

National Consultative Assembly, 7th Term

The 7th National Consultative Assembly was inaugurated on October 6, 1928. It was the beginning of an era during which the Assembly distanced itself from its' real mission. The first to sixth assemblies were marked for their perseverance against internal despotism and external colonialism. However, from the 7th Assembly onward, when Reza Shah was in power, the Assembly turned into a ceremonial body.

Reza Shah's accession to the throne was a product of special conditions prevailing in the world. As the balance of power between Tsar-led Russia and Britain was disturbed, concerns grew over Russia's October 1917 Revolution, and the project for legal colonialism under the cover of the 1919 Treaty failed. The British decided to install an absolute monarchy relying on a modern army within the framework of a secular and progressive approach in strategically important Iran. The first body that was affected by this policy was Majlis. As a result, the legislative vote for the 7th Assembly was held in a ceremonial form and three months before the 6th Assembly bowed out.

The election watchdog was comprised of 36 members from the main six groups (scholars, lords, land proprietors, tradespeople, guilds, and farmers). This watchdog was formed during the 7th Assembly, but it was neutralized by Reza Shah.

After the election, three MPs from Tehran (Motamen al-Molk, Mostofi al-Mamalek, and Moshir ad-Doleh) tendered their resignations. Three other people were nominated to replace them. Ali Modarress was one of them, but he refused. The Lar Constituency failed to have any representative. In the end, a total of 136 deputies formed the 7th Assembly. The main absentee was Seyyed Hassan Modarress, a firm opponent of Reza Shah.

The Shah directly intervened to bar him from Majlis. Modarress expressed a phrase which marked history: "But what happened to the single vote which I cast in my own favor?"

In the end, only two opponent MPs were allowed in. They were Farrokhi Yazdi, the poet and chief editor of Toufan newspaper, and Mahmoud Tolouei, who represented the northern city of Lahijan. (Modarresi et al, 2014: 118-121)

In line with the policy of eliminating opponents, no dissident party was in Majlis. Progress Party, the parliamentary branch of Revival Party or Modern Iran, was the only tolerated dissident party in Majlis.

The Revival Party was renamed Modern Iran in the final days of the 6th Assembly in office. This party survived only three months and was then banned. After that, Progress Party was only tolerated. This party, which was organized based on Mussolini's Fascism in Italy and Ataturk's Republic in Turkey, was active up to 1932. In a bid to eliminate Modern Iran, Reza Shah created the "Anti-Foreigner Party". Reza Shah, who was strictly opposed to any party, finally dissolved his own creation. Civil servants were barred from membership in any political party. From that time until the end of Reza Shah's reign, no political party or group was lawfully allowed to be active. (Abrahamian, 2004: 172-173 And Atabaki, 2006: 99)

In terms of classes represented in the Assembly, the number of clerics started falling sharply and continued in the future terms. It is noteworthy that the number of clerics who were Mujtahid and had advanced theological education were higher in the previous assemblies. The clerics in the 7th Assembly and the following assemblies held low degrees of study. In the

lineup of other components of Majlis, no significant change was seen and land proprietors still dominated Majlis. (Shajiei, Ibid: 181)

The Cabinet that won the vote of confidence under the 7th Assembly was headed by Mehdi Qoli Khan Hedayat who had led the government under the 6th Assembly too. He was in office two years as long as the 7th Assembly was in power. (Modarresi et al, 2014: 121)

Acts of parliament in this term were aimed at modernizing Iran; however some of them were rubber-stamped: Obligation of uniform for civil servants and authorization of uniforms for the clergy, religious scholars and religious monitories, law on sending students abroad, direct tax law, tobacco monopoly law, agriculture bank law, anti-slavery law, weights law, radio establishment law, and printing banknotes in Bank Melli. (Shajiei, Ibid: 154 And Modarresi et al, Ibid: 123)

The 7th Assembly arrived at the end of its term on October 23, 1930.

References

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