

National Consultative Assembly, 6th Term

The sixth term of The National Consultative Assembly was inaugurated on July 11, 1926 with a speech by Reza Shah. The election for this Assembly was the first one that had been held under the reign of Reza Shah as the king of Iran. Reza Shah's ascension to the throne was the beginning of period during which Iran's parliament turned into a ceremonial organ.

During elections held for the first to the fifth assembly, independent politicians in cities and influential figures in villages used to convince people to turn out massively to cast their ballots. However, from the sixth assembly onward, it was the Shah in person who decided the outcome of elections.

Since Reza Shah insisted on the approval of executive affairs by the legislature he drew up a list of future MPs in cooperation with the chief of law enforcement forces to be sent by the Ministry of Interior to provincial governor's offices to be passed on to the election watchdog. (Abrahamian, 2004: 172)

In the 6th Assembly, a minority led by Seyed Hassan Modarress sought in vain to halt the endorsement of unelected deputies. In the end, the credentials of three-fourths of MPs were approved and the assembly took office on August 14, 1926. Since Reza Shah had not yet established his full hegemony in the country some anti-monarchy deputies managed to find their way into the chamber. In Tehran, only three of twelve deputies had been pushed in by Court.

The 6th Assembly was set to house 132 seats, but the cities of Rasht and Sanandaj were not represented. One credential was rejected and a representative of Armenians living in southern Iran tendered his resignation. The Assembly was finally inaugurated with 128 members.

In terms of lineup no tangible change was seen: Landowners and civil servants had the majority of seats while the number of clerics was on the decline. (Shajiei, 1965: 181)

The Revival and Socialist parties, which contributed to the ascension to the throne of Reza Shah, were strongly present in the new assembly. The Revival party comprised former Democrats who had lost confidence in masses; however, Socialists were former Democrats who still pinned hope on middle and lower social classes. Other parties – Economy, Liberal, Unity, Radical, Independent and Individualist – constituted minorities.

From the 7th Assembly onward, even this minimum representation by political parties and groups was terminated and the chamber was filled with Reza Shah-appointed lawmakers. Under the rule of Reza Shah, no political party and population was recognized. (Nozari, 2001: 16)

Another characteristic of this period was the elimination of the elite from the legislative body. The most prominent one was Modarress, a redoubted opponent of Reza Shah. Modarress survived an assassination attempt on October 30, 1926. Under Reza Shah's influence, Modarress was barred from the 7th Assembly. Meanwhile, Hassan Pirnia, the first prime minister of Constitutional period and member of the 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th and 6th assemblies, and his brother Hossein, who served in six assemblies and was speaker of the 4th assembly, quitted politics for good. Mohammad Taqi Bahar, the famous poet who was deputy in the 3rd, 4th, and 5th assemblies, was also barred from the legislature. Also, Mostofi al-Mamalek became prime minister and

nominated his Cabinet. But he was finally forced to resign and he could never return to politics. He was succeeded by Mehdi Qoli Khan Hedyat. (Masoudi et al, 2014: 114-115)

However, this round of assembly was the most fruitful one in terms of the number of sessions. A total of 276 sessions were held and positive steps were taken for drafting economic laws and establishing administrative bodies.

Among the acts approved by the 6th Assembly was the establishment of a mortgage bank by the Ministry of Finance in late 1926.

This assembly also authorized the following matters: amendments to laws governing judicial bodies, ordered the establishment of Office of Registration of Deeds and Properties and Office of Statistics, adopted a treaty of amity between Iran and Turkey and Afghanistan, adopted a law for the establishment of Bank Melli Iran, voted a law which barred civil servants from running for parliament, approved law for punishing embezzlers of state funds, adopted a law for prosecuting ministers and jurors, monopolized tobacco, barred exit of gold and silver through national borders and ordered the construction of railway.

Mean while, in order to save state spendings, the assembly moved to modify salaries paid to civil servants. However, this motion was held in abeyance due to a general strike by employees. The expulsion of the American held of Iran's Treasury at the order of Reza Shah and preparing the ground for the annulment of capitulation were among other measures adopted by the 6th Assembly. (Shajiei, Ibid: 152-153 And Masoudi et al, Ibid: 113-114)

The 6th Assembly's term ended on August 12, 1928. After that, a new era of absolute monarchy started with the legislature turning into a ceremonial body.

References

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