

National Consultative Assembly, 8th Term

The 8th National Consultative Assembly was inaugurated on December 15, 1930, but started its' work on January 15, 1931 with a view to improving the economy. This term of Majlis was the lowest-profile yet. Following the model of the 7th Assembly, the election for the 8th Assembly was held with government intervention and nomination of unelected deputies. There was no canvassing and campaigning in the run-up to the election, indicating Reza Shah's supreme authority. The ruling government did not deny its' interference with legislative affairs and it even supported its meddlesome policy. The 8th Assembly was the last one under the reign of Reza Shah to house representatives of political parties. The parliamentary branch of Modern Iran was still active. In practice, this party wouldn't really any independent activity. It was totally banned in 1932. (Nozari, 2001: 16 And Atabaki, 2006: 99)

The lineup of the 8th Assembly was indicative of a significant decline in the number of clerics. It was somewhat related to Reza Shah's dominance on Majlis. Even this number declined in the following terms of Assembly. The share of clerics in the Assembly declined from 32% in the 3rd Assembly to 17% in the 7th Assembly and 10% in the 8th Assembly. Only 3% of these clerics were Mujtahids, down from 13% in the 3rd Assembly. Land proprietors made up 59% of MP's in the 8th Assembly. Civil servants made up 42%, merchants 13%, national institutes' employees, and lower classes 1% each. (Shajiei, 1965: 181)

Among important events during the 8th Assembly was the termination of immunity for MPs. Not with standing the stipulations of the Constitution and rules of procedure in the National Consultative Assembly, ending the immunity of MPs turned into a political tradition under Reza Shah.

Article 12 of the Constitution which was in effect stipulated that nobody was authorized to file protest against MPs without notifying the National Consultative Assembly and without approval thereof. But on August 29, 1932, Minister of Interior Mansour al-Malek had a law adopted in the parliament in a bid to end the immunity of Esmaeil Khan Qashqaei and his son Nasser Khan, who represented Fars Province in Majlis. This action was aimed at undermining nomads and suppressing riots in Southern Iran. (Mollaei Tavani, 2011: 373-379)

Other acts of parliament adopted by this assembly included the termination of D'Arcy Concession which had been awarded to British businessman William Knox D'Arcy in 1901 by Muzaffaruddin Shah Qajar for 60 years of oil exploration and extraction in southern Iran. The reason for the annulment of the Concession was the decline in Iran's revenue from oil extraction. The Iranian government scrapped the agreement, but the British government filed a lawsuit against Iran and finally a 1933 deal was signed. Reza Shah gave his nod to the new agreement following talks with Sir John Cadman, then CEO of Anglo-Persian Oil Company (APOC). The Shah also forced the parliament to endorse the deal which was valid for 60 years and authorized APOC to extract and sell Iran's oil without having to submit any report to the Iranian government. (Abrahamian, 2004: 179)

Under this Assembly, 264 laws were adopted, the most important of which were as follows: Law on Granting Monopoly of External Trade to Government, Law on Inauguration of Wireless Telegraph in Iran, Law on Prohibition of Land Ownership by Foreigners, Law on Residence of Foreign Nationals in Iran, and Law on Authorizing National Bank to Print Banknotes for 10 Years.

During the 8th Assembly, an act of parliament divided the Ministry of Economy into three Directorates-General of Trade, Agriculture, and Industry. (Shajiei, Ibid: 154 And Masoudi et al, Ibid: 133)

The only Cabinet formed during the 8th Assembly was led by Mokhber as-Saltaneh.

The 8th Assembly ended its term on January 13, 1933.

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