

National Consultative Assembly, 22nd Term

The legislative election for the 22nd National Consultative Assembly was held in the summer of 1967, immediately after the 21st Assembly ended its term. The 22nd Assembly was inaugurated on October 6 the same year and was in office for four years.

A significant feature of this term of the Assembly was that the number of lawmakers increased from 200 to 219. The election for the National Assembly coincided with the election for the Senate and the Assembly of Constituents.

This round of election was party-based. Prime Minister Amir Abbas Hoveyda always spoke of free and fair elections. He was a member of the majority Modern Iran party, but declared himself neutral.

The Shah delivered a speech, calling on hopefuls to join either the minority or majority party. However, the election results was a foregone conclusion. It was agreed earlier that the Peoples Party receive 30 seats, Pan-Iranist Party five seats, and Modern Iran party the remaining seats. (Qobadi, 2004: 238-265)

The Modern Iran party was established in 1963 by the prime minister, Hassan-Ali Mansour. He was succeeded by Hoveyda after his assassination by Fadaian Elsam group.

Modern Iran was the largest and the most durable state-run party of the Pahlavi era. It dominated the 22nd and the 23rd national assemblies.

The Peoples Party, which was established by Assadollah Alam in 1957, used to constitute a minority in parliament. (Saremi, Shahab, 1999: 95-128)

In fact these two government-backed parties had been established to highlight Iran's parliamentary system and convince the US and European press about Iran's parliamentary regime. (Tolouei, 1995: 821)

The Pan-Iranist party was set up in 1941 based on a view to fight hegemony and colonialism. It was active throughout struggles for the nationalization of petroleum industry. Following the ouster of Prime Minister Mohammad Mossadeq, their general policy was based on détente and avoidance of confrontation with the ruling establishment. The Pan-Iranist party stuck to its extremist nationalist views and had regulated its performance on such basis. (Razmjoo, 1999: 35)

The Peoples Party suffered a crushing defeat in the election. It failed to have even a single candidate elected in Tehran or other big cities. Only under the order of Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, could 29 MPs be allowed into parliament from small cities. Three-fourths of seats (108) went to the Modern Iran party and four seats were won by pan-Iranists. (Akhtarian, 1996: 86)

Abdollah Riazi was elected speaker of parliament again. The credentials of Gholam-Reza Mobin, representative of Khaf, were rejected due to his opposition to changes to supplements of the Constitution. (Masoudi, 2009: 388)

Addressing the Assembly's inauguration, Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi announced the three principles of his White Revolution as follows: nationalization of water resources, reconstruction, and administrative revolution. Prime Minister Hoveyda nominated his Cabinet to parliament and won the vote of confidence for them. Since most MPs were submissive to him he had no problem with the approval of motions and bills. (Masoudi, 2014; 387)

A large number of bills were approved under the 22nd Assembly, but the most challenging one was the Iranian government's agreement with the United Nations to recognize the independence of Bahrain. Historical documents indicate that the Bahraini island had been an integral part of Iran's territory since before the revelation of Islam. The Bahraini island's autonomy bid started after it came under full British dominance in 1982.

Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi sought in vain to restore Iran's sovereignty over Bahrain, but out of the sudden he struck a deal with Britain in 1968 to give up on his bid for getting back Bahrain. In return, Britain pulled out of the three islands of the Lesser Tunb, the Greater Tunb, and Abu Musa islands.

The Pan-Iranist party strongly opposed the government's decision, but the bill for the detachment of Bahrain was approved by 187 votes in favor. Only 4 votes from pan-Iranists were against the bid. Due to their opposition, the Pan-Iranists were banned from running in the next election. (Amin, 2009: 48-58)

Nearly 560 bills and laws were approved by the 22nd Assembly, the most important of which were the following: Water Nationalization Law, law on establishment of ministries of agrarian reform, agricultural produce, science and higher education, and natural resources, law on Authorizing Poppy Cultivation and Opium Export, Law on Women's Social Services. (Masoudi, 2014: 391)

The 22nd Assembly was dissolved on August 31, 1971 and the next assembly was immediately formed without any significant changes in the composition of lawmakers.

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