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Russian Terrorism in Tehran: A Qajar Princes' Letters during the "Minor Tyranny" of 1908

Lloyd Ridgeon

Abstract

A daughter of Naser al-Din Shah named Malakeh-ye Iran suffered the indignity of having her house in Tehran plundered during the Minor Tyranny of 1908 when the autocratic Shah attempted to re-assert control over the newly won powers of the democratic Constitutional movement. It is generally thought that the ransacking of her house was due to the sympathetic views towards the Constitutional movement that she shared with her husband, Zahir al-Dawlah and their radical son, Zahir al-Soltan. Malakeh-ye Iran's letters to her husband, who was in Gilan at the time of the attack, graphically describe this traumatic event and are intriguing because neither her supposed "pro-Constitutional" views are apparent, nor does she blame the autocratic Shah (and her nephew), Mohammad ^cAli for the destruction of her home. It is to be speculated whether her reluctance to blame and criticise the Shah was due to her family connections or whether she feared that the letters might be intercepted and read by the Shah's spies. Aside from shedding light on one of the most dramatic periods of the Constitutional Movement, the letters also demonstrate the erudition of a Qajar princess, and the bravery and courage of a hitherto unexplored character whose exploits and role during the Constitutional period deserve greater attention.

Key words

Malakeh-ye Iran, Zahir al-Dawleh, Palkovnik Liakhov, Mohammad ^cAli Shah, Constitutional Revolution

Introduction

Although the first modern constitutional government in Iran was established in 1906, its survival was threatened by the autocratic Shah, Mohammad ^cAli, who attempted to assert

monarchical authority over the newly elected Parliament (*Majles*). Under the Constitution the Shah maintained considerable power; he controlled the military, had the right to nominate the Cabinet and select the Prime Minister. Tensions between the Shah and the Constitutionalists escalated during 1907 partly as a result of the criticisms levelled against the monarch by the *Majles* deputies and the various political societies (*anjomans*) that proliferated in the first decade of the twentieth century. By the summer of 1908 the Shah issued a series of demands, included the closing of newspapers that were critical of him and the expulsion from Tehran of eight prominent reformers. One of these was Zahir al-Soltan, a cousin of the Shah himself and son of Malakeh-ye Iran (who was a daughter of Naser al-Din Shah (d. 1897) and aunt of Mohammad ʿAli Shah). When these eight individuals were not surrendered, the Shah's forces bombarded both the *Majles* in Tehran and the houses of prominent opponents. One of these houses was that of the aforementioned Malakeh-ye Iran. In the immediate aftermath of these events she composed several letters that describe the terrifying incidents that took place in June 1908, which are worthy of detailed consideration for a number of reasons.

First, the letters are among the few contemporary accounts that provide a detailed and specific report of what occurred during those eventful days in June 1908. The usual sources for the Constitutional movement, such as Kasravi, Kermani and Browne do not include such particular descriptions.¹ Only Malekzadeh's history utilised the accounts left by Malakeh-ye Iran.² Second, the letters reveal the dilemma that existed for some members of the élite in the royal family: Malakeh-ye Iran's husband, Zahir al-Dawleh, and one of her sons, the aforementioned Zahir al-Soltan, were supporters of the Constitutional Movement, and so her sympathies most likely lay with them. However, her ties with the royal court may account, in part, for her reluctance to condemn then Shah in an explicit fashion. Of course it is also possible that the absence of explicit criticism of the Shah may reflect Malakeh-ye Iran's caution, in case the letters were intercepted and fell into the hands of the Shah. Her likely support of the Constitutional Movement accords with her probable sympathetic sentiments related to female rights, which some have argued are apparent in her supposed unveiling, her composition of poetry, and her participation in the meetings of the *Anjoman-e okhovvat* (Society of Brotherhood) which had a reputation for defending the Constitutional Movement. Third, the

¹ Kasravi (1319-21/1940-3) is a narrative that emphasises chosen themes, such as “the dangers of ethnic and factional division to the ‘national cause’”. See de Groot J. 2010: 17. He provides very little detail of the destruction of the *Majles* and houses of prominent individuals. See also de Groot's criticisms of Kasravi as a historian, (2010: 27-8). Another major source, Kermani 1927: II. 143-5 covers the bombardment and the *Majles* and its subsequent events in only a few pages. In English, the limited survey is by Browne 1910: 196-232. For the historiography of the Constitutional movement see M. Reza Afshari 1993: 477-94. See also Abrahamian 1979.

² Malekzadeh 1984. II, 789-794.

letters provide an indication of the status and learning of a high-born female in Qajar Iran, demonstrating the erudition of a Qajar princess. Amanat has claimed that “most women of the nobility, judging by their many spelling and grammatical errors, could hardly claim a sufficient command of Persian.”³ However, Malakeh-ye Iran’s letters of 1908 are perfectly comprehensible, grammatically correct, and demonstrate a sophisticated and careful use of Persian prose, written under the most trying of circumstances. Yet a recent collection of Malakeh-ye Iran’s letters from 1884-6 has revealed that she could be very careless with her Persian spelling,⁴ although it should be considered that these earlier epistles were little more than hurried, jotted notes that she sent to her immediate servant. In any case, the letters of 1908 demonstrate the level of culture and education to which the élite could attain. Furthermore, Malakeh-ye Iran is known to have composed poetry, which also suggests she had a certain measure of technical ability.⁵ Fortunately one of her poems relates the events of June 1908, and some of the verses will be reproduced in this article.

This article started from a translation of the letters that Malakeh-ye Iran wrote to her husband in the aftermath of the bombardment. These dramatic and exciting letters require contextualising in order for their full import to be appreciated. This contextualisation includes a brief overview of Malakeh-ye Iran’s privileged upbringing in the royal Qajar court, and a discussion of factors that may have nurtured her strong personality. These include her association with reformist Sufi thinkers and the gradual emergence of a movement advocating female rights, about which Malakeh-ye Iran must have been aware. Subsequently, possible reasons behind the bombardment of her house will be assessed. A number of studies have referred all too briefly to Malakeh-ye Iran as a supporter of the Constitutional Movement. I do not oppose this view, however, what is missed in these studies is the emotional and internal conflict that Malakeh-ye Iran must have experienced; on the one hand she was as aunt of the Shah and was probably associated with a privileged lifestyle, and on the other hand she was connected in various ways to the monarch’s opponents and advocates of simplicity and frugality. In short, this episode offers a fascinating glimpse into the dynamics of the Qajar royal court, from a female perspective, during a time of the utmost upheaval.

³ Amanat 1993: 36.

⁴ Afshar 1383/2004-5: 14.

⁵ Afshar 1383/2004-5: 12; B. °Aqoli 1384/2005-6:100-1. This poem about the bombardment of her house is held in the Institute for Iranian Contemporary Historical Studies Collection, Women’s World in Qajar Iran Digital Archive, Middle East Division, Widener Library, Harvard University. See <http://www.qajarrowomen.org/en/items/1261A15.html>.

I. The Author of the Letters: Forugh al-Dawleh/Malakeh-ye Iran (d. 1916)

(a). Early Life

Malakeh-ye Iran, the author of the letters considered and translated herein, was the daughter of Naser al-Din Shah (d. 1897) who had eighty wives according to Taj al-Saltana.⁶ It was a temporary marriage with Khazen al-Dawleh that resulted in the birth of two girls, Touran Agha who was born in 1859 and was later given the title Fakhr al-Dawleh, and Tuman Agha who was born three years after her sister, and given the title of Forugh al-Dawleh (1862).⁷ (See image 1) Khazen al-Dawleh died when the two girls were still infants and so the Shah entrusted their upbringing to Taj al-Dawleh, another of his wives. The two royal princesses had a privileged infancy, as they were allocated rooms and received close attention from their step-mother. They received classes in Persian language, Persian literature, history and mathematics, and reliable servants were appointed for them.⁸ However, Afshar has observed that there was a degree of rivalry and jealousy between the sisters.⁹ This does not seem surprising in light of the special treatment received by Fakhr al-Dawleh who appears to have been a favourite of her father.¹⁰ In 1879, at the age of seventeen Forugh al-Dawleh was married to Zahir al-Dawleh (1864-1923), who was Naser al-Din Shah's Minister of Ceremonies. Zahir al-Dawleh subsequently enjoyed a distinguished career serving the throne in a number of official positions, and he was sufficiently respected at the time of the first *Majles* that he was considered by Ehtesham al-Saltaneh, the Speaker of the *Majles*, to be one of the candidates to replace him.¹¹

⁶ Taj al-Saltana 1993: 124. The majority of these marriages being temporary (*sigheh*).

⁷ See <http://www.qajarpages.org/nassereddinchildren.html>.

⁸ °Aqoli 1384/2005-6: 100.

⁹ Afshar 1383: 10. Unfortunately Afshar does not provide further details or his source.

¹⁰ °Aqoli 1384/2005-6: 96-98. Fakhr al-Dawleh was instrumental in recording the 19th century story *Amir Arsalan* which was composed by the Shah's story-teller and recited by him to help the Shah relax before going to sleep at night. It seems that Fakhr al-Dawleh also listened and transcribed the whole story which was then published (W. Hanaway, Jr, 1989, 958). Her attention to the Shah has been described in °Aqoli 1384/2005-6: 98: she would sit at the Shah's dinner table and serve him food, and take away the bones from his kebabs. She would also accompany him on riding trips and participate in archery. She died at the young age of thirty-three from consumption.

¹¹ See Mohammad Hosayni 1381/2002-3: 79-112; On Ehtesham al-Saltaneh, see Amanat M 1998, 269-271.



Image 1: Fakh al-Dawleh (left) and her sister Forugh al-Dawleh (Malakeh-ye Iran) – (right)

(b). Sufi Sympathies

Virtually nothing is known of Malakeh-ye Iran's early life, although in his chapter on Zahir al-Dawleh within the larger work entitled *Rahbaran-e Mashruteh* ("Leaders of the Constitution") Safa'i includes six lines about her, and says, "She had sufficient education, knew well how to compose poetry and prose. At the beginning [of her marriage] she was strongly opposed to the *darvish* life-style (*darvishi*) of Zahir al-Dawleh, but her worthy spirit discovered the truth of gnosis [and] the perfection of [her] husband influenced her, and she set to one side royal luxuries, and lived a simple a dervish-like life."¹² The simple dervish-style life referred to by Safa'i needs some explanation. Just before the turn of the 20th century, Zahir al-Dawleh became attracted to the Sufi message of a master of the Ne'matollahi order, Safi 'Ali Shah (d. 1899), and he became one of his disciples. Of course the "setting aside of royal luxuries" can only have been relative, as Zahir al-Dawleh was an influential and respected member of the élite, and by any standards he must have been a wealthy Persian whose house was located in one of the best and central positions of the capital. Malakeh-ye Iran's letters reveal that the house had two stories, bedrooms, a dining room, a kitchen, a bathroom, a library, and a winter room in which there was a golden chandelier. She also mentions various kinds of servants, so it is clear that her house was of a substantial size and was probably luxuriously furnished. (Indeed, her letters complain of how the Cossacks plundered books, jewellery, furniture and golden

¹² Safa'i, 1363/1943: 1. 165.

objects).¹³ Malakeh-ye Iran would have received a stipend from the royal court which helped to maintain her standard of living, yet in his introduction to the collection of her letters composed between 1884-6, Iraj Afshar has pointed out that the income of Malakeh-ye Iran and Zahir al-Dawleh was never sufficient to cover their expenses.¹⁴ The letters of 1884-6 reveal that she was constantly battling to avoid taking loans or pawning property, which Afshar states was common among the members of the Qajar court.¹⁵ Although her income cannot be ascertained, it would seem that she enjoyed some wealth in her collection of jewels. E^ctemad al-Saltaneh recalled that, “I heard that on the first day of this month [January 1895] Forugh al-Dawleh visited the shrine of ^cAbd al-^cAzim. She was covered in jewels (*java^her zadeh*) and finery, and she entered the inner part of the shrine (*haram*).”¹⁶ Malakeh-ye Iran’s attachment to her jewels is also apparent when her house was plundered in 1908 and her jewels were looted. Zahir al-Dawleh attempted to downplay the misfortune by remarking, “My dear wife! It is good that they stole all of the jewels and treasures which were the heart-blood of the afflicted. They have given us peace of mind! Whenever I peeped into your jewellery-box and saw all those worthless and insignificant things I felt snake bites and scorpion stings on my body. Thank God that I can rest in peace from these torments.”¹⁷ It cannot be determined whether she was able to relinquish her attachment to material wealth, but it does appear that Malakeh-ye Iran finally embraced aspects of the Sufi philosophy espoused by her husband. Her eventual inclination to Sufism is, perhaps, captured in a photograph (dated to 1910),¹⁸ taken of her with her two daughters, all clad in traditional Sufi costume.¹⁹ (see image 2).

It was not unusual that an attachment to Sufism resulted in concerns that pertain to both otherworldly and this worldly affairs. And this was certainly the case with Zahir al-Dawleh. He founded the aforementioned *Anjoman-e okhovvat* which was socially engaged and committed to reform. Some believe that the *Anjoman-e okhovvat* fused Sufi ideals with the principals of

¹³ Bamdad (1371/1951 II. 367) states that valuable were plundered from the library. Others have said that his library was not so important in terms of the numbers of books, but it did have a number of priceless old manuscripts (Mamalik 1982: 112). Afshar 1351 cites a newspaper from 1326 that states that 12,000 volumes were plundered.

¹⁴ Afshar 1383/2004-5: 23.

¹⁵ Afshar 1383/2004-5: 23.

¹⁶ Afshar 1383/2004-5: 13.

¹⁷ Hosayni 1381/2002-3: 98-9.

¹⁸ See the information given about this photo at: <http://www.qajarwomen.org/en/items/1260A1.html> (accessed 27th October 2015).

¹⁹ The photograph first appeared in Bamdad Mehdi 1371/1951: 369. It was subsequently republished in Zahir al-Dawleh 1351/1972-3. A copy of the photo is kept in the Nina Akhaviayn Collection, in the Women’s World in Qajar Iran, stored in Harvard University Library. According to Nina Akhaviyan, the photo was given to her as a gift from Forugh al-Saltaneh. The photograph does not flatter Malakeh-ye Iran, at least not according to a 21st century Western appreciations of beauty. However, the Qajar aesthetic was quite different, as the single eyebrow and slight hair on the upper lip of the female were considered favourably. (Najmabadi 2005) Indeed, Malakeh-ye Iran was viewed as a beauty. Afshar, I. (ed). 1383/2004-5: 12.

Freemasonry.²⁰ Be that as it may, it is clear that this Sufi group had a pronounced reformist agenda, typified by its performance in its headquarters of pantomimes with political themes that were critical of the Shah.²¹ It has also been claimed that Malakeh-ye Iran attended the meetings of the Society.²²



Image 2: Makakeh-ye Iran (centre) with her two daughters in Sufi clothing. (Photo taken circa 1910).

(3). The Powerful Personality of Malakeh-ye Iran?

Despite her eventual sympathies to Sufism, which traditionally embraced a humane doctrine of compassion, mercy and humility, there are indications that Malakeh-ye Iran was a strict advocate of correct social order. Aware of her high-birth, she was determined to enforce such conditions that necessitated the correct division of labour, appropriate behaviour and polite

²⁰ See the references to freemasonry in °A. Anwār and *EIr* 1985.

²¹ Ridgeon, Lloyd. 2010: 156-8.

²² Paydar 1995: 68 (citing J. Ghaemmaghami 1967).

manners. One of her letters of 1884-6 to her chief retainer spells this out in a message brimming with outrage:

I heard [that during] these few days [when] I was absent [from home that] Mr °Ali has come into the inner quarters (*andarun*) and has been arguing with the female servants (*kaniz-ha*). What [does he] mean by this?! Why does a servant come into the inner quarters? Send for Mr °Ali. Scold him severely (*fohsh-e ziyadi behesh bedehid*). Ask [him], “Why did you so brazenly enter the inner quarters, o stupid, little man (*mardakeh-ye khar*)?” What does this mean? What is the purpose of these irrational deeds? Tell [him] firmly that servants must never speak to women at the entrance to Mr [Zahir al-Dawleh’s] office ... You must punish Mr °Ali severely so that he never repeats his mistake.²³

Her forceful personality, so apparent in the above is also evident in a letter that she wrote to her man-servant concerning a trip her husband had made to Khorasan with three acquaintances. Her opposition to the trip and these three is not exactly clear, although what is significant is the language and dynamics at play between the married couple.

I do not accept your argument. I will have nothing to do with Mr [Zahir al-Dawleh] either. I regard it as your fault. Now, you go and don’t think about Mr [Zahir al-Dawleh’s] bad nature. Make Da’i and Mirza Mohammad °Ali [and] Abu’l-Qasim Abdar, these three, come back quickly. Also tell [Zahir al-Dawleh] that Forugh al-Dawleh has commanded that these three must not go with you; they must return. I have also written to Mr [Zahir al-Dawleh] himself that on the blessed head of the Shah, by the right of the God, I will have nothing to do with him. He understands. These three must return from Bumahan. I know this bastard (*haramzadeh*) Da’i and Mirza Mohammad °Ali. If they were decent [people] I would not have thrown them out. Even if Mr [Zahir al-Dawleh] dislikes [this], certainly you must send them back. Four or five months is a long journey. It is not a joke. They will cause harm to Mr [Zahir al-Dawleh] if they go along with him. In addition, if Mr [Zahir al-Dawleh] makes any unnecessary expenditure on the path, I will not accept [responsibility] for a single dinar on the day you return. It will be your fault.²⁴

The image conveyed in the above letter correlates with the claim that she appeared unveiled at the *Anjoman-e okhovvat* and spoke often.²⁵ Bamdad argues that this is an indication of Malakeh-

²³ Forugh al-Dawleh 1383: 79.

²⁴ P. 33-4.

²⁵ Bamdad, Badr al-Moluk, 1977: 31-2.

ye Iran's commitment to the promotion of female rights in Iranian society.²⁶ If Bamdad's assertion is true, Malakeh-ye Iran's unveiling would have taken place at least twenty years prior to the official and legal unveiling of women, promulgated by Reza Shah in 1936, suggesting that she was committed to the modernising movement as it was understood by the nascent feminist movement of Iran at the time. Women had been involved in politics and had called for the reform of certain injustices in society, and had led public demonstrations in the 1890s in Shiraz, Tabriz and Tehran,²⁷ but the Constitutional period saw specific gendered debate about the nature of desired reforms and the position of women in society. Such reforms were discussed in meetings of the various *anjomans*, several of which focused specifically on female issues. In this respect, the most active were the society for the Freedom of Women (*anjoman-e azadi-ye زنان*) which was created in early 1907, and the Secret Union of Women (*ettehadiyeh-ye ghaybi-ye nisvan*) which was established in the same year. These *anjomans* attracted the educated elite, among them, two daughters of Naser al-Din Shah (Taj al-Saltaneh and Eftekhar al-Saltaneh).²⁸ The Secret Union of Women was vociferous in its demands for women to be allowed into the political process. It sent an open letter to the *majles* in which the members were asked to resign so that women could begin a radical reorganisation of Iran.²⁹ In light of this, it is certainly possible that Malakeh-ye Iran did indeed attend and speak at the *Anjoman-e okhovvat*, perhaps even unveiled during its sessions.

Although women were denied the vote under the Constitution (which was enshrined in article 3 of the first section of the electoral law of September 9th 1906),³⁰ there was considerable support for granting women the right of assembly, i.e. the creation of *anjomans*.³¹ (It was only in the second *Majles*, after 1909 that the female vote was discussed). An issue that was "safer" was schooling and education for girls, and one of the largest groups in the second *Majles*, the Democrats, called for free education for girls.³² Given this perspective, it is of interest, therefore, to consider the letters that Malakeh-ye Iran sent from her home in Tehran to her husband during the Minor Tyranny, while in 1908-9 he was serving as the Governor of Gilan in northern Iran. Not only do the letters reveal her literary talents, but they also demonstrate the trust that existed between the two. As Malakeh-ye Iran was well aware, Zahir al-Dawleh would

²⁶ For a general survey of the socio-political role of women during the Constitutional Revolution see Bayat-Philipp 1978.

²⁷ For the Shiraz demonstration in 1893 see Martin, 2005: 103. For women protesting during the crisis surrounding the Tobacco concession see Sedghi, 2007: 41.

²⁸ For these two societies see Afari 1996: 184-5.

²⁹ Afari 1996: 192.

³⁰ Browne 1910: 356.

³¹ Paydar 1995: 61-2; Afsaneh Najmabadi 2005: 209-10.

³² Paydar 1995: 66.

have been informed of the bombardment of the *Majles* and the destruction and plunder of the *Anjoman-e okhovvat* and their home, and even of the insulting behaviour of the Cossacks against members of his own family. Yet she felt the need to convey in her own words the events that were unfolding around her, as if it was necessary to either corroborate or correct what her husband had heard or read. In effect, Malakeh-ye Iran was the reliable witness and conduit of information for a high-ranking government official who supported the Constitutional Movement. The letters translated herein represent only a few of the exchanges sent between them. The edited collection of documents pertaining to Zahir al-Dawleh and the letters and telegrams sent by Malakeh-ye Iran prior to and subsequent to the summer of 1908 demonstrate her continuing importance to her husband, as more than just a house-wife, but as a dependable informant on social and political affairs. Malakeh-ye Iran's relationship with her husband appear to be crucial, as this symbiotic relationship must have empowered both parties. Without a doubt, her high position would have opened many doors for both partners, and his position at court and social contacts with reformers would have encouraged anyone of an inquisitive nature to seek out more information about the social and political developments, and the revolutions and changes that were occurring across the world. Zahir al-Dawleh was a first-hand witness to this, having journeyed to Europe on one of Mozaffar al-Din Shah's "medical" trips.³³ Perhaps Malakeh-ye Iran was even aware of the feminist movement that was awakening in Europe and elsewhere.

As a housewife it seems that Malakeh-ye Iran was responsible for maintaining the finances on an even keel. Certainly, her letters of 1884-6 reveal an overwhelming emphasis on matters financial, and it is fair to assume that this duty would not have changed into the Constitutional period. She was ultimately responsible for running the household, which would have included male and female servants, butlers, gardeners, cooks, stable-masters, horse grooms and superintendents of various kinds. Although her letters of 1884-6 indicate that she employed a certain Hajji Khan as a chief retainer to assist in this task, it is evident that she took a keen interest in keeping order. These letters also reveal that she could be devious by claiming to be a "simple woman", and that her intelligence was insufficient to understand certain problems (*man 'aql-am digar na-mirasad*),³⁴ clearly a strategy designed to defend her own interests. Iraj Afshar has pointed to the financial difficulties of Malakeh-ye Iran and Zahir al-

³³ Rezvani 1992.

³⁴ Afshar 1383/2004-5: 17.

Dawleh experienced during the reign of Mozaffar al-Din Shah (r. 1897-1905). He mentions a document in the Shah's own handwriting to his chief minister that states:

To the noble and great Atabak,
 Malakeh-ye Iran has written of her worry (*parishani*). You also know yourself that Zahir al-Dawleh is very worried. I wrote a note while in Europe to him on this matter [and] we promised him something. Now, whenever you deem it correct, summon him ... and give him [something] ... to ease his mind. 1318/1900.³⁵

Aside from trying to keeping the finances on an even keel, Malakeh-ye Iran was the mother of seven children, the first being born in 1880, when she was eighteen.³⁶ By the time of the bombardment of the *Majles* and her home, Malakeh-ye Iran would have still had household responsibilities, which perhaps assumed a certain gravity as the behaviour of her children (such as the pro-Constitutionalist Zahir al-Soltan) reflected upon her. Moreover, there would have been additional obligations to the extended family and grandchildren. In short, the running of an aristocratic Qajar household cannot have been an easy task, which is graphically illustrated in her letters of 1884-86. Certainly a thorough analysis of these letters will illustrate the kinds of problems that the female head of the family faced. The context of the letters of 1908 foreground the political and social difficulties of the time, in particular the bombardment of the *Majles* and Malakeh-ye Iran's home, to which we now turn.

II. Reasons for the Bombardment of the *Majles* and Zahir al-Dawleh's House and Malakeh-ye Iran's Relationship with the Shah

The subject of the 1908 bombardment has been examined in both Persian and English, so it is unnecessary to repeat the details.³⁷ However, a summary of possible reasons will be useful to provide the context for Malakeh-ye Iran's letters. First is the connection of Malakeh-ye Iran's son, Zahir al-Soltan with the Constitutionalist Movement. His participation in the Movement was so significant that he was included in a list of eight individuals that Muhammad 'Ali Shah presented to the *Majles*; according to Malakeh-ye Iran the Shah demanded that they be handed over to him, while Browne explained that the Shah's wanted all eight individuals expelled from

³⁵ Zahir al-Dawleh, 1351/1972-3: 17.

³⁶ For details of the children see Afshar 1383/2004-5: 10-11.

³⁷ Hosayni 1381/2002-3: 79-112; Ridgeon 2010: 143-162.

Tehran.³⁸ The second reason concerns the opposition faced by the Shah from Zahir al-Dawleh. The latter was known as a supporter of the Constitutionalist Movement; according to Malakeh-ye Iran, he made his position as Governor of Gilan even more precarious when he sent a telegraph to the Shah, criticising the latter's involvement in the political unrest there.³⁹ Third was the connection of Malakeh-ye Iran and Zahir al-Dawleh with the *Anjoman-e okhovvat*, which incurred the Shah's wrath after the members performed a pantomime which lampooned the monarch's inactivity against European power and corrupt Iranian officials who plundered Iranian wealth. The *Anjoman-e okhovvat* included in its ranks radical Constitutionalist, including Nosrat al-Soltan, who had been a member of the first Majles.⁴⁰ It was rumoured that he was also the author of a number of *shab-nameh* (the posters and pamphlets that appeared in Tehran, criticising the Shah).⁴¹ Moreover, it was claimed by Colonel Vladimir Platonovich Liakhov (the Russian commander of the Shah's Cossack Brigade) that the Cossacks had been acting in self-defence during the bombardment and plunder of Malakeh-ye Iran's house, as some of them had come under attack from the *Anjoman-e okhovvat*, which was adjacent to Malakeh-ye Iran's home. Malakeh-ye Iran observed that he protested that someone from the *Anjoman-e okhovvat* had killed several of his Cossacks; In his own words, "They threw a bomb, and killed five of my Cossacks." The possibility that the Cossacks viewed the *Anjoman-e okhovvat* as a den of revolutionaries is all the more possible as Malakeh-ye Iran makes a point in a letter to her husband that when she discovered a revolutionary in her garden she told her servants not to keep him there or offer him sanctuary, but to expel him due to the danger his presence would cause them all. Moreover, she instructed her servants not to give refuge to anyone.⁴² The rumour that Malakeh-ye Iran's house was being used to harbour and hide the revolutionaries is one of the reasons for the bombardment given in the contemporary history of Dawlatabadi.⁴³ Moreover, the linkage and rumours of connections between Freemasonry and the *Anjoman-e okhovvat* (mentioned above) might have been a contributory factor to the

³⁸ Browne 1910: 204. The eight were: Zahir al-Soltan, Malek al-Motakallemin, Mirza Jahangir Khan, Sayyed Mohammad Reza of Shiraz, Aqa Sayyed Jamil, Mirza Dawud Khan, Yahya Dawlatabadi and Mirza 'Ali Mohammad "Biradar".

³⁹ Forugh al-Dawleh in Zahir al-Dawleh 1351/1972-3: 339.

⁴⁰ Nazem al-Islam Kermani 1927 (I): 633 produces a list of the first Majles representatives elected in Tehran, and Nosrat al-Soltan (b. 1888) is the twentieth on the list. Kermani has a favourable opinion of him and states that he was a friend of Malek al-Motekallemin, that he was passionate and had endeavoured very much to awaken the people, especially the regional government in Kerman (499-500). Kermani 1927 (II) also records meetings of leading Constitutionalist in May 1909, and places Nosrat al-Soltan and Zahir al-Dawleh together with other leading members of the reform movement in the houses of Constitutionalist.

⁴¹ Hosayni 1381/2002-3: 88.

⁴² Forugh al-Dawleh in Zahir al-Dawleh 1351/1972-3: 369-70.

⁴³ Hosayni Mohammad 1381/2002-3: 94.

bombardment. Although it is unknown if the Cossacks were aware of such rumours, some scholars have called the house of Zahir al-Dawleh and Malakeh-ye Iran an “Aryan lodge”, and it was this that caused the Shah to bombard the house.⁴⁴

The two suspects in this tragedy are the Shah and Colonel Liakhov. The latter had been appointed by the Shah as military governor of Tehran on 22nd June 1908.. On the very next day, the Cossacks surrounded and bombarded the Baharestan (the building where the *Majles* met) and the adjacent Sepah-salar mosque. The bombardment and plunder extended to the homes of several enemies of the Shah. As Kasravi remarked,

The only houses that they (the Cossacks) plundered were those that the Shah ordered. Today they only plundered the houses of Jalal al-Dawleh – son of Zell al-Soltan,⁴⁵ and Zahir al-Dawleh (the husband of Zell al-Soltan’s sister). The soldiers and Cossacks took whatever was in the houses. It is surprising that they fired on Zahir al-Dawleh’s house, and then plundered it because there was no-one there to resist them. Zahir al-Dawleh himself was in Gilan, as he was the governor. Just as we said, Mohammad ‘Ali Mirza’s hostility was directed at Zell al-Soltan more than at anyone else ... And as we said, it is a lie that a bullet was fired from the Society of Brotherhood, which had been established in that house, [and it is also a lie] that the son of Zahir al-Dawleh (Zahir al-Soltan) was among the Constitutionalists.⁴⁶

Although Malakeh-ye Iran stated in her letters that the Shah protested that he had no knowledge of the events, Browne published several documents that suggested that the Shah was not as innocent as he made out. A secret report purportedly from Liakhov to the Quartermaster General of the General Staff of the Military district of the Caucasus stated,

On the 26th of May (June 8) H.M. the Shah summoned me ... to Bagh-e Shah.⁴⁷ In an intimate conversation the Shah expressed his agreement to our former proposals, of which I had the honour at the time to inform your Excellency to abolish the Constitution, disperse

⁴⁴ Hosayni Mohammad 1381/2002-3: 96.

⁴⁵ Zell al-Soltan (1850-1918) was the son of Naser al-Din Shah, and who was powerful in the south of Iran, around Isfahan. See Walcher 2008.

⁴⁶ Kasravi, 1381/2002-3: 657.

⁴⁷ The *Bagh-e Shah* was the location where Muhammad ‘Ali Shah had established himself during the crisis of 1908-9. See ‘A.-A. Sa‘īdī Sirjānī 1988: 402-3 who says, “In the mid-Qajar period, the site was a broad, circular field about 1,000 m in diameter situated on the outskirts of the city near one of its west gates and devoted to horseback riding and racing ... Adjoining the gate and abutting the racetrack was a crescent-shaped structure, from the second story of which the Shah, his family, and his retainers would watch the races; the royal butlery occupied the lower story.”

the *Majles*, and, by means of a whole series of manoeuvres, so as to escape the insistence of the European Powers, to return to the former absolute form of government.⁴⁸

A second letter stated that one of points in the plan agreed with the Shah was “After the bombardment to give up the houses of eminent Constitutionalists and Deputies to be sacked by the soldiers and rabble.”⁴⁹ The reliability of these reports, known as Panoff documents, is dubious, and Browne himself was sceptical about their authenticity. However, it is to be wondered if their circulation had reached Iran soon after Browne published his book in 1910.

III. Malakeh-ye Iran’s Understanding of the Bombardment and her Relationship with the Qajar Court

Malakeh-ye Iran was persuaded to exonerate the Shah immediately after the event at least in public, for at his bidding she wrote and advised the Sufis of the *Anjoman-e okhovvat* not to take revenge on the plundering of their headquarters. She wrote to one of the prominent Sufis of the *Anjoman-e okhovvat*:

His Majesty was not aware from the very beginning of the destruction of the *Anjoman-e okhovvat* and our house, and he is not pleased [about it] ... The Pivot of the Universe [the Shah] said. “I have the utmost respect for Zahir al-Dawleh and the dervishes. God forbid that [those] dervishes who are the disciples of Zahir al-Dawleh make some accusation against the Cossacks or perpetrate a misdeed [in revenge] for the events [relating to] the destruction [of their headquarters], because I was unaware [of it].” Although I have confidence in all the brothers I am writing to you especially, so that you [should] gather them together. Read this letter of mine [to them]. Assure them that His Majesty is not without respect for Zahir al-Dawleh...⁵⁰

Caught up in the very heart of the Bagh-e Shah with Mohammad ‘Ali Shah, Malakeh-ye Iran’s immediate circumstances are likely to have contributed to such a letter. She had no real alternative but to compose this letter; her son Zahir al-Soltan had been arrested, was imprisoned and being tortured in the same compound where she was located.⁵¹ In addition, her husband

⁴⁸ Browne 1910: 221.

⁴⁹ Browne 1910: 223

⁵⁰ Forugh al-Dawleh in Zahir al-Dawleh 1351/1972-3: 368.

⁵¹ Ses Eskandari-Qajar, Manoutchehr, 2015, for the “twenty-two” prisoners taken to the Bagh-e Shah. Browne 1910: 208-9. claims that Zahir al-Soltan’s life was spared due to the supposed “declaration of his mother that

and the dervishes were suspected of sympathising with the Constitutional Movement. A refusal to carry out the Shah's request to write this epistle would probably have signalled to him his aunt's unqualified support for the Constitutional Movement. She may have thought that a refusal to write the letter that he had requested would have endangered further her son's chances of survival (several of the leading figures of the movement were hanged, including Malek al-Motakallemin) and it would also have effectively ended her husband's career.

A poem composed by Malakeh-ye Iran, which may have been written in the wake of the bombardment of her house offer similar tantalising clues as to her real thoughts. The poem commences by lamenting over the misfortunes that had befallen her. No names or culprits are given in the poem; instead very general and traditional terms for the agents of fate that determine human destiny are used such as *charkh* (the spinning heaven), *aseman* (the sky or heaven), and *falak* (sphere or firmament). For example, Malakeh-ye Iran says,

What vengeful plan has the heaven set out for me?

What did I do that he made me his desire?

فلک با من چه طرح کینه انداخت؟
چه کارم را به دل خواه خودش ساخت؟

She recalls the indignity of her situation, being helpless and forced to flee her home across the roofs of neighbouring houses with the added indignity of not being properly attired:

I was trapped, helpless, without any one [to help].

[With] my body trembling, my heart burning and my face drained

بماندم ناتوان و بی کس و فرد
تتم لرزان دلم بریان رخم زرد

Though I was naked on the roof of the house

I have no complaint of this fortune

برهنه گر شدم بر بام خانه
ندارم شکوه ای از این زمانه

Malakeh-ye Iran complains there was nothing she could do against the unexpected injustice:

I had no escape from this sudden tyranny

I was stuck, helpless, lamenting and weeping

نبودم چاره ای زین ظلم ناگاه

she would kill herself if her son were put to death. After being cross examined, he was finally released and allowed to go to Europe."

ببستم لب ز عجز و ناله و آه

And yet she is livid, insulted by the injustices perpetrated against her and her family:

Whoever stares into my face for a little while,
[Sees] its two eyes [will] remain forever angry

به رویم هر که چندی خیره ماند
دو چشمش تا همیشه تیره ماند

She concludes the poem by defending Zahir al-Dawleh's reputation, as if she knew that the real reason for the bombardment was the animosity held by the Cossacks and the court, and perhaps, even the Shah himself against her husband:

I am the wife of that noble person
He has no fear in his heart of anyone

منم همسر به آن شخص کریمی
که نبود بر دلش از خلق بیمی

He has neither desire for pomp nor position
He has neither bondage to home nor residence

نه حرص حشمت و نه جاه دارد
نه قید خانه و خرگاه دارد

He is a darvish, and his pride comes through poverty⁵²

For him, the wealth of the world is nothing.

بود درویش و فخر او ز فقر است
به پیشش مال دنیا را چه (فرق است؟)

⁵² This is a reference to the hadith so often quoted by the Sufis that "poverty is my pride".

مادینه که ایران در مع توبت لکن نه
 آنچه طهر برده در آن دقت حکمان کون نه
 بیایم هم در بر دل چو کجی کر

<p> چه کرد این صبح نه جوار دردم کف با این صبح کینه انداخت لب علم را چه پراکنده از نه ای که ایتم را داد بر باد یک دم صبح چون در بخت غمت چنانم جوار در زار و تعلقه کرد کشته بر دستم ز غم بر بی مانه بمانم تا راقه دلی کمی و فر د نه دردم بی زینت ظلم تا که رضا اندر رضای هرست دادم بر چه کشته با افتاد که کرد آفتاب از رخ کرده تمام آفتاب عالم آلود بودم بر کشته غم مانه تمام همسایه کفر گری نه وقتی غمت و نه جوار دارد بود در دلم و خوار از هر است </p>	<p> چه کرد این صبح نه جوار دردم چه لایم بر اهل خواه خودی غمت دردم را از دگر فرست از غم ز دست دین کف دادم چه میداد کینه دادی رخ که در دست کجایم که جوار و زبانه کرد تار نه بر بد لاری با مانه هم لرزان دلم بر تانک رونم رزاد بر کفم کینه محرومانه کرد بر کفم در رضای او است دادم تا ام کجایم که ز این مانه بر نه روز و شب در کوه کوه در تانک دهم کمی زلف کوه چشمم بر کشته تر مانه در تانک دلم بر تانک از صفتی ز کینه فتنه سر خواره دارد بر کفم کینه دلم بر تانک </p>
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Image 3: Forugh al-Dawleh's poem about the bombardment of her house

Malakeh-ye Iran's apparent reluctance to blame the Shah may have been the result of her family ties with him. Her letters reveal that by the summer of 1909, after Mohammad ^cAli had failed in his attempt to defeat the Constitutional Movement and had been "tricked" by the Russians into surrender, she had some sympathy for his plight. She declared on 2nd July 1909, "The poor Shah is all alone,"⁵³ and on visiting him in the Russian embassy on 24th July 1909 she wrote, "Oh poor Shah! What shall I say? Truthfully, anyone who sees [him] would feel sorry [for him]."⁵⁴ And yet, even if Malakeh-ye Iran accepted the Shah's innocence, she was still faced with the uncomfortable truth that he was responsible, perhaps indirectly, for the torture of her

⁵³ Forugh al-Dawleh in Zahir al-Dawleh 1351/1972-3: 424.

⁵⁴ Forugh al-Dawleh in Zahir al-Dawleh 1351/1972-3: 439.

son. As Dawlatabadi observed, “Zahir al-Soltan, who was one of the national riflemen who was put in chains, and they tied him up beneath the sun and tormented him so much for several days.”⁵⁵

From the early letters of 1884-6 it is clear that the bonds between Malakeh-ye Iran and the royal family were sufficiently strong for her to request of her father (Naser al-Din Shah) that Zahir al-Dawleh should be awarded a Governorship,⁵⁶ and such intimacy with senior members of the Qajar royal family seems to have continued through the reigns of subsequent monarchs. Even in the tumultuous period of 1908-9 Malakeh-ye Iran had relatively easy access to senior members of the royal family. What is more remarkable is how she managed to maintain cordial family relationships in this period when such family members were clearly opposed to the kinds of goals espoused by Zahir al-Dawleh. It is to be wondered if the family affection was deep or merely a superficial veneer designed to maintain appearances of proper etiquette. Malakeh-Iran reported that that Shah’s wife, Malakeh-ye Jahan said that whilst in the Russian embassy in 1909, the Shah said, “I want to see Malakeh-ye Iran. Why doesn’t she come to see me?”⁵⁷ Although genuine family bonds may account for such declarations of affection, it is also possible that at this very late, desperate period of the Shah’s life in Iran he was hoping that his aunt may in some fashion be able to help him.

The real sentiments between members of the Qajar family and Malakeh-ye Iran are difficult to fathom during the period 1908-9. After he had been deposed in the summer of 1909 and was thinking of escaping to Russia from the Russian embassy in Tehran, the conversation of the Shah with other members of the Royal family reported below is intriguing; was the Shah simply observing proper and polite courtesy, enshrined in the verbal games of *ta’arraf* (for which Persians are known), or was he being genuine? Malakeh-ye Iran’s final silence perhaps speaks louder than words:

Then Nayeb al-Saltaneh asked me [Malakeh-ye Iran], “Have you seen this newspaper that describes Mr. Zahir al-Dawleh?” I said, “No I have not read it.” He said, “Well, they have really written positively about Mr Zahir al-Dawleh. It said that Zahir al-Dawleh established the foundation of the Constitution in Hamadan,⁵⁸ and the first *Anjoman* to appear in Iran was the *Anjoman-e okhovvat*. He did much in the service of the nation (*mellat*). It is a pity

⁵⁵ Dawlatabadi 1984: II. 341.

⁵⁶ Afshar, I. (ed). 1383/2004-5: 31,153.

⁵⁷ Forugh al-Dawleh in Zahir al-Dawleh 1351/1972-3: 439.

⁵⁸ Zahir al-Dawleh was Governor of Hamadan between June 1906-November 1907. See Ridgeon, 2010: 151-8. He encouraged the promotion of local democracy and the creation of regional associations.

that Zahir al-Dawleh is not in this city.” Then the Shah said, “Yes, he is a great man. In truth he has universal approval, and everyone likes him. [The people] accept him for everything. It would be good [if] they gave Ahmad⁵⁹ to be trained by Zahir al-Dawleh.” I listened and said nothing.⁶⁰

It must have been a delicate game that Malakeh-ye Iran played, for whilst she supported the Constitutional Movement, she must have felt obliged to maintain good relations with her Qajar relatives, and this must have produced the kinds of difficult situations and conversations that emerged when members of the Qajar family were seeking refuge in the various European embassies. Malakeh-ye Iran wrote:

Qavam al-Dawleh and Moshir al-Saltaneh went to the Ottoman embassy with their wives and children ... Sorur al-Dawleh, the wife of Nayer al-Saltaneh and other women insisted, “You must come too.” I said, “I am not coming. No-one has anything against me (*kasi ba man kar nadarad*).”⁶¹

In other words, Malakeh-ye Iran felt sufficiently confident that she would be identified as a supporter of the Constitutionalist Movement, whereas other members of Mohammad °Ali Shah’s family and supporters sought protection from the European powers.

The letters include a number of passages that indicate that in spite of her sympathy to her nephew, Malakeh-ye Iran was aware of his cunning and intrigue, and clearly felt desperate to be in such an awkward relationship. Her criticisms of the Shah are relatively few, and are often delicately worded so that it is necessary to read between the lines. On one occasion Mohammad °Ali Shah was trying to raise some money by selling some jewels. Malakeh-ye Iran reported:

One day I went to the Bagh-e Shah. I saw the Shah was selling three emeralds for 25,000 *tomans*. I said, “Don’t sell them so cheaply.” I took them and sold them to a foreigner for 50,000 *tomans*. I gave the money to the Shah. They also wanted to sell a few pearls. I took them and put them on a chain, and sold them at a good price. Now their Excellencies say, “You have stolen and sold all the jewels. You must either give [us] the money or [give back] the same jewels.” You see what headaches we have! Moreover the conversations

⁵⁹ The reference to Ahmad is Muhammad °Ali’s son Ahmad Shah, who succeeded him as an eleven year old boy on 16th July 1909. Due to his age, Ahmad Shah’s uncle °Ali Reza Khan Azad al-Molk was made regent.

⁶⁰ Forugh al-Dawleh in Zahir al-Dawleh 1351/1972-3: 440-1.

⁶¹ Forugh al-Dawleh in Zahir al-Dawleh 1351/1972-3: 429.

[they have] fly from one subject to another. The Shah said, “[All the people] of the whole city have become Babis. They are unbelievers. They hanged their leaders. What hope can I have from these people?”⁶²

By the time the Shah was forced to abdicate in 1909 Malakeh-ye Iran was still writing to her husband and describing the circumstances of the Shah. Whilst sympathising with his fall and his immediate condition, she was still well aware of his anti-Constitutional tendencies, to the extent that in a rare and explicit criticism of the Shah (who was holed up in the Russian embassy), she remarked, “Mohammad ʿAli Shah has not stopped his corrupt ways. They say that he is paying the Bakhtiyaris [and] gathering horsemen.”⁶³

Malakeh-ye Iran died in 1916 after Mohammad ʿAli Shah had gone into exile in Russia. It is perhaps appropriate that this Qajar princess who was trapped between the modernising tendencies of the Constitutional Movement and the autocratic leanings of the Shah was buried in the grave of her father, Naser al-Din, a monarch who oscillated between reform and a conservative, traditional, patriarchal form of government.

⁶² Forugh al-Dawleh in Zahir al-Dawleh 1351/1972-3: 441.

⁶³ Forugh al-Dawleh in Zahir al-Dawleh 1351/1972-3: 437.

Cast in Characters in Malakeh-ye Iran's Letters⁶⁴

°Abbas Qoli Khan: the headman of the district.

°Amid al-Dawleh: An °Amid al-Dawleh is mentioned in a telegram sent by Malakeh-ye Iran. His son, Gholam Hosayn Mirza married Malakeh-ye Moluk (Malakeh-ye Iran's daughter) (Zahir al-Dawleh 1351/1972-3: 174). In the index prepared by Iraj Afshar his full name is given as Taj al-Din Mirza °Amid al-Dawleh. He was a Qajar aristocrat, as Zahir al-Dawleh calls him a prince (*shah-zadeh*) (Zahir al-Dawleh 1351/1972-3: 234). It is not known where °Amid al-Dawleh lived.

Amir [Bahardor]: Hosayn Pasha Khan (d. 1918) was the minister of court under Mozaffar al-Din Shah, and head of the royal guards and Minister of War under Mohammad °Ali Shah. By 1908, Bahador had gained control of the "notorious" *silakhor* regiment that was stationed in and around the palace (see Gheissari, 1988: 437-438).

Ardashir Khan: A neighbour of Malakeh-ye Iran.

°Azod al-Saltaneh: Ahmad Mirza was the youngest son of Naser al-Din Shah whose house was destroyed in the bombardment. He was born in 1891 and died 1940.

Atabak: Mirza °Ali Asghar-Khan, Amin al-Soltan, also known as the Atabak, was assassinated on 31 August 1907, almost a year before the events of the bombardment. (Calmard 1987: 878-890).

Banu-ye °Ozma: Kasra'il Khanom Qajar was a daughter of Naser al-Din Shah, and therefore a sister of Malakeh-ye Iran and Zell al-Soltan.

Comte: The identity of this person is unknown. The title "Comte" may be a nick-name.

Entezam al-Saltaneh: One of the leading members of the *Anjoman-e okhovvat*. He was also known as Binesh °Ali Shah. He was elected leader of the *Anjoman-e okhovvat* at the death of Zahir al-Dawleh.

Foruq al-Molk: Foruq al-Molk, born in 1301/1883, was one of the daughters of Malakeh-ye Iran and Zahir al-Dawleh.

Gholam Reza Khan: The identity of this person is unknown. He seems to be a member of the *Anjoman-e Okhovvat*.

Hajji Zahir al-Dawleh: Mohammad Naser Khan Dawlu, father of Zahir al-Dawleh.

Jalal al-Dawleh: Hosayn Mirza was the son of Zell al-Soltan.

⁶⁴ In this list the titles of individuals are given first (if the titles are known) and then their person name is recorded.

Liqa al-Saltaneh: Zahir al-Dawleh's sister.

Malek al-Motekallemin: Haj Mirza Nasrollah was the founder of an *anjoman* known as the Revolutionary Committee, which was composed of fifty-seven radicals, who drew up a plan for overthrowing despotism and establishing the rule of law and justice. See Abrahamian 1979: 403. (Safa'i 1363/1943:I.339-60).

Malakeh-ye Jahan: Malakeh-ye Jahan (1875-1947) was the wife of Muhammad °Ali Shah.

Malakeh al-Moluk: The third daughter born to Malakeh-ye Iran. She married Gholam Hosayn Mirza Qahramani, the son of °Amid al-Dawleh. She died at a young age.

Mirza °Ali Akbar Khan: The identity of this person is unknown. He seems to be a member of the *Anjoman-e Okhovvat*.

Monir al-Saltaneh: Monir al-Saltaneh was one of Naser al-Din Shah's wives. Their son was Nayeb al-Saltaneh. (She was the daughter of Mohammad Taghi Khan and sister of Mohammad Ebrahim Khan Vazir Nezam "Nezam ed-Dowleh").⁶⁵

Moshir al-Saltaneh: Mirza Ahmad Khan, Moshir al-Saltaneh was an important dignitary in the late Qajar period. He had been Treasurer of the country (*khezaneh-dar-e keshvar*) under Mozaffar al-Din Shah and was chosen by Mohammad °Ali Shah to head the Majles prior to the bombardment

Naser °Ali Khan: Identity unknown.

Nayeb al-Saltaneh (1856-1927): Kamran Mirza was another son of Naser al-Din Shah, thus brother of Malakeh-ye Iran. He was a staunch supporter of Mohammad °Ali Shah.

Qavam al-Dawleh: Mirza Mohammad °Ali, son of Mirza °Abbas Khan Tafrishi Qavam al-Dawleh. During the Constitutional period he was included in three cabinets of Mirza Ahmad Khan Moshir al-Saltaneh (1325-26/1907-8).

Reza Bala: A police officer.

Sayyed °Abdullah: Sayyed °Abdullah Behbehani was one of the important *mojtaheds* in Tehran. He had been pro-British and had supported the notorious Tobacco concession. (Safa'i 1363/1943: I. 173-207).

Sayyed °Ali Qommi: Identity unknown.

Sayyed Mohammad: Sayyed Mohammad Tabataba'i was another of the leading pro-Constitutional Movement *mojtaheds* in Tehran. (Safa'i 1363/1943: I. 208-22).

Simin °Azar: Identity unknown

Sorur al-Dawleh: Sorur al-Dawleh was the wife of Mozaffar al-Din Shah.

⁶⁵ See <http://www.qajarpages.org/nassereddinchildren.html> (accessed 20.4.16).

Taqizadeh: Sayyed Hasan Taqizadeh (1878-1970) was elected by Tabriz merchants to the first *Majles* in 1906. He made a name for himself, partly through his literary activities, publishing articles in contemporary newspapers about the reform of Iranian society. He had a long career in Iranian politics, however, for his contribution to the Constitutional Revolution (see Safa'i 1363/1943: II. 225-72).

Zahir al-Dawleh: ^cAli Khan Dawlu, wife of Malakeh-ye Iran.

Zahir-e Hozur: Born in 1303/1885 as Naser Quli Khan, son of Malakeh-ye Iran, he was known as Zahir-e Hozur, and received the title of Mozaffar al-Dawleh.

Zahir al-Islam: Zahir al-Islam was the son of Mirza Zayn al-^cAbedin, the *Imam Jom^ceh*, grandson of Naser al-Din Shah.

Zahir al-Mamalek: A member of the *Anjoman-e okhovvat*.

Zahir al-Soltan: First son of Malakeh-ye Iran, he was born in 1299/1881. He was a staunch supporter of the Constitutional Movement and was one of the eight revolutionaries that the Shah demanded to be handed over to him.

Zell al-Soltan: Mas^coud Mirza (1850-1918) was the son of Naser al-Din Shah, and who was very powerful in Isfahan, where the British influence was strong.

24 Jumada al-Awwal 1326/Wednesday 24th June 1908: (Letter from Tehran to Rasht)⁶⁶

Certainly everyone will describe for his blessed Excellency the details of yesterday's events, [but] I shall write what I have heard. Yesterday at sunrise, several Cossacks came to the *Majles* and said that the Shah had stated, "I have no dispute with you, neither the *Majles*, nor the *Anjomans*. But I want the *Majles* to surrender those eight people.⁶⁷ If the *Majles* does not hand them over then I shall bombard the *Majles*, and today I shall kill many people." The *Majles* gave no response, and so the Cossacks repeated the message. Suddenly, there was gun-fire from the *Majles* towards the Cossacks, and about thirty were hit. One of them informed the Shah who ordered Palkovnik to bombard the *Majles* and the [Separ-Salah] Mosque. Immediately there was chaos in the city. Twelve or thirteen canons were [then] directed at the *Majles*. How

⁶⁶ The letter begins in Zahir al-Dawleh, 1351/1972-3: 357.

⁶⁷ See note 20.

can I describe what the servants of the Amir [Bahardor], the *silakhuri* soldiers⁶⁸ and the Cossacks did? You know yourself. [Even] the thief in the bazaar was terrified, for they pursued everyone and captured and killed those who fled in haste. They began shooting at the *Majles*. Sayyed ʿAbdullah, Sayyed Mohammad, Taqizadeh and the sons of Sayyed Mohammad and Zahir al-Soltan fled and hid in Amin al-Dawleh Park. All the members of the *Majles* fled if they could. Not everyone was killed, and [some] were buried under the debris. They destroyed the entrance to the Masʿudiyeh,⁶⁹ plundered all the items and furniture in Zell al-Soltan’s house, and destroyed and plundered Jalal al-Dawleh’s house. They emptied, plundered and completely destroyed Banu-ye ʿOzma’s house, and they also destroyed Sayyed ʿAli Qommi’s house. They plundered the *Anjoman-e Azerbaijan* and also ten to fifteen others *Anjomans* which were [located] to the side of the *Majles* grounds; they even plundered the iron doors, windows, carpets, tables, quilts, mattresses, and household things. They also plundered thirty to forty individual houses, although the names of the owners are unknown. A large number of spectators were killed. [There were] about one hundred and thirty to forty Cossacks, one hundred horses, fifty-sixty soldiers among the *silakhori* soldiers, [and] in total between two and three hundred people were killed. Many who were in the Sepah-Selah mosque were killed. There were many students and merchants in the mosque. About a hundred people fled, and the rest were killed. Many were buried in the debris, and it is not yet clear how many or who they are.

Yesterday morning, Malek al-Motekallemin and an *akhund* were on horse-back, riding behind some Cossacks. They had been badly beaten, and wore shirts and trousers, but were bare-headed and their bodies were blood-stained. They were led past the back of our house to the Bagh-e Shah. They took ten or twenty people. There were still two hours till sunset when Comte and Gholam Reza Khan arrived from the *hasir*-weaver (*hasiri*)⁷⁰ when they were escorting Sayyed ʿAbdullah, Sayyed Mohammad, Taqizadeh and the sons of Sayyed Mohammad and Zahir al-Soltan to the Bagh-e Shah. Their heads were bare, their clothes had been torn, and their heads and faces were covered in blood. Sayyed ʿAbdullah fainted and could no longer walk. They brought a carriage, and they all got in and were transported to the Bagh-e Shah. [Comte and Gholam Reza Khan] told me to write to the Shah to intercede for Zahir al-Soltan so that he would not be executed. You see what a state I was in. I said that a letter to the Shah at this juncture would be worthless. I wrote to Amir Bahador that although Zahir al-Soltan

⁶⁸ The *Silakhori* were soldiers in the Shah’s camp who originated from Lorestan.

⁶⁹ *Maʿsudiyyeh* was the residence of Zell al-Soltan. It was located very close to the Baharestan, and so became an easy target for the Cossacks. It was a large palace of some 4,000 square metres, and is currently being renovated.

⁷⁰ A *hasir* is the person who used reeds to make mats and coverings. His shop or work-place was known as the *hasiri*.

was not guiltless, he was young. [I asked him to] have compassion on his youth, [and] send him somewhere or imprison him, but [that he should not] let him be executed. I put a seal on the letter and gave it to Gholam Reza Khan to take to the father of an aide-de-camp to give to the Amir, since they don't permit our men to enter the army camp. He took the letter and gave it to the Vazir-e Nezam. From that time until the present moment I have neither seen [Amir Bahador] nor received a reply to my letter. Since yesterday morning neither Foruq al-Molk nor I have slept. I don't even know where they have taken Zahir al-Soltan. No-one has told me. I don't know if they have killed or imprisoned him. I don't know anything. At the moment, my hands are shaking so much that I have difficulty holding this pen. Of course you can't imagine a mother's state of mind in these circumstances. God be praised that you aren't in Tehran. You didn't see the state of Zahir al-Soltan yesterday and you didn't hear how they dragged him through the dirt and blood.

It was early yesterday morning. A cry came from the garden. There were several shots of gunfire. One of the young, screaming *fokoli-has*⁷¹ had thrown himself into the garden, and his leg was bleeding. He ran away immediately and went to the end of the garden. The Cossacks wanted to chase after him in the garden, but their officer did not let them. He said that they could not enter Zahir al-Dawleh's garden and so they left. The janitor brought that man into the room. At the door, I asked him who he was and why they had they been following him. He cried out "I'm not to blame. The Cossack said, 'You've killed my brother.' He wanted to kill me. Give me sanctuary here." Yesterday, Gholam Reza Khan, Mirza 'Ali Akbar Khan and Zahir al-Mamalek were in the *Anjoman-i okhovvat*. Since sunset, no one had [else] had come there, and last night nobody [else] came. Today, up to this point (four hours have passed) no one has yet come. I said that it was not safe to keep that man here. Gholam Reza Khan took him to his own house. How can I explain the tumult? What a state of affairs! Today too the shops have not opened, that is to say, the owners do not allow them to open. All the merchants and craftsmen whose photographs you have seen have gone to the embassies. Today is the tenth or twelfth day that they have been in the Separ-salar mosque. It is the same with the *Majles*. Huge cauldrons of rice were set up. It was donated, and the people gathered in the bazaars and streets. As on previous days there was no-one [in the streets]; all the [members of the] *Anjomans* were in the *Majles*, day and night, there was such an uproar. Yesterday when they fired on the *Majles*, they also fired five or six canons at the mosque. They destroyed one part of the mosque. They

⁷¹ *Fokoli* (sing: *fokoli-ha*, plural) was a term given to Westernised people, who more often than not more Western style clothing, such as suits and neck-ties. The term is derived from the French for "false collar" (*faux col*). See Chehabi, H. 1993: 209-229.

say that many of the noteworthy merchants were buried beneath the rubble, and half of them ran away.

Yesterday at three [hours] to sunset they captured Hajji Hosayn Agha, causing a public outcry. So many Cossacks hit him with their rifle butts that if they had not killed him he would have died anyway. They placed both Cossacks and soldiers around his house. This morning I heard that he was one of the ten people that they had killed. But there is no truth in this.

With regard to the Cossacks ...⁷² they capture a man and take him to the Bagh-e Shah. They kill some of them immediately and detain others. Today too the shops and the markets are closed, and only the small food stores are open. No one has the strength to walk in the streets. The Cossacks and the Amir's cavalry kill the people, and say they are Babis. Now as I am writing this letter there is the sound from the street of ten to twelve bullet shots, one after the other. I asked what it was, and they said that someone was in a carriage, and a soldier fired his rifle into the person's chest. By the Shah's carriage-house two or three people had come out to help. Ten or fifteen soldiers gathered and [those] two-three people were wounded. There is still the sound of the commotion and uproar.

Malakeh-ye Iran

Telegraph from Tehran to Rasht

27th Jumadi al-Awwal/Saturday 27th June⁷³

To the gracious, most glorious, most kind and most grand, Mr Zahir al-Dawleh, may his good fortune continue.

I am in the Bagh-e Shah with His Highness. Your telegraph arrived. Obviously you have been informed of the events that have taken place. Know that His Highness was not aware [of the events]. Showing the utmost kindness for me he has sworn all oaths [to that effect]. Don't worry about me.

⁷² The original text has this lacuna.

⁷³ This letter starts in Zahir al-Dawleh, 1351/1972-3: 361.

Malakeh-ye Iran

Letter from Tehran to Rasht

1st *Jumadi al-thani* /Tuesday 30th June⁷⁴

Someone must have given an account – true or false – of the events of last Wednesday. Now, from the beginning to today (Tuesday), I will tell you without adding or omitting anything. On the day before the start of the Shah's war with the *Majles*, I was asleep. I heard a shout from the garden. I woke up. I asked what it was, and they said that the Cossacks had chased someone [and wanted] to kill him. He threw himself into the garden and shouted out. I said not to keep him here for it would be dangerous for us all. [I said that] you must throw him out. Gholam Reza Khan and Zahir al-Mamalek came from the *Anjokan-e Okhovvat* into the garden, and they led him from the vestibule, where he had sat down, to the *Anjoman-e okhovvat*. He was there for an hour and then he went to Gholam Reza Khan's house. That was the end - he went away.

Two hours till sunset (after they had bombarded the *Majles*) and no doubt you have heard the details, Gholam Reza Khan and Comte came from the *hasir* makers. They said that they had something to say. I asked them what it was, and they said that a carriage had passed Comte's house. Sayyed °Abdullah, Zahir al-Soltan and Sayyed Mohammad were in it. None of them had a turban or a hat, and they wore shirts and some trousers. They had hit them so much with rifle butts that blood and dirt had mingled together. This means that they were escorting them in this state to the Bagh-e Shah to kill them. [They said that I should] write a petition to the Shah to intercede for Zahir al-Soltan. I replied that in these circumstances, my petition would be worthless. I would not write to the Shah, but I would write to Amir Bahador that Zahir al-Soltan is young, and if he has made a mistake then the Shah should not have him killed. He should do whatever else he pleased. I gave [the letter to them] and they took and went to the city. It is clear what a commotion there was. All the Cossacks and the canons went down our street.

How can I describe these events? I also ordered the servants that we have, Ahmad, Ma°sud, the stable master, the horse groom and °Ali Akbar, to sit by the door. [I told them that]

⁷⁴ This letter starts in Zahir al-Dawleh, 1351/1972-3: 369.

they should refuse entry to anyone who wanted to come into the garden and deny help to any of these helpless people if they ask for refuge. Night fell and I went to sleep. We woke up in the morning. It was an awful day. I wrote a letter to you and then we ate lunch, and Forugh al-Moluk went to the bath. All the servants went to their homes, and they would come in the afternoon. Mir Akhur and °Ali Akbar sat at the garden door so that no-one could come in. Five or six days ago there were guards everywhere who wanted to [keep people] away from the Bagh-e Shah. We didn't have a guard. I had said that there were four and half hours until sunset. The dentist was coming to check my teeth, [and] they said that the he was now ready [to see me]. I went into the dining room, and I put on my chador. The dentist had not gone far [when] the stable master came from behind the *hasir* makers. He called Simin °Azar and said, "Tell Malakeh-ye Iran not to be afraid. All the Cossacks are on the roof of the *Anjoman-e okhovvat* and the inner and outer parts of the building, and they have two canons in front of the *Anjoman-e okhovvat*, one in front of the inner parts of the building." While the stable master was saying this, a rifle bullet shot into the dining room, and passed in front of the dentist's leg. The dentist was afraid and ran away, and they began to shoot from the roof to the inner buildings and in the courtyard. I looked all around the roof, and saw that the Cossacks were positioned. They fired aimlessly towards the inner parts of the building. I went to see what was going on. Cossacks were entering the door of the dining room that faces the garden. [There were] about two hundred [of them]. I was about to flee down the stairs, but there were *silakhuri* soldiers, perhaps a thousand on the stairs, on the veranda and in the courtyard. They were plundering golden objects and furniture. Three servants and I remained upstairs among all of these Cossacks and soldiers. There was no way for us to go downstairs. In front of the alley to the building they had positioned a canon. The garden was full of Cossacks and soldiers, and they had plundered the library and the outer parts of the building. A Cossack grabbed my *chador* that I had put on when the dentist came. I refused to let him have it and clung on to it, and I took hold of his rifle. I held the barrel of the rifle while he held the butt. Suddenly the canon fired at the building. The bedroom and the winter-room were destroyed, and the golden chandelier crashed down. They fired from another canon towards the dining room in which we were standing. The cornice and the chandelier fell down and the room was filled with smoke, dust and dirt. Continually from the roof, they fired their rifles towards the building. They had hung the canaries on the veranda. I saw them shoot [at the birds] and the cage fell to the ground. They brought another canon into the garden to destroy the outer building. Smoke, dust and earth rose into the air. The Cossacks and the plunderers saw that the building had been destroyed and they were afraid. Suddenly, they ran out of the rooms. I went downstairs with two servants with the Cossacks.

When we came downstairs, your mother was holding Zahir-e Hozur's child. Everyone had assembled on the veranda, bare-headed. Forugh al-Moluk and two others who had been in the bath [were] at the entrance to the changing room, naked [except for] a bathrobe and they wanted to come out. The Cossacks fired at them, and they were afraid. I came running down directly to the changing room. I led Forugh al-Moluk out and embraced her. I said to the men, "Don't be afraid. Come, let's go. God is great!" Forugh al-Moluk trembled in my arms. I went into the court-yard. I asked a Cossack, "What have we done? Why are you destroying our house?"

We could not see a thing in the courtyard. Palkovnik himself was standing by the vestibule. However much we implored them to give us chadors to cover our heads, they responded with insults. At first they gave no reply. Your mother and the men stood in the middle of the court-yard, around me. A bullet shot past, and these unfortunate ones became [more] afraid, and they fell over each other, diving for cover, and I too, was bare-headed, with only a prayer-chador, wrapped around me. Forugh al-Moluk was naked except for the bathrobe that she wrapped around her, and none of the other female servants had a chador. A cossack in front of Palkovnik approached me, for I had asked [him], "Why are you doing this? If you say that we are the criminals, search and find them and take them away. There are ten to fifteen women here, and we haven't done anything wrong. If there is an order to kill Malakeh-ye Iran, I am Malakeh-ye Iran. Kill me and let my daughter and the female servants escape from this house." They said, "You can't escape. You must die here in this house. We don't have permission to let you go outside. If we let you run outside, you would go to the [British] Embassy, and that would cause trouble. You must die here in this house."

Your mother and the men became [even more] afraid when they heard this. They wanted to plead, to cry, but I didn't let them. I said to Forugh al-Moluk, "Come! Let's escape through the factory door." I called all the men and said, "We're ready". Since it was late afternoon, the cooks had left. They had locked the door. [The Cossacks] had taken all the plundered things onto the balcony. They went up onto the roof, into the house of Ardashir Khan. There were more Cossacks gathered in that part of the courtyard for this reason. Anyway, Forugh al-Moluk, the female servants and I, fearing for our lives, kicked open the kitchen door with our heels. We entered the kitchen court-yard. That door was also locked, but we broke it open and we ran into the alley to go to Ardeshir Khan's house. Ardeshir Khan's servant did not let us in. Ardeshir Khan's courtyard was full of Cossacks; they were also on the rooftop and I saw that it was worse here. We went to the alley behind the kitchen and however much we knocked on the

Atabak's door, and pleaded [to let us in] they said, "We won't open the door."⁷⁵ Zahir-e Hozur's child who was in your mother's arms was scared and began to cry. The Cossacks on the roof heard the child crying, and they realised that we were trying to escape. They began to empty their rifles into the alley. We wanted to go into the main street and get a ride [but] soldiers were in front of us, and they said, "We will kill you if you go into the main street." At this point, the female servants were really afraid. They all began to cry out loud, and they started pleading with the soldiers. Anyway, there was a broken ladder there and Forugh al-Moluk and I placed it against the wall. I sent up Forugh al-Moluk and your mother to the roof top first. Despite my insistence, the female servants did not have the courage to climb up the ladder because it was broken. I realised that if we wasted another minute the soldiers would shoot us with their rifles, so I went up the ladder myself. The men were trampled on by the horses. When I had climbed up I saw that our position was worse than being in the alley. From that direction came the sound of a canon that was firing continuously, and they had destroyed the inner and outer parts of the building and the *Anjoman-e okhovvat*, and the sound of rifles of soldiers who were shooting and fighting. Among the servants there was no one apart from the stable master whom the Cossacks had captured (and tied to a tree). He pleaded with one of the Cossacks that he knew, and they untied him. He ran for his life to 'Amid al-Dawleh's house to tell what had happened. In short, we went on the roof, the roof of Amin al-Soltan's house. Hajji Abu'l-Fath Khan and all of his men were in the garden, panic-stricken. We pleaded, "Let us have a ladder so that we can come down. We won't stay in their house, and we'll leave through the door." He said, "We aren't brave enough. If we let you do this, they will bombard our house."

Woe is me! Imagine our circumstances. Ten or twelve bare-headed females, all afraid, and a child too, that continually cried [like] a scared animal, and from all directions bullets whizzed through the air like locusts. Forugh al-Moluk stood in front of me. She said that if a bullet hit me she would throw herself off the roof to kill herself. The sun was at its hottest, and I saw one of the Atabak's servants (*khwajeh*) on his roof. I pleaded [with him]. He said, "I'm going to send someone to Palkovik. I'll save you if he gives permission." He went off to send someone [to Palkovnik]. It took an hour and a half, and we watched on the rooftop as they destroyed and plundered our house. Sometimes, they fired bullets towards us which sped over our heads and past our sides. We had lost all hope, and left everything in the hands of fate.

⁷⁵ The reference here to the Atabak, read in conjunction with the mention of Amin al-Soltan, and subsequent references to the Atabak suggest that the individual in question is Mirza 'Ali Asghar-Khan, Amin al-Soltan. The proximity of the Atabak's house with that of Zahir al-Dawleh is confirmed by *Mahin-Dokht Azramsa* 1378: 171-193. The author states that the Atabak's house was located at the start of a street now known as Firdawsi (p. 171). The house of Zahir al-Dawleh, likewise, was located on what is now Firdawsi Street (p. 183).

Truly, it is astonishing how a bullet didn't hit us. My soul was beyond caring about this world. How much can someone endure? God knows that as I write this letter the whole of my body is trembling so much that I can barely hold the pen. "*Muslims cannot hear and infidels cannot see.*"

We had still not climbed down the ladder when I told two of the servants to plead with these Cossacks to let them go and get a chintz prayer chador for each woman so we could cover our heads. They took a chance and through [their] pleading they got two or three chintz chadors that the soldiers had pulled and torn, so that by the time we were on the Atabak's roof we had [chadors]. An hour till sunset remained. Four officers came into the Atabak's garden and allowed us to come down. They positioned a ladder in the Atabak's kitchen, and they took us into the kitchen vestibule. This kitchen was near to Ardeshir Khan's house. Since the Cossacks has thrown out much of the property, the bastards (*pedar-sag-ha*) saw us. When we went [to the vestibule] they fired ten to fifteen rifle shots behind us, but we safely reached the vestibule. We sat down for a while and Reza Bala who is the police deputy and °Abbas Qoli Khan the headman of the district came into the garden with thirty or forty people from the bureau (of police?). They opened the gardens' doors and took us into another room. A foreign woman with four *chaqchuri* chadored women from the bureau came up to me to see that there wasn't a man among us. They searched us to see that we didn't have bomb beneath our chadors. They said, "Now you can go anywhere you want." I said, "I want to go to °Amid al-Dawleh's house." They brought six carriages after ten minutes, and sat us in them. In front of my carriage sat Reza Bala, holding a rifle. Two men with rifles sat one side, two more on the other side. They brought the other carriages also with people holding rifles. The child and its nanny were sick, as they were terrified. I sent your mother to Liqa al-Saltaneh. I told the servants to go to their homes. Forugh al-Moluk, five of the [other] servants and I went to °Amid al-Dawleh's house, that is, Malakeh al-Moluk's house. Anyway, we sat down in the carriages. We went like prisoners to Malakeh al-Moluk's home. That night we fell like dead people. My thoughts were with you. I was sure that they had put the blame on you, and that they had killed you, Zahir-e Hozur and Naser °Ali Khan, and for that reason they had destroyed our house, enslaved your women and children and made them beggars. I forgot all of those injustices, and thought only of you. Forugh al-Moluk, Malakeh al-Moluk and I sat up until morning, crying. The assurances of °Amid al-Dawleh about you were of no use to us.

Early morning Nayeb al-Saltaneh wrote a letter to me. How can I explain what sort of letter it was? "Since last night until the present moment, the Shah has not slept out of his worry [for you]. [This] letter is sent in the early morning because I want Malakeh-ye Iran to be with

me. You must do something to put the Shah at ease. Come with me. I myself apologise. Rest assured about Zahir al-Dawleh, for I have the utmost consideration for him and for you. I swear to God and all the prophets that I knew nothing about these events.”

I wrote in response that today I could not go to the Shah. I [wrote that I would go] when my nerves had calmed down. Once more Sorur al-Dawleh came. Palkovnik explained to the Shah that someone from the *Anjuman-e Okhovvat* had killed a Cossack of his. “They had thrown a bomb, and killed five of my Cossacks.”

They carried out a sack of bombs from your house. When I saw that they had killed my men I took those actions. The Shah was furious with Amir [Bahadar] Jang and Palkovnik.

Everyone in the city was crying: the Shah, the beggar, the soldier, the cossack, and the people of the city. They regretted these events. How can I explain what the abject and noble people did. Anyway, the Shah wrote a message to the effect that he was extremely sorry about the events. In consideration for the lack of respect that was shown to you, I will compensate you for whatever they plundered, even though your men killed five Cossacks and a sack of bombs was taken out of your house.

Then Sorur al-Dawla came and she took Forugh al-Moluk and me to *Amiriyeh*, the house of Nayeb al-Saltaneh. The Shah sent someone there to take me to him. I went with Sorur al-Dawla and Forugh al-Moluk to the Bagh-e Shah. They had made a military base around the Bagh-e Shah. It is chaotic.

The Shah’s inner quarters are in the Vazir Afkham Garden, the outer quarters are in the Bagh-e Shah. The servants are in the rooms beneath the balcony. Each day they take ten to twenty people and bring them to the Bagh-e Shah.

Anyway, I went to the Shah. He didn’t allow me to explain anything. He himself and Malakeh-ye Jahan expressed remorse and sorrow, and they swore that they did not know about the events. There is much to say. I can’t describe everything. In the end, the Shah said to me, “What do you want? You can have whatever you wish. Ask and I will obey.” I said, “If you gave me control of the world, I would not retaliate despite the misfortunes that have befallen me. I do not want anything.” However much he insisted, I repeated this. Night fell. He refused to let me return to *Amiriyeh*, however much I asked.

They brought in Sayyed °Abdullah in the night to the inner quarters with Amir Bahadar Jang and Sayyed Muhammad.

The Shah was very kind and affable with both of them, and he gave 1200 *tomans* to Sayyed °Abdullah. He gave him two carriages to take him away. He even kissed his face, and he kissed the Shah’s face. He gave Sayyed Mohammad 3000 *tomans* in order that he could go

to Karbala. They hung Malek al-Motakallemin. They also hung the newspaper-writer, and ten to fifteen others. Hajji Hosayn Agha arrived at the Bagh-e Shah and fell at the Shah's feet and begged for mercy. The Shah was merciful and let him go. Taqizadeh and several others went to the English embassy, and they are still there. The embassy does not permit them to do anything. It is no wonder that they did not let Taqizadeh do anything, because for two or three days the people have been waiting for a new uprising from the English.

The Shah continually says that if [the embassy] does not turn them out he will fire the canons at the embassy. They say, "Do you have the courage to command one canon to fire towards the embassy?!"

The city has rapidly come under Palkovnik's martial law. There is a strange hubbub. We stayed in the Bagh-e Shah for a night and two days. I said to the Shah, "I cannot stay here. Zahir al-Soltan is imprisoned here, in chains. The eunuchs and the sons of the servants are always coming to tell [me] what he says and what he does. It is better if you let me go to *Amiriyeh* which is also the property of the *Qibla 'Alam* [the Shah]." He said, "[Tell them] to bring Mirza Sayyed 'Abd al-Rahim."

"Do something so that the dervishes don't do anything [silly in revenge], for [the Cossacks] destroying their master's house. One of them killed the Cossacks. There may be a riot. It would be the worst embarrassment for me." I said, "Perhaps Sayyed 'Abd al-Rahim is not in the city. But I will write your requests to Entezam al-Saltaneh. I will ask him." He replied, "Write [to him] now, in front of my eyes, and say that [the Shah] says to all the dervishes 'I have the utmost respect for Zahir al-Dawleh, and I very much regret this terrible event, that they destroyed his house, about which I was unaware. It was something that [just] happened, and I will pay for all the damage done to the property of Malakeh-ye Iran and Zahir al-Dawleh. They can all rest assured.'" I wrote this in front of the Shah. He took the letter and read it. I gave it to him and they took it to Entezam al-Saltaneh. He wrote a very good reply. I gave it to the Shah to read. Once again, he wrote to me that he had instructed all the dervishes, just as the Shah had commanded [him], and I assured them that I could not go to their houses one by one, [as] the city was under martial law, and two people could not gather together. But the poor [dervishes] were dying out of anxiety and fear. I wrote a letter and offered consolation to them all. This eased their nerves. You must have heard about Ra'uf. On the day that they bombarded the *Majles*, a Cossack fired a rifle at the door of the *khanaqah*. A bullet hit that poor wretch who was behind the door, and he died immediately.

Now I am returning to our own topic. The Shah said, "I won't let you leave until you say what you want in compensation for these events." I said that I didn't want anything at all. I

asked him not to believe what Moshir al-Saltaneh and Qavam al-Dawleh had said about Zahir al-Dawleh. Of course it is the Shah's duty to look after me. I said that Qavam al-Dawleh had been making all of these plots to take the endowment deed of the deceased Hajji Zahir al-Dawleh.

I explained the particulars of the property in detail to the Shah, and I said that a month ago Zahir al-Dawleh wrote a letter to me, to say to Qavam al-Dawleh "Don't make an unnecessary fuss about the turbulence in Rasht, don't misrepresent it, and don't start plotting. If you are inviting trouble I will show you the endowment deeds on Varamin and give them to a molla so that he will force you to go to the legal offices. Then you will have to leave me alone." Qavam al-Dawleh was uncomfortable when he saw this document. He sent Ahmad Saraydar to get it. He promised a thousand *tomans* if he stole the endowment deeds from Zahir al-Dawleh's library, [he said], "I will give you a thousand *tomans*." Even Ahmad said, "It is in the library. I don't have it." [Qavam al-Dawleh] said, "[Then] smash down the door." Ahmad came and told me, and I told the scribe of the Friday prayer leader, Hajji Nezam al-Islam. I [also] told Zahir al-Islam. They are both witnesses on this matter. [I told the Shah], "Send [someone] to ask them. Now, I swear that this hostility has been instigated by Qavam al-Dawleh." The Shah and Nayeb al-Saltaneh said that without a doubt this was the case. I said, "Now, I ask that you send [someone] to take into custody those five pieces of property. If you find those writings of Palkovnik ... it is [already] fixed. The endowment properties of Hajji Zahir al-Dawleh that are the endowments for his descendants are under the trusteeship of Zahir al-Dawleh, and they include: three *dang* (a sixth part) of Gol Teppe, six *dang* of Karim Abad, six *dang* of Qasem Abad, six *dang* of Shams Abad, and six *dang* of ʿAli Abad. By the right of God, they should be returned. Give them to us." I explained these matters, and the Shah agreed. He said, "I will do everything that you wish." Then I went to *Amiriyeh*, where a carpet had been laid out and furniture had been put out. They had locked the door since Monir al-Saltaneh had died, and they only opened it in *Moharram* for *Rawzeh Khaneh* and Friday evenings. At other times they did not open the door. Now they made it ready for me.

It is two days since I came here with our men. They serve dinner and late afternoon lunch with great ceremony in the house of Nayeb al-Saltaneh. They have prepared the inner quarters of Monir al-Saltaneh for the servants, and they have laid out a carpet. They gave [us] dinner, lunch, bedding and everything [that we needed].

For the time being, Mr Nayeb al-Saltaneh has been exceedingly affable and hospitable to me. The Shah sends [messengers] to ask after me two or three times a day. Today too, they have sent many garments of all kinds and insist that I take some [of them]. However much they

insisted, I took nothing except three white linen garments for myself, Forugh al-Moluk and Simin °Azar.

In short, if you are wondering about me, just like the mad, dumbfounded and bewildered, I don't understand anything. In truth, I am fed up. Oh, I am fed up of these men who sit around me and engage me in conversation. They don't leave me to take one breath in peace. An army of men come to see me! They lament and cry. And they talk! These summer days are at their hottest. Even in the morning I have a guest - until the fifth hour of the night. For the time being, "The only thing left to us is a half living soul, and it has almost left our bodies."

They also destroyed and plundered the houses of Zell al-Sultan, Jalal al-Dawleh and Banu-ye °Ozma. They also plundered the house of Sayyed °Ali Qummi. They plundered and destroyed the house of °Azod al-Saltaneh which is also in Baharestan. Yesterday, Sayyed °Ali's wife and son came to Nayeb al-Saltaneh's house. °Azod al-Saltaneh, with his wife, is also at Nayeb al-Saltaneh's house. They have ransacked the houses of half the poor and unimportant people. You can't appreciate what has happened!

When Nayeb al-Saltaneh came to see me this morning, I was writing this letter. He asked [me what I was doing]. I said that I was writing to you. He said that I should ask after you for him, and that I should write that you should not be concerned about me. It would be good if you wrote a thank-you note to Nayeb al-Saltaneh. You can't appreciate how much kindness he has shown to me. I have given [him] so much trouble. This is enough. Write about your own affairs each week. Malakeh-ye Iran.

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