

REMOVAL FROM OFFICE

His Imperial Majesty has other means of limiting the power of the counterelite than these variations in what is basically the rather uncommon practice of forced or voluntary exile. One such means that is repeatedly employed is the removal of dissidents from office. There exist numerous examples whereby a member of the counterelite, persisting in attacking the government or regime, exhausts the patience and tolerance

⁴³ During his entire term as an exile and, subsequently, as Iranian ambassador to UNESCO, Eghbal is reported to have drawn a salary as professor of medicine at Tehran University. Holding two (or three) full-time jobs is not an uncommon practice but simultaneously holding full-time jobs in different countries is.

⁴⁴ Echo of Iran, *Daily Bulletin: Political Edition*, 15, no. 41 (Feb. 21, 1967): 5.

of His Majesty. More unusual is the case of a group of the most trusted of the elite, perceived by others in fact as *nokare dowlat* (lackies of the government), being so removed.

By the second day of the extensive rioting following the mourning of Moharram and the arrest of Khomeini in June 1963, the blood of thousands of Iranians had been spilt.⁴⁵ His Excellency Hussein Ala, then serving as minister of the Imperial Court, expressed mounting concern over the force of the military reaction to the riots. He called together a handful of Iran's most elite officials, among whom were Abdollah Entezam, General Morteza Yazdanpanah, and Sardar Fakher Hekmat. Together they agreed that the savage military response to what had begun as a simple protest against the arrest of Khomeini could only redound to the ill of His Majesty. Already the strength and determination of the rioters had grown in the face of the shooting. Disorders had spread through Iran and rumor had it that University of Tehran students were about to enter on the side of the rioters. And, increasingly, the demonstrators were not expressing their violence in random fashion. They were seeking out, looting, and burning undefended government offices.

The results, this group assumed, could be a government victory, but by bloodbath. Or the army could waiver and the government fall, perhaps with unimagined consequences for the shahanshah. In either case too many lives would be lost and too much bitterness engendered for the intrinsic importance of the riot's origins. They decided to approach His Imperial Majesty to urge him to temper the violence of the government's response.

Hussein Ala. Who were these four members of the elite who had resolved on this unusual step? Hussein Ala was then seventy-eight years of age. His father had served the Qajars as prime minister, minister, and ambassador and had been a leading constitutionalist in the 1905–1907 revolu-

⁴⁵ Estimates of the numbers of casualties suffered in the rioting vary widely by source. One elite respondent, sympathetic to the demonstrators, estimated that "between five and ten thousand had *died* throughout the country." Writing in *Peighame Emruz* (Tehran) on June 10, 1963, Dr. A. R. Azimi suggested that "some of the persons arrested during the June 4 disturbances had confessed that they had been paid 25 rials [33 cents] each to take part in the processions. They had been told that if killed they would go to Paradise. We are told that the number reached 10,000." Premier Alam, on the other hand, told the *New York Times* that 86 were killed and 150 injured (June 7, 1963, p. 1), while Iranian newspapers reported that "official figures put the casualties at 200" (*Tehran Journal*, June 8, 1963). The author was an eyewitness to the initiation of firing by army troops on the first day in front of the Tehran Bazaar. It is his personal opinion that actual casualty figures resemble more closely the former estimates than the latter. Whatever the actual totals, which will undoubtedly never be known, the number of dead and wounded certainly reached many thousands.

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tion. Ala himself had served with distinction under Reza Shah and Mohammad Reza Shah. He had filled cabinet posts in the Ministries of Finance, Public Welfare, Science, Agriculture, Trade, and Foreign Affairs. He had been a delegate to the Paris Peace Conference following World War I (where the Iranian delegation was excluded by British pressures), and he was Iran's chief delegate to the United Nations after World War II. It was Ala who eloquently pleaded Iran's case against the USSR in the Security Council, protesting the Soviet's refusal to withdraw their troops from Iranian territory. He had also served the two monarchs as ambassador (to Spain, London, and the United States), and the present king as prime minister and twice previously as minister of court. He was considered so devoted to the monarch that Mossadegh had demanded and received his dismissal by the shah. At the time of this extraordinary meeting, Ala was once again serving as minister of court, a position to which he had been reappointed immediately following the overthrow of Mossadegh.

Abdollah Entezam. Abdollah Entezam, born in 1907, was the son of Entezam os-Saltaneh (Order of the Kingdom), who several times served the Qajars as minister. Abdollah Entezam had entered government service in the Foreign Ministry and filled a variety of foreign posts until Ala was called to form a cabinet. Entezam served as his minister of foreign affairs. After Mossadegh's overthrow, Entezam again served as minister of foreign affairs through the cabinets of General Zahedi and Ala. In 1957, he was appointed director of the National Iranian Oil Company, a position he was holding when the riots broke out.

Sardar Fakher Hekmat. In 1895, Sardar Fakher Hekmat was born into a renowned family of Shiraz. His grandfather was the most famous physician of his day while his father was a wealthy landowner. Hekmat was early a patriot, taking part in the Constitutional Revolution. Later, during World War II, he organized military resistance to the British in southern Persia. Thereafter he served as governor of numerous provinces but entered the Majles in its fourth session, inaugurated shortly after the coup staged by Zia ed-Din and Reza Khan. Hekmat continued to serve in numerous sessions of the Parliament, even rejecting a request from the shah to form a cabinet. Beginning in 1941, he was elected speaker of the Majles, a position that he held through the dissolved twentieth session. He headed the lower house from 1947 through 1961, save for the Mossadegh period, when he "retired" from politics as a result of his differences with the prime minister. At the time of the riots, Hekmat was preparing to resume his political activities in the elections for Parliament that had been promised for that summer.

General Morteza Yazdanpanah. General Morteza Yazdanpanah was the oldest and most venerated general of his time. Born in 1888, he was a graduate of the *Ghazaq Khaneh* (Cossacks' House) where officers were trained for the Russian-sponsored Cossack Brigade. At the time of the 1921 coup, Yazdanpanah was a general commanding the Northern Army. He was invaluable to Reza Shah from 1921 to 1941 as he drove his troops victoriously against the tribes in all sections of the country. With the abdication of Reza Shah, the new king leaned heavily on the experienced and devoted Yazdanpanah. The general served him four times as minister of war, as His Majesty's general adjutant, and finally as senator. With the dissolution of the Parliament in 1961, His Majesty appointed General Yazdanpanah as director of the Imperial Inspectorate (an Iranian variant of the ombudsman reporting directly to the shah), a position he was filling in June 1963.

These four devoted elite officials carried their forebodings to His Imperial Majesty at a hastily arranged audience. What actually transpired at that audience is unknown. It is reported that the shah was infuriated. That any of his servants, even these four trusted officials, should presume to instruct him in the conduct of kingship, which he had practiced since 1941, was insufferable. What is known is the aftermath. Ala was relieved of his duties as minister of court. Later, he was "promoted" to the Senate. Yazdanpanah was dropped from the Inspectorate. He was also "promoted" to the Senate. Hekmat was forbidden to campaign for the Parliament, was not appointed to the Senate, and remained in the silent isolation of an inactive politician. Entezam was retired from the National Iranian Oil Company and was "at home." (He was succeeded by Dr. Eghbal, who returned from Europe.)

These four had attempted what is never done in Iran—to volunteer suggestions of policy to His Imperial Majesty. That a member of the elite should assume that he could alter the behavior of the shah might establish a precedent dangerous to the continued autonomy of His Majesty's sovereignty. From the shah's perspective, such an assumption must be rejected out of hand, while publicly negated and invalidated. A most effective means of accomplishing these ends and destroying the assumption is to render powerless their perpetrators. In this, the shah did not hesitate, irrespective of the individuals involved.

Interestingly, these same riots witnessed a similar incident that Persians, *au courant* with court matters, consider unprecedented. Another government official offered the shah an ultimatum, and, strangely enough, succeeded. During the night between the first and second days of rioting, Prime Minister Alam roused the shah by telephone. He respectfully suggested that troops who had spent the day and evening

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firing on their own countrymen might refuse to continue a second day. With riots having broken out in cities around the country, no risks could be run in Tehran. If the troops of the capital refused to "shoot to kill" as the shah had ordered, forces throughout Iran might waiver. The shah is reported to have raged that as commander in chief of the Imperial Iranian Armed Forces, he knew his men. They were too well disciplined and too obedient to refuse to execute even his most inconsequential orders, he said. Alam then responded that such might be the case. But if the shah did not remove the troops that had seen action and replace them with fresh troops from outside the city by morning, he was resigning the premiership. His Majesty knew Alam as a trusted boyhood playmate who had been totally loyal his entire life. If he concurred, it would be one of the few such incidents of his rule. The shah hesitated, but agreed. On the second day, fresh troops "shot to kill."