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## The Iranian Parliament Institutional Decline Indices at the Time of Reza Shah

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## ABSTRACT

Investigation into Reza Shah's actions 15 years after the advent of Constitutional Revolution suggests the Shah's dual conduct towards the constitution, interference in parliamentary elections, votes manipulation & abuse of power to elect parliament speakers which led to the institution's being away from functional duties and parliament institutional decline.

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### INTRODUCTION

At the time of the constitution compilation, the presence of a powerful constitution and parliament was thought to change into a national solidarity center which would not be easily vulnerable to domestic & foreign pressures, and it would instead, both protect the fundamental of the government and prevent the violation of the authority structure to the alliance established between them and the nation. Investigation however suggests types of domestic & foreign interferences in such institutions.

Opposition of Reza Shah to the constitution and parliament: Reza Shah never cancelled the constitution. Nor he dissolved the board of ministers. In many cases however, he talked of the necessity to protect the constitution & constitutionalism. In his 1<sup>st</sup> prime ministry declaration, he referred to 2 principles of protecting the nation's rights and executing the law (Maki, H., 1358). Yet, investigation into his actions shows that he has attempted to violate the laws in many cases. As examples:

- Upon his being appointed to ministry of war, he did not attend the board of ministers any more (Bahar, M.S., 1371).
- He discussed the issue of republicanism 3 months after he became the prime minister,
- He delivered an ultimatum to the 5<sup>th</sup> parliament for his appointment as the forces commander-in-chief.
- He tried to cull parliaments representatives (Mlaykof., 1358) through whom the single article of sultanate change, the single article of granting Iranian nationality to fouzieh, the law of offence to the king Excellency, were ratified,
- His withdrawal of immunity for the representatives of the 8<sup>th</sup> parliament onwards which opposed principle 12 of the constitution, and
- Based on Reza Shah's inauguration speeches, parliament's plans were identified. As an example, at the inauguration of the 8<sup>th</sup> parliament, he said, "I am pleased what I advised at the previous parliament was performed. I wish the 8<sup>th</sup> parliament would be named the period of economy". (Hedayat, M.S., 1375).

This is why Reza Shah is said to have attached no value or importance to parliament, and nothing to consultation. Beside the fact that the parliament showed the apparent shape of a constitutional government, he liked the parliament because it could contain the khans, great landlords and clans heads, for he wanted to monitor all of them in Tehran (Behnoud, M., 1370). Besides, he had advised to one of his prime ministers, "Employ competent experts in executive positions and send to the parliament those who are good for nothing." (Toloe, M., 1376) Not illogically, the British ambassador used to say, "The Iranian parliament cannot be taken seriously. It's representatives are not independently free and parliamentary elections are not freely held." (Abrahamian, Y., 1377).

Due to parliamentary institutional decline in the 2<sup>nd</sup> period of constitutionalism, the legislative power less succeeded in questioning and criticizing or interpolating the cabinets, none of the proposed cabinets and prime

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ministers faced vote of no-confidence, no draft or bill received from the government was denied and no law to which the government or the king himself opposed was ratified by the parliament.

*Conclusion:*

As observed, at the time of Reza Shah, in the format of protecting the legal appearance of the government and institutions which were considered to symbolize the governance of law, functions opposing the state law were practically justified, and especially from the 4<sup>th</sup> parliament onwards, we observe Reza Shah's interferences in parliament representative's elections, work agenda compilation and parliamentary priorities. He became in effect the identifier and proposer of that group of the constitution provisions and relevant complements which needed changes. This was why the institution of parliament and constitution became distant from their functional load and faced the category of institutional decline or decadence.

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