

After the 1953 Iranian coup d'etat, Pahlavi aligned Iran with the Western Bloc and cultivated a close relationship with the United States to consolidate his power as an authoritarian ruler. The American "Operation Ajax", orchestrated by the CIA, was aided by the British MI6 in organizing a military coup d'etat to oust Mossadegh. The Shah fled to Italy when the initial coup attempt on August 15 failed, but returned after a successful second attempt on August 19.[59] Pahlavi maintained a close relationship with the U.S. government, as both regimes shared opposition to the expansion of the Soviet Union, Iran's powerful northern neighbor. Like his father, the Shah's government was known for its autocracy, its focus on modernization and Westernization, and for its disregard for religious and democratic measures in Iran's constitution. Leftist and Islamist groups attacked his government (often from outside Iran as they were suppressed within) for violating the Iranian constitution, political corruption, and the political oppression, torture, and killings, by the SAVAK secret police.

White Revolution (1963–1978) Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi The White Revolution was a far-reaching series of reforms in Iran launched in 1963 by Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi and lasted until 1978. Mohammad Reza Shah's reform program was built especially to weaken those classes that supported the traditional system. It consisted of several elements including land reform; sales of some state-owned factories to finance the land reform; the enfranchisement of women; nationalization of forests and pastures; formation of a literacy corps; and the institution of profit-sharing schemes for workers in industry. [60] The Shah advertised the White Revolution as a step towards westernization, [61] and it was a way for him to legitimize the Pahlavi dynasty. Part of the reason for launching the White Revolution was that the Shah hoped to get rid of the influence of landlords and to create a new base of support among the peasants and working class.[62][63] Thus, the White Revolution in Iran was an attempt to introduce reform from above and preserve traditional power patterns. Through land reform, the essence of the White Revolution, the Shah hoped to ally himself with the peasantry in the countryside, and hoped to sever their ties with the aristocracy in the city. What the Shah did not expect, however, was that the White Revolution led to new social tensions that helped create many of the problems the Shah had been trying to avoid. The Shah's reforms more than quadrupled the combined size of the two classes that had posed the most challenges to his monarchy in the past-- the intelligentsia and the urban working class. Their resentment towards the Shah also grew as they were now stripped of organizations that had represented them in the past, such as political parties, professional associations, trade unions, and independent newspapers. The land reform, instead of allying the peasants with the government, produced large numbers of independent farmers and landless laborers who became loose political cannons, with no feeling of loyalty to the Shah. Many of the masses felt resentment towards the increasingly corrupt government; their loyalty to the clergy, who were seen as more concerned with the fate of the populace, remained consistent or increased. As Ervand Abrahamian pointed out: "The White Revolution had been designed to preempt a Red Revolution." As the foreigners reveled on drink forbidden by Islam, Iranians were not only excluded from the festivities, some were starving." [89] Five years later, the Shah angered pious Iranian Muslims by changing the first year of the Iranian solar calendar from the Islamic hijri to the ascension to the throne by Cyrus the the Shah's family was the foremost beneficiary of the income generated by oil, and the line between state earnings and family earnings blurred. By 1976, the Shah had accumulated

upward of \$1 billion from oil revenue; his family – including 63 princes and princesses had accumulated between \$5 and \$20 billion; and the family foundation controlled approximately \$3 billion.[92] By mid-1977 economic austerity measures to fight inflation disproportionately affected the thousands of poor and unskilled male migrants settling in the cities working in the construction industry. Culturally and religiously conservative,[93] many went on to form the core of the revolution's demonstrators and "martyrs".[94] All Iranians were required to join and pay dues to a new political party, the Hezb-e Rastakhiz party—all other parties were banned.[95] That party's attempt to fight inflation with populist "anti-profiteering" campaigns—fining and jailing merchants for high prices – angered and politicized merchants while fueling black markets.[120] These and later events in Renewed protests (August–September) Appointment of Jafar Sharif-Emami as prime minister (11 August) By August, the protests had "kick[ed]...into high gear, " [122] and the number of demonstrators mushroomed to hundreds of thousands.[119] In an attempt to dampen inflation, the Amuzegar administration cut spending and reduced business. However, the cutbacks led to a sharp rise in layoffs— particularly among young, unskilled, male workers living in the working-class districts. By summer 1978, the working The protesters demanded that Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi step down from power and that Grand Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini be returned from exile. The protests grew incredibly fast, reaching between six million and nine million in strength in the first week. About 5% of the population had taken to the streets in the Muharram protests. Both beginning and ending in the month of Muharram, the protests succeeded, and the Shah stepped down from power later that month.[137] After the success of what would become known as a revolution, Ayatollah Khomeini returned to Iran as its religious and political leader for life. Khomeini had been an opposition leader to Shah for many years, rising to prominence after the death of his mentor, renowned scholar Yazdi Ha'iri, in the 1930s.[138] Even in his years in exile, Khomeini remained relevant in Iran. Supporting the protests from beyond Iran's borders, he proclaimed that "freedom and liberation from the bonds of imperialism" was imminent.[138] Tasu'a and Ashura marches (10–11 December) As the days of Tasu'a and Ashura (10 and 11 December) approached, in order to prevent a deadly showdown the Shah began to draw back. [15] By 11 February 1979, the monarchy was officially brought down and Khomeini assumed leadership over Iran while guerrillas and rebel troops overwhelmed Pahlavi loyalists in armed combat.[16][17] Following the March 1979 Islamic Republic referendum, in which 98% of Iranian voters approved the country's shift to an Islamic republic, the new government began efforts to draft the present-day Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran; [18][8][9][19][20] Khomeini emerged as the Supreme Leader of Iran in December 1979.[21] The success of the Iranian Revolution was met with surprise around the world,[22] and was considered by many to be unusual in nature: it lacked many of the customary causes of revolutionary sentiment (e.g., defeat in war, a financial crisis, peasant rebellion, or disgruntled military);[23] occurred in a country that was experiencing relative prosperity;[6][20] produced profound change at great speed;[24] was massively popular; resulted in the massive exile that characterizes a large portion of today's Iranian diaspora; [25] and replaced a pro-Western secular[26] and authoritarian monarchy[6] with an anti-Western Islamist theocracy[6][19][20][27] that was based on the concept of Velayat-e Faqih (or Guardianship of the Islamic Jurist), straddling between authoritarianism and totalitarianism. Away from public view, Khomeini

developed the ideology of velayat-e faqih (guardianship of the jurist) as government, that Muslims--in fact everyone--required "guardianship," in the form of rule or supervision by the leading Islamic jurist or jurists.[73] Such rule was ultimately "more necessary even than prayer and fasting" in Islam,[Note 2] as it would protect Islam from deviation from traditional sharia law and in so doing eliminate poverty, injustice, and the "plundering" of Muslim land by foreign non-believers.[74] This idea of rule by Islamic jurists was spread through his book Islamic Government, mosque sermons, and smuggled cassette speeches by Khomeini[75][76] among his opposition network of students (talabeh), ex-students (able clerics such as Morteza Motahhari, Mohammad Beheshti, Mohammad-Javad Bahonar, Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, and Mohammad Mofatteh), and traditional businessmen (bazaari) inside Iran.[75] cohesion and organization of Khomeini's forces.[79] Communist groups--primarily the Tudeh Party of Iran and the Fedaian guerrillas[Note 3]--had been weakened considerably by government repression.[106] On 9 January 1978, seminary students and other people demonstrated in the city, which was cracked down by the Shah's security forces who shot live ammunition to disperse the crowd when the peaceful demonstration turned violent.[107] Between 5-300 of the demonstrators were reportedly killed in the protest.[106] 9 January 1978 (19 Dey) is regarded as a bloody day in Qom.[108][109] Consolidation of the opposition (February-March) According to Shia customs, memorial services (chehelom) are held 40 days after a person's death.[110] Encouraged by Khomeini (who declared that the blood of martyrs must water the "tree of Islam"),[102] radicals pressured the mosques and moderate clergy to commemorate the deaths of the students, and used the occasion to generate protests.[111] The informal network of mosques and bazaars, which for years had been used to carry out religious events, increasingly became where protests were larger, and Tehran, where they were smaller--protesting every 40 days. This amounted to a small minority of the more than 15 million adults in Iran.[119] Against the wishes of Khomeini, Shariatmadari called for 17 June mourning protests to be carried out as a one-day stay. [110] Although tensions remained in the milieu, the Shah's policy appeared to have worked, leading Amuzegar to declare that "the crisis is over." One European newspaper, the Frankfurter Neue Presse, reported that Mosaddegh "would rather be fried in Persian oil than make the slightest concession to the British." The British considered an armed invasion, but UK Prime Minister Winston Churchill decided on a coup after being refused American military support by U.S. President Harry S. Truman, who sympathized with nationalist movements like Mosaddegh's and had nothing but contempt for old-style imperialists like those who ran the AngloIranian Oil Company. Mosaddegh, however, learned of Churchill's plans and ordered the British embassy to be closed in October 1952, forcing all British diplomats and agents to leave the country. Although the British were initially turned down in their request for American support by President Truman, the election of Dwight D. Eisenhower as U.S. president in November 1952 changed the American stance toward the conflict. On 20 January 1953, U.S. Secretary of State John Foster Dulles and his brother, C.I.A. Director Allen Dulles, told their British counterparts that they were ready to move against Mosaddegh. In their eyes, any country not decisively allied with the United States was a potential enemy. Iran had immense oil wealth, a long border with the Soviet Union, and a nationalist prime minister. The prospect of a fall into communism and a "second China" (after Mao Zedong won the Chinese Civil War) terrified the Dulles brothers.[65] Western culture was a plague or an intoxication to

be eliminated;[70] Ali Shariati's vision of Islam as the one true liberator of the Third World from oppressive colonialism, neo-colonialism, and capitalism; [71] and Morteza Motahhari's popularized retellings of the Shia faith all spread and gained listeners, readers and supporters.[70] Most importantly, Khomeini preached that revolt, and especially martyrdom, against injustice and tyranny was part of Shia Islam,[72] and that Muslims should reject the influence of both liberal capitalism and communism, ideas that inspired the revolutionary slogan "Neither East, nor West – Islamic Republic!" Despite this the guerrillas did help play an important part in the final February 1979 overthrow[81] delivering "the regime its coup de grace." [96] In 1977 the Shah responded to the "polite reminder" of the importance of political rights by the new American president, Jimmy Carter, by granting amnesty to some prisoners and allowing the Red Cross to visit prisons. Through 1977 liberal opposition formed organizations and issued open letters denouncing the government.[97] Against this background a first crucial manifestation of public expression of social discontent and political protest against the regime took place in October 1977, when the GermanIranian Cultural Association in Tehran hosted a series of literature reading sessions, organized by the newly revived Iranian Writers Association and the German Goethe-Institute. In these "Ten Nights" (Dah Shab) 57 of Iran's most prominent poets and writers read their The chain of events began with the death of Mostafa Khomeini, chief aide and eldest son of Ruhollah Khomeini.[29] After the consolidation of Khomeinist factions, Iran began to back Shia militancy across the region in an attempt to combat Sunni influence and establish Iranian dominance within the Arab world, ultimately aiming to achieve an Iranian-led Shia political order.[30] 6