

National Consultative Assembly, 18th Term

In the aftermath of the August 18, 1953 coup, Shah Mohammad Reza and the Court overtly meddled with the legislative election. The election for the 18th Assembly was held in early 1954. The parliament was inaugurated on March 18, 1954. The 18th Assembly marked the end of the 1951-1953 overture as due to the Court's interference, the Reza Shah-era assemblies were regenerated.

As the 18th Assembly started work, Mohammad Mossadeq and his government stood trial. Everyone was preoccupied with the hearings and the 18th legislative election was held without any important incident. A total of 132 MPs, mainly pro-Shah, were elected. Fifty of them were proprietors of land. (Shajiei, 1965: 178)

Political parties became ineffective, the Tudeh party leaders left the country while many of them were arrested and executed. Leaders of Toilers and Iran party became isolated or left the country. The "Iran People Party" joined the Iran party to form Movement of God-Worshipping Socialists led by Mohammad Nakhshab. Later on, he dissociated himself from the Iran People Freedom Society in support of Mossadeq and started cooperating with Islamic-Shia groups. (Azghandi, 2003: 311-312)

The National Front Movement restarted its work under the title of National Resistance Movement in 1954 after the release of its members from prison. Fadaian-e Eslam was also active covertly. (Ibid, 302-303).

Alongside these parties and groups were parliamentary blocs of Unity, Consensus, Democrats, Progress, and Youth parties (Shajiei, 1993: 290). The press also faced crackdown and was placed under government control. The crackdown was so tough that a large number of newspaper editors signed an open letter to MPs, complaining about stifling crackdown on the press. (Safari, 1991: 79-80)

One of the most important tasks assigned to the 18th Assembly was to approve the international oil consortium contract, which the Zahedi government had negotiated with the US and UK governments for four months. This contract divided Iran's oil resources between eight American, British, Dutch, and French companies (Shajiei, Ibid: 284).

The negotiations finally concluded on July 18, 1954 and the Assembly voted in 114 to 1 in favor of the oil agreement that was to be signed by Dr. Ali Amini, Finance Minister and Howard N. Page, vice president of the Standard Oil Company (New Jersey) and chairman of the consortium delegation. (Masoudi, 2014: 301)

After strengthening his power, Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi dismissed General Fazlollah Zahedi as prime minister after America approved. Hossein Ali was confirmed by the Assembly as prime minister on April 7, 1955. Eight months after, he survived an assassination attempt by Fadaian-Eslam on November 15. (Ibid: 304)

A major change which happened during the term of the 18th Assembly was that the parliament's term in office doubled from two to four years. The number of parliamentary seats was increased to 200 from 136. (Safari, 1991: 223); Abrahamian, 2004: 516)

An important piece of legislation in the 18th Assembly was the approval of Iran's integration into the Baghdad Pact, or the Middle East Treaty Organization (METO), on October 23, 1955. Pakistan and Britain also joined this treaty. After Iraq pulled out of this pact in August 1959, it was renamed the Central Treaty Organization (CENTO). (Shajiei, 1965: 169)

A total of 343 laws were approved by the 18th Assembly. In addition to the foregoing, important laws were as follows: Law on payment of pensions to survivors of servicemen killed in action; Law on Fight against Harassment of Women in the Streets; law on teachers rights; Law on Sending Top Students Sbroad to Study; law on improving teachers rights; Statistics Law; approval of National Iranian Oil Company's Articles of Association; law banning cultivation of poppy and use of opium, Seven-year Development Plan Law; Banking Law; separation of National Economy Ministry to Ministry of Commerce and Ministry of Industry and Mines; Municipality Law. (Masoudi, Ibid: 307; Shajiei, Ibid)

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