and infinitely more in tune with their aspirations than politicians who had suffered neither exile nor imprisonment.⁵⁰

Khomeini emphasized the need for an Islamic government that would restore Iranian traditions and culture, and de-westernize Iran by ridding Iran of the Shah and the foreign influences that the Shah


had encouraged and promoted. These revolutionary and change-oriented elements of his ideology attracted a vast number of Iranians.

While in exile, Khomeini "issued periodical proclamations concerning developments in Iran that were smuggled into the country and clandestinely circulated at great risk". In addition to these, Khomeini addressed Muslims gathered in Mecca during the pilgrimage season. He also addressed Iranian students studying abroad, urging them to join the Iranian Islamic movement. Algar notes why Khomeini was the natural leader of Iran's Islamic movement.

Imam Khomeini and the cause that he embodied were never forgotten in Iran. His example inspired a number of religious scholars and groups, which continued to build on the foundations laid in 1963 and 1964, and unnoticed by most foreign observers, an Islamic movement of unparalleled breadth and profundity came into being. With the infiltration of Khomeini's message into Iran, and with the guidance of his charismatic leadership, Khomeini's Iranian followers began to envision and anticipate an alternative society to the perceived oppressive monarchical society that existed.

In 1967, Khomeini wrote an open letter to Iran's Prime Minister Hoveyda, that described the poverty that existed in Iran, and the discrepancies that existed between the livelihoods of the rich and the poor. In this letter he also stated that the Iranian

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52 Ibid., pp. 18-19.
economy was dominated by the West and that Iran was governed by corrupt individuals who only cared for their own well being:

Sitting in your opulent palaces, which you change once every few years, you spend millions of tumans with an extravagance our people cannot even imagine and steal it all from the purse of our wretched nation. You witness complacently the hunger and poverty of our people, the bankruptcy of the bazaar, the unemployment of our educated youth, the sorry state of our agriculture and industry, the domination of the country's economy by Israel, and even, according to some reports, Israel's interference in our educational system. You see that most of the villages near the capital, let alone in remote regions, lack the basic necessities of life - clean drinking water, bathhouses, and medical care. You see the diffusion of moral corruption, dishonesty, and irreligion in the depth of the countryside. You see funds set up that are supposedly cooperatives, but in fact are a means for government official to rob and plunder the peasants, who come ruefully to understand that they have been cheated. Finally you see all the illegal imprisonment, terror, and threats that are inflicted in the people, while you are immersed in your pleasures, enjoyments, and shameful games and recite the funeral prayers over this cemetery called Iran.\(^{53}\)

These images of Iran's poverty were continually prevalent in Khomeini's speeches.\(^{54}\)

In a speech made in 1971, Khomeini again referred to the extreme conditions of poverty in Iran and the government's questionable use of charitable funds:

People address themselves to us constantly from all over Iran, asking permission to use the charitable taxes demanded by Islam for the building of bathhouses, for they are without baths. What has happened to all those gilded promises, those pretentious claims that Iran is


\(^{54}\) See, for example, any of Khomeini's speeches prior to the Iranian Revolution such as the "Open Letter to Prime Minister Hoveyda", April 16, 1967 and "The Incompatibility of Monarchy with Islam", October 31, 1971, both in Algar (1981).
progressing on the same level as the more developed countries of the world, that the people are prosperous and content? Are the people prosperous when they sell their children because of hunger?  

Khomeini's constant reference to the poverty in Iran and his sympathy for the poor and wretched most likely created support amongst those who desired to change their exiting social status under the Shah. Those who perceived themselves to be oppressed and deprived were eager to escape from the Shah's tyrannical regime.

In his speeches, Khomeini also stressed the lack of a free press in Iran and he called the Shah a coward for not allowing Iranian writers and speakers to challenge his authority. Khomeini contended that the solution to the problems that Iranian society faced was the establishment of an Islamic republic. This would require a strong Islamic movement to contest the Shah's regime.

Cohn contends that millenarian groups are often comprised of the marginalized and atomized classes of society. This was true in the case of Iran. Khomeini's constant mention of the poor made him a popular figure amongst this class, for he voiced their

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57 Cohn, 1957, p. 282.
grievances. This was well-evidenced in the case of the June Uprising of 1963. (See Table 1 on p. 101)

The June Uprising was a result of Khomeini’s arrest on June 5, 1963. On June 3, Khomeini had delivered his sermon on ‘Ashura and publicly ridiculed the Shah. He also questioned the legitimacy of the Shah’s regime. This resulted in his arrest. When the news of his arrest reached his followers, they rioted and demonstrated in all the major Iranian cities and their outskirts, and the Shah was eventually forced to deploy the army to control the situation. As noted above, skilled workers, ulama, retailers, and students comprised the majority of those who participated in the June Uprising.

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58 In 1963 "the end of May and early June coincided with the mourning month of Moharram, during which the passion and martyrdom of Imam Hosain, reenacted in villages and towns across the country, revives in dramatic form the themes of resistance to tyranny and of martyrdom in the name of Islam and justice. Feelings run particularly high on tasu’a and ashura, the ninth and tenth days of the month, which mark the passion and death of Imam Hosain, son of the first Imam, Ali, in the plains of Karbala in an unsuccessful bid to realize his claim to the Caliphate." Bakhash, 1986, p. 29. For the speech, see Algar, 1981, pp. 177-180.
TABLE 1

Occupational Backgrounds of the Arrested and Injured in June Uprising, June 2 to June 10, 1963

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Job Background</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage of Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Skilled workers</td>
<td>163</td>
<td>27.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ulama</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>15.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retailers; shopkeepers</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>13.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>11.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apprentices; assistant shopkeepers</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>8.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Merchants and middlemen</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>6.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unskilled workers</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>5.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployed</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unspecified and others</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private and public employees</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farmers</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional groups</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total [not including those who died]</td>
<td>588</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It can be speculated that the same groups that strongly supported Khomeini and his ideas in the 1963 uprising played a significant role in the Iranian Revolution of 1978-79. Although these groups appeared to belong to mainstream society, each of these groups had reason to feel alienated from and/or deprived by the Shah's regime.

5) KHOMEINI'S VIEWS OF SALVATION

Khomeini envisioned a salvation that was imminent, this-worldly, ultimate, total, and collective. The Iranians who supported Khomeini supported this doctrine. Each of the above-mentioned elements were appealing to them. An imminent salvation was appealing because many Iranians perceived themselves to be

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59 Milani, 1988, p. 95.
suffering under the reign of the Shah and therefore desired emancipation as soon as possible. A this-worldly salvation was also alluring because it meant that not only could they anticipate change in their lifetime, but their day-to-day life would be vastly improved. An ultimate salvation was important to the Iranians because Khomeini's prescribed changes were intended to be eternal. A total salvation can be seen as a motivating factor for Iranians that supported Khomeini because they believed that the salvation he promised would alter society entirely. Finally, Iranians believed that those who supported Khomeini would attain salvation together, that is, their deliverance would be a collective salvation.

According to Khomeini, salvation for his supporters would be attained by ousting the Shah and liberating Iran from foreign cultural influences, especially those of the U.S. and Israel. Khomeini motivated his supporters to revolt against the Shah through his millenarian ideas portrayed in his vivid descriptions of how perfect Iranian society would be after the Shah was ousted and an Islamic republic was created. Khomeini's vision of salvation will be studied by employing Talmon's framework and exploring each characteristic in detail.

A) IMMINENT

Khomeini portrayed religious and political salvation as imminent. He stated in February of 1978, that the time of political and religious emancipation for Iranians was nigh:

God, the Invincible, has willed that the voices of the people now be raised against the Shah and his regime
throughout the country, and these voices will be raised ever louder. The religious leaders will hoist the banner of Islam to exact vengeance on this Zuhhak [a villainous king in the mythical history of pre-Islamic Iran] of the age, and the nation of Islam, with their hearts in unison and obeying the life-giving teachings of the Qur’an, will expunge every trace of this anti-Islamic regime.  

With the abolition of the Shah’s regime, Khomeini assured Iranians that salvation would be theirs. He encouraged them by stating "verily the dawn is near".  

In September of 1978, he reassured Iranians that they would soon reap the fruit of their struggles. He urged them onwards in their struggle against the Shah. "Noble people of Iran! Press forward with your movement and do not slacken for a minute, as I know full well you will not! Be certain that, God willing, victory and triumph are near."  

B) THIS-WORLDLY  

Khomeini also anticipated that salvation would be this-worldly. He suggested that by following the path of the Qur’an, eternal happiness could be gained:  

The Glorious Qur’an and the Sunna [the practice of the Prophet Mohammed, accepted by Muslims as the norm and ideal for all human behavior] contain all the laws and

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61 Ibid.  
ordinances man needs in order to attain happiness and perfection of his state.\textsuperscript{63}

This salvation would result from Muslims collectively pursuing the same goal, to establish an Islamic republic and live under the guidance and authority of the shar'iah. Khomeini vowed that with the establishment of an Islamic republic the injustices of Iranian society would be corrected. He promised this a number of times.\textsuperscript{64} He best summarized how he anticipated Iranian life to change on the first day of the establishment of the Islamic Republic of Iran:

By casting a decisive vote in favor of the Islamic republic, you have established a government of divine justice, a government in which all segments of the population shall enjoy consideration, the light of divine justice shall shine uniformly on all, and the divine mercy of the Qur'an and the Sunna shall embrace all, like life-giving rain. Blessed for you be this government that knows no difference of race, between black or white, or between Turk, Persian, Kurd, Baluch. All are brothers and equal; nobility lies only in the fear of God, and superiority may be only attained by acquiring virtues and performing good deeds. Blessed for you be the day on which all segments of the population have attained their legitimate rights; in the implementation of justice, there will be no difference between women and men, or between the religious minorities and the Muslims. Tyranny has been buried, and all forms of transgression will be buried along with it.\textsuperscript{65}

According to Khomeini, the unity of the umma could bring about this-worldly salvation. This unity, once established, would free oppressed and deprived Muslims from foreign domination.

\textsuperscript{63} Khomeini, no date available, "The Necessity for Islamic Government", in Algar (1981), p. 44.

\textsuperscript{64} See, for example, Khomeini's earlier speeches such as "The Granting of Capitulatory Rights to the U.S.", October 27, 1964, in Algar (1981), pp. 183-184.

In order to assure the unity of the Islamic umma, in order to liberate the Islamic Homeland from the occupation and penetration by the imperialists and their puppet governments, it is imperative that we establish a government. In order to attain the unity and the freedom of Muslim peoples, we must overthrow oppressive governments installed by the imperialists and bring into existence an Islamic government of justice that will be in the service of the people. The formation of such a government will serve to preserve the disciplined unity of Muslims; just as Fatimah az-Zahra\textsuperscript{66} (upon whom be peace) said in her address: "The Imamate\textsuperscript{67} exists for the sake of preserving order among the Muslims and replacing their disunity with unity.\textsuperscript{68}"

It was the duty of the Imam to unify Muslims and it was only as a result of this unity that foreign powers could be overcome.

C) ULTIMATE

Khomeini perceived salvation to be ultimate; he predicted that life under the guidance of the shari'ah would lead to creation of the eternal just state:

The beliefs that Islam came for a limited period and for a certain place violates the essentials of the Islamic beliefs. Considering that the implementation forever of laws after the venerable prophet, may God's prayers be upon him, is one of the essentials of life, then it is necessary for government to exist and for this government to have the qualities of an executive and administrative authority. Without this, social chaos, corruption and ideological and moral deviation would prevail. This can be prevented only through the creation of a just government that runs all aspects of life.\textsuperscript{69}

\textsuperscript{66}Fatimah az-Zahra was the daughter of the Prophet Mohammed and the wife of Imam 'Ali.

\textsuperscript{67}The term signifies the mission of an Imam.


\textsuperscript{69}Khomeini, Islamic Government (1979), p. 19.
This just government was to administer every aspect of life, thereby altering existing society completely; it would lead to "eternal dignity and splendor".\textsuperscript{70} The above quote also reiterates the this-worldly nature of Khomeini's vision of salvation.

D) TOTAL

Khomeini's followers attempted and most likely hoped to change every aspect of society, in an effort to attain total salvation. One of Cohn's criteria for distinguishing millenarian movements from other social movements is that millenarian movements aspire to change society completely. Cohn suggests that revolutionary millenarian movements strive to alter society socially, politically, and/or religiously (in most cases).\textsuperscript{71}

The demands of the oppressed people of Iran are not restricted to the departure of the Shah and the abolition of the monarchy. Their struggle will continue until the establishment of an Islamic Republic that guarantees the freedom of the people, the independence of the country, and the attainment of social justice.

Certain characteristics that existed under the reign of the Shah would be altered, for example the role of women, the influence of the West, and the state's monarchical form of government.

Concomitant with the establishment of the Islamic Republic "dignity and honor in the sight of God and man" would be


\textsuperscript{71} Cohn, 1957, pp. 281-283.
achieved.\textsuperscript{72} Khomeini stressed that total salvation would be the
result of creating an Islamic Republic:

\textit{...it is only through the establishment of a government of Islamic justice, confirmed and supported by the people and functioning with their full and active participation, that the vast cultural, economic, and agricultural damage inflicted by the corrupt regime of the Shah can be repaired and the reconstruction of the country for the benefit of the working and oppressed classes can begin.\textsuperscript{73}}

With the creation of an Islamic Republic, those who perceived themselves as oppressed and/or deprived would be liberated, and total salvation would be attained. Accompanying the Islamic Republic, Iranian society would be entirely altered.

E) COLLECTIVE

Khomeini postulated that religious Muslims could not survive in a corrupt and unjust society, such as the Shah's Iran. He emphasized, therefore, that Muslims had a collective duty to bring about an Islamic government by the destruction of the existing corrupt governments. Khomeini stated that:

A believing, pious, just individual cannot possibly exist in a socio-political environment of this nature and still maintain his faith and righteous conduct. He is faced with two choices: either he commits acts that amount to kurf\textsuperscript{74} and contradict righteousness, or in order not to commit such acts and not to submit to the orders and


\textsuperscript{74} This term literally means the rejection of divine guidance; the antithesis of Islam.
commands of the taghut, the just individual opposes him and struggles against him in order to destroy the environment of corruption. We have... no choice but to destroy those systems of government that are corrupt in themselves and also entail the corruption of others, and to overthrow all treacherous, corrupt, oppressive, and criminal regimes.

The duty of all Muslims, according to Khomeini, was to establish a society that was not corrupt but righteous thereby allowing pious individuals to maintain their way of life. Khomeini stressed that the existing society would need to be purged of its western influence, or corrupting elements, in order to establish the collective Islamic salvation that Khomeini and his followers envisioned.

Khomeini envisioned a collective salvation to be achieved by Muslims uniting to combat what he perceived as foreign domination and oppression. To demonstrate the deity of Muslims in contesting foreign domination, Khomeini cited the Qur'an directly:

"Prepare against them whatever force you can muster" commands you to be as strong and well-prepared as possible, so that your enemies will be unable to oppress you and transgress against you. It is because we have been lacking in unity, strength, and preparedness that we suffer oppression and are at the mercy of foreign aggressors.

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75 Taghut is a title accorded to one who surpasses all bounds in his despotism and tyranny (illegitimate powers) and claims the prerogatives of divinity for himself, whether explicitly or implicitly.


Khomeini encouraged Muslims to unite and collectively conquer foreign domination:

My dear ones! Avoid all disagreements, for disagreement is the work of the devil. Continue your sacred movement in unison for the sake of the ultimate goal, which is the overthrow of the corrupt Pahlavi regime and the liberation of the destiny and resources of our country from foreign control. Fear nothing in your pursuit of these Islamic goals, for no power can halt this great movement. You are in the right; the hand of God Almighty is with you, and it is His will that those who have been oppressed should assume leadership and become heirs to their own destiny and resources.78

Khomeini promised his followers that by emancipating Iran from the Shah and foreign influences, those who perceived themselves as oppressed and deprived would obtain political, social, spiritual, and/or economic leadership and be liberated from their condition of poverty.

Khomeini also stated that it was the collective duty of Muslims to fight for the rights of those who perceived themselves to be alienated and deprived and who therefore could not fend for themselves. This was necessary so that all who desired salvation would be able to achieve it in a collective manner.

Hundreds of millions of Muslims are hungry and deprived of all form of health care and education... It is our duty to save the oppressed and deprived. It is our duty to be a helper to the oppressed and an enemy to the oppressor. ...The scholars of Islam have a duty to struggle against all attempts by the oppressors to establish a monopoly over the sources of wealth or to

78 Khomeini, "In Commemoration of the Martyrs", October 11, 1978, in Algar (1981), pp. 240-241. Algar notes that this part of Khomeini's speech is an allusion to the Qur'anic verse 28:5, which states: "We wish to grant our favor to those who have been oppressed in the earth by making them leaders and making them heirs."
make illicit use of them. They must not allow the masses to remain hungry and deprived while plundering oppressors usurp the sources of wealth and live in opulence.79

The establishment of an Islamic republic would only be attained through Muslim unity and collective action.

This unity of purpose and goal was witnessed in the demonstrations held in Iran. Iranians came together to oust the Shah and establish a just government. Khomeini proclaimed that:

These demonstrations that break down tyranny and advance the goals of Islam are a form of worship that is not confined to only certain months or days, for the aim is to save the nations, to enact Islamic justice, and to establish a divine government on the firm basis of justice.80

This section has attempted to show how Khomeini’s visions of salvation motivated Iranians, especially those who perceived themselves as deprived and alienated from the Shah’s regime, to alter their society. Khomeini contended that in order to establish an Islamic republic, the Shah would have to be ousted. Those Iranians who supported Khomeini’s vision of the Islamic republic struggled to bring it about. These struggles resulted in the Iranian Revolution.

6) THE IRANIAN REVOLUTION

The rapid pace at which the Iranian Revolution took place was astounding because Iranians that supported Khomeini, equipped only

79 Ibid., pp. 49-50.
with their desire for change, brought the Shah’s regime to its knees. The revolutionaries were armed only with slogans and leaflets whereas the Shah commanded an army of four hundred thousand soldiers, a large police force, and a fearsome secret police force, SAVAK, that had four thousand full-time agents and scores of part-time informers.\footnote{Shaul Bakhsh, The Reign of the Ayatollahs: Iran and the Islamic Revolution, (London: I.B. Tauris & Co. Ltd. Publishers, 1985), p.9.}

James Bill notes that the year 1977 set the stage for the Iranian Revolution, as it displayed all the initial signs of the impending collapse of the Shah’s regime.

These critical twelve months contained, in retrospect, all the signs of imminent political collapse... they were visible in the economic system, which was in the midst of a sharp retrenchment; in the religious revival, where hundreds of thousands of Iranians returned to the fundamentals of Shi’i activism; and in the political realm, where the Pahlavi regime attempted to cope with the growing dissent in an inconsistent and ineffective manner.\footnote{James Bill, "The Shah, The Ayatollah, and the U.S.", Headline Series, (Pennsylvania: Science Press, 1988), pp. 9-10.}

It is not within the scope of this thesis to analyze the entire Iranian Revolution. There are, however, a number of events that were crucial to its rapid progression. On January 7, 1978, there was an anti-Khomeini letter published in the Iranian national newspaper, Etela’at. This letter instigated riots within Qom religious community, during which many were killed and injured. This event also initiated a further chain of demonstrations in Qom, Tabriz, Isfahan, and Tehran. Every forty days subsequent to the
killings at Qom, demonstrations were held in the major Iranian cities to protest the government's violation of such basic human rights as political freedom and freedom of expression.\textsuperscript{83}

One event, however, marked the turning point in the Iranian Revolution. This event, which is known as "Black Friday" or "The Jalah Square Incident", enraged Iranians to such a degree that they were no longer able to tolerate the Shah's oppressive regime. On "Black Friday", September 8, 1978, the Shah's troops massacred unarmed protestors during a peaceful demonstration at Jalah Square. "The Shah's troops had fired into unarmed crowds at Jalah Square, killing and wounding hundreds of men, women, and children..."\textsuperscript{84}

The American reaction to this incident was also a deciding factor in the Iranians' fight for social, political, and cultural change. Iranians were simply outraged at the repose that U.S. President Jimmy Carter gave to "Black Friday".

President Carter took time out from his important Camp David meetings to call the Shah early on Sunday morning, September 10. Carter told the monarch he had his personal support and friendship. This publicly announced telephone message convinced the Iranian people that Carter approved of the Jalah massacre and that the United States was now determined to oppose the revolution at all costs.\textsuperscript{85}

The fact that Carter made time during the crucial Camp David meetings with Begin and Sadat to call the Shah and show his support


\textsuperscript{84} Ibid.

shows the importance of the Shah to the U.S. In other words, even Carter, who advocated human rights, supported the Shah’s inhumane behavior towards Iranian citizens. The rage of the dissident Iranian masses at Carter’s unyielding and resolute support of the Shah generated intense anti-American sentiment.

The Shah and his family fled Iran on January 16, 1979, following numerous general strikes, riots, and demonstrations. They never returned. Khomeini arrived in Iran on February 1, 1979, as the leader and founder of the new Islamic Republic of Iran.

7) SUMMARY

This chapter has attempted to show that Khomeini’s doctrine was millenarian and following that, why it was appealing to Iranians. Moreover, this chapter has also attempted to show the nature of the salvation that Iranians anticipated upon the demise of the Shah’s regime and the creation of an Islamic Republic. It can be concluded that Khomeini’s millenarian speeches inspired Iranians to establish an Islamic Republic after they ousted the Shah and rid Iran of foreign influence.
CONCLUSION

This thesis has attempted to show that Mohammed Reza Shah Pahlavi's reign was conducive to the rise of an Islamic movement inspired by millenarian rhetoric. This Islamic movement was comprised of Iranians that who perceived themselves as deprived of political freedom and their traditional way of life. Khomeini promised political, religious, and social emancipation upon the establishment of an Islamic republic. Motivated by Khomeini’s promises, the Iranians who espoused his millenarian vision of salvation encited strikes and demonstrations, consequently bringing the Shah’s regime to its demise.

This thesis has discussed the struggle for power between the Shah and Khomeini. Khomeini eventually won for a number of reasons:

1) The Shah’s attempts to modernize, though positive in themselves, most likely alienated many Iranians because they threatened their traditional way of life.

2) During its later years, the Shah’s government became increasingly oppressive; after the 1949 assassination attempt, political freedom was limited. Many Iranians therefore perceived the Shah as a repressive monarch.

3) Reforms, such as the unveiling of Iranian women, were perceived by many Iranians as attacks on traditional Iranian beliefs and practices.
4) The army and the bureaucracy, because of their powerful status, were corrupt and they were also perceived as oppressive.

5) The ulama, especially Khomeini, were in a position to exploit the situation, which they did primarily by:

   a) claiming that the Shah’s White Revolution was un-Islamic and a threat to Islam, and

   b) presenting an alternative system based on Islam and a millenarian vision of the future.

This power struggle between the Shah and Khomeini resulted in the Iranian Revolution, which ousted the Shah and established the Islamic Republic of Iran in 1979. Some of the reasons that many Iranians chose to support Khomeini have be illustrated in this thesis by employing millenarian theory.

Millenarian theory has helped in explaining the social origins of the Iranian Revolution. Millenarian salvation has also clarified why many Iranians may have found Khomeini’s political ideology appealing. Cohn’s three distinct characteristics of millenarian movements hold true, by and large, in the rise of the Iranian Islamic movement, which resulted in the Iranian Revolution. It can be argued however that Cohn’s contention that millenarian movements are comprised of marginalized and atomized groups is difficult to prove in the Iranian case. As has been noted in Table 1 (p. 101) skilled workers and shopkeepers participated heavily in the June Uprising of 1963. It can also be argued that both these groups are part of main stream society and may even be wealthy and politically influential.
This thesis has added to the field of International Relations a consideration of the social motivations for revolutions. Iranians were motivated by Khomeini's millenarian rhetoric and by their perceived deprivation and/or alienation. They were dissatisfied with the Shah who had embraced western values and imposed them on Iranians. This study has examined the social reasons for the Iranian Revolution and has concluded that it resulted from many Iranians being discontented with their way of life during the Shah's regime.

After the establishment of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Khomeini did not want to limit the establishment of an Islamic republic to Iran. He encouraged Muslims to overthrow other tyrannical regimes in order to establish Islamic republics in every nation with a Muslim population. "This is the duty of all Muslims, that they must fulfill, in every one of the Muslim countries, in order to achieve the triumphant political revolutions of Islam."¹

The Islamic movement of Iran, and Khomeini's leadership, have been the motivating factor in a number of other Islamic insurgencies, for example, in Lebanon, Liberia, Turkey, Egypt, and even Iraq. Although these insurgencies have had limited success, it remains to be seen whether any of them or any other will have success of the Iranian Islamic movement and the subsequent Iranian Revolution.

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