

## CHAPTER 11 IDEOLOGY AND MOVEMENT FRAMES OF THE IRANIAN RELIGIOUS REVIVAL (1962-1978)

### *Islam as an Ideology*

This work has considered ideology<sup>1</sup> as, “the set of beliefs that are used to justify or challenge a given social-political order and are used to interpret the political world” (Zald 1996), and assumes that creating a movement ideology is a necessary component for groups that want to effect social change.<sup>2</sup> One fascinating aspect of the Iranian religious revival is that some movement leaders, many who had studied abroad, made the same judgment with respect to the importance of movement ideology. They explicitly told movement supporters that developing Islamic ideology was the first step toward enabling broad social change (see Shariati 1979; 1981). This chapter investigates revival religious thought that used socialist and nationalist themes in the construction of an “Islamic ideology.” In particular, Jalel Al-e Ahmad and Ali Shariati formulated the most resonant movement messages that blended both traditional Islamic discourses with Western political theory.<sup>3</sup> All religious movement factions were calling for a rhetorical “return” to Islam, but there was considerable disagreement regarding what a “return” to Islam meant with respect to practical governance, and how Islam could be used to combat the Pahlavi monarchy.

At the same time, movement leaders with traditional religious credentials were also working to create an innovative Islamic philosophy of governance. Some rejected making Islam “ideology” (see Motahhari 1984), preferring to frame their program as a return to “culture.” Nonetheless, these leaders expropriated the dynamic frames of the “Islamology” discourse, particularly when they proved resonant among young Iranian students. In this regard, Ayatollah Khomeini was one of several clerics who rejected the late Ayatollah Borujerdi’s strategy of clerical “quietism” (see previous chapter). Khomeini’s activism caused his exile to Iraq to 1964, where he worked to craft a

philosophy that legitimated the direct participation of the Islamic elite in Iranian governance [1970] 1981). Khomeini's ([1970; 1981) conception of Islamic governance (*Velayat-e Faqih*) was later incorporated into the 1980 Iranian constitution that institutionalized the clerical oversight of all other government institutions.<sup>4</sup>

### ***Cycles of Repression and the Religious Revival***

To review, increased repression changes the conditions a movement operates under and alters movement narratives and goals<sup>5</sup> (Tilly 1978). Likewise, the development of the modern state increases a government's ability to repress social movement actors. Conversely, the conditions that make the modern state possible, such as increased telecommunications structures, also help facilitate social movement action (Tarrow 1998:80). Some have asserted that widespread repression can be causal to revolution in that competing social movements begin to form alliances with one another, and fix their primary movement goals toward deposing the national government (Goldstein 1983). At the same time, strategic openings after a period of wide spread state repression can facilitate social movement activity (della Porta 1996). During Reza Khan Shah's reign (1924-41) the Iranian state developed the capacity to repress movement actors in Iran to an extraordinary degree. Dissent during the period of Reza Khan Shah was not tolerated.<sup>6</sup> The coercive ability of the centralized state was facilitated by the development of the national police and national army.

Following the re-establishment of the Pahlavi monarchy in 1953, Mohammad Reza Shah used the newly established Iranian secret police (SAVOK) to repress nationalist and communist parties in Iran. From 1953-60, the Shah aligned himself religious establishment as a means of combating the Tudeh and other Marxist inspired groups. As a result, many Iranian religious institutions enjoyed a period of relative prosperity following the abdication of Reza Khan Shah up

until the “White Revolution” reforms of 1961. The implicit alliance between the state and religious elite ended after this reform program was introduced (Akhavi 1980). This program nominally included a land reform bill and expanded rights for women and non-Moslems. It employed slogans that attempted to co-opt the frames of nationalism and class-consciousness established by both the Tudeh and National Front. The remnants of the National Front recognized this fact, and organized opposition to the Shah under the slogan, “Reforms Yes, Dictatorship No” (Matin-asgari 2002:64). Despite the White Revolution rhetoric of “peasant” emancipation, the land reform degenerated into a land grab by the monarchy and the Iranian state. Many peasants migrated to the cities, or worked for state run enterprises on land they had been granted, but then subsequently dispossessed of (see Afshar 1985).

Repression increased following the *Moharam* protests (June 3, 1963) in both Qom and Tehran led by Ayatollah Khomeini and Ayatollah Taleqani. Ayatollah Khomeini was exiled to Iraq in 1964. This protest, and the manner with which it was organized during the traditional religious ceremonies of *Moharam*, used the same tactics—primarily anchoring symbolic protests to traditional religious celebrations—that were employed successfully during the revolution (see Fischer 1980). Initially, the nationalist and religious movements appear to have had little coordination between them. Indeed, members the National Front were surprised by the 1963 protest,<sup>7</sup> although they later called for the release of religious leaders jailed following this protest (see Matin-asgari<sup>8</sup> 2002).

Social movement actors in Iran responded to repression in innovative ways, and used aspects of the modern state to help spread movement messages. Also, the traditional infrastructure controlled by the religious elite—the mosques, the shrines and the *madrasas*—did offer a parallel organizing network that was largely uncontrolled by the state.<sup>9</sup> Still, new religious movements in

Iran incorporated the resonant movement messages used by nationalist and communist. Leaders who anchored their appeals to a “return” to Islam often re-framed Islamic values so that they expropriated popular nationalist messages used in the past.

### *The Creation of “the West”*

The development of an Islamic ideology was made possible by an Iranian discourse that constructed “the West.” Said’s (1979) influential work, *Orientalism*, described how the “the East” was constructed in the discourses of Western intellectuals. In this regard, some have reversed Said’s argument and explored how intellectuals in Iran created “the West” as a social category (Borujerdi 1996; Dabashi 1993). Rejection of this constructed “Westernism” was integral to the creation of the ideologies used during the Iranian revolution. Indeed, political ideologies—in all parts of the world—are usually juxtaposed against the ideas of the “other,” and particularly against the ideas of those who are considered oppressors.

### *Modernization, Development and the West*

Previous Iranian movement leaders often stated that Iranians should be engaged in a process of national development. They argued that adopting a “modern” worldview—often synonymous with a “Western” worldview—would help facilitate this process. For example, supporters of the Constitutional revolution explicitly stated that Western social development should be recognized and emulated. Later, Reza Khan Shah attempted to bludgeon the Iranian people into mimicking the mannerism of Westerners assuming that changes in dress would help to facilitate a more modern worldview. As such, Iranians were being told that in order to develop one had to think, and act, like a Westerner. The attack on traditional Iranian identities generated resentment among people of all

social backgrounds in Iran. Even individuals who had an affinity with the philosophical discourses of the West often resented the assault on traditional norms.

During the early revival period many began to reject the idea that to be “modern” Iranians had to become Western. Some who were disaffected following the failure of the National Front movement, and religious intellectuals who were tired of having their values assaulted as “backwards,” crafted revival ideologies that stated “modernizing” ideals should be fashioned from Iranian-Moslem culture. In effect, Iranians needed to return to the “roots” of their culture, and not mimic the West, in order to realize just governance and material advances. This rhetorical appeal for the reestablishment of an Islamic-Iranian identity—following a half-decade in which Iranian intellectuals championed “Western” modernization—gained increasing support from Iranians throughout the 1960s-70s (see Boroujerdi 1996; Dabashi 1993; Jahanbakhsh 2001; Moaddel 1992).

*Lay-Religious Leaders and the Rhetorical “Return” to Iranian Islamic Traditions*

Jalel Al-e Ahmad’s polemic, *Plagued by the West (Gharbzadegi)* ([1963] 1982), was the starting point for Iranian intellectual trends that contributed to the Iranian revolutionary ideology (Bourjerdi 1996; Dabashi 1993). *Plagued By the West* was read by a wide cross section of the Iranian public and was resonant with many different groups in Iranian society. For example, Ali Khamenei, the current *Leader of the Revolution* and successor to Ayatollah Khomeini in this position, was an avid reader of Jalel Al-Ahmad’s work (Dabashi 1993). Likewise, Khomeini employed the term constructed by Al-e Ahmad—*gharbzadegi* (Westoxification)—in his indictments of Iranian intellectuals who use Western ideas (see [1970] 1981:270). At the same time, secular nationalists and Marxists also embraced the work.

Jalel Al-e Ahmad’s life<sup>10</sup> typifies the changes that many of Iranian intellectuals experienced in Iran during the 1940s-60s. Jalal Al-e Ahmad was born into a religious family and briefly studied

at a seminary in Najaf before enrolling in the Teachers College in Tehran where he graduated in 1946. He was, as a student, active in the Tudeh, working as a writer for Tudeh journals. He broke with the Tudeh leadership due to its support for the Azerbaijani separatist movement. He was an associate of Khalil Maleki (see previous chapter) and supporter of Mohammad Mosaddeq and the National Front. Following the protest against the White Revolution by the religious elite in Qom in 1962-3 he criticized Iranian intellectuals for ignoring that the clergy was the last bulwark against Westernism. He died in 1969, at age 48, of a heart attack (see Boroujerdi 1996 and Dabashi 1993).

Following the 1953 coup Jaleel Al-e Ahmad—no longer closely associated with the nationalist movement—became an acclaimed writer of social criticism. A dominant theme in his fiction concerns the search for individual authenticity in the face of rapid, largely Western inspired, social change.<sup>11</sup> Many characters in Al-e Ahmad's fiction are unwitting agents of "modernization" who are helping destroy Iranian culture, but not preparing Iranians for the "modern" world (Al-e Ahmad 1974). In *Plagued By the West (Gharbzadegi)* he asked: "What are our schools and universities accomplishing?" (88). He answered:

In the curriculum of the schools there is no sign of the culture of the past, no philosophical or ethical principles and not a word about literature; no link between yesterday and tomorrow, between the home and the school, between the East and the West, or between society and individual at all! ([1962] 1982:88)

*Plagued By The West (Gharbzadegi)*

*Plagued by the West (Gharbzadegi)* was part of a report submitted, in 1961, to the "Council on Educational Goals of Iran." It was omitted from the published report. Later, after the work was suppressed, it became a phenomenon on the black market in Iran. The text introduced the term

*gharbzadegi*,<sup>12</sup> which literally means to be “struck,” or “stricken,” by the ideas of the West. The term continues to enjoy wide usage in Iranian society. There are many different specific translations of *Gharbzadegi* and these include, in no particular order: Westoxification, Westitis, West-mania, Weststruckness, the Plague of the West and Occidentosis.<sup>13</sup> The most common translation is “Westoxification.” Jalel Al-e Ahmad explicitly described “Westoxification” as a disease, and someone stricken would be considered “Westoxified.” *Gharbzadegi* ultimately encompassed far more than the specific meaning that Jalel Al-e Ahmad outlined in his work. The title was soon part of the popular lexicon in Iranian society. Al-e Ahmad, commenting on the book’s censorship, stated: “It was in this way that the trivialities in this book were rumored about more than they were discussed. Truths were not revealed, rather the title was bandied about” ([1962] 1982:2). Dabashi (1993), mixing metaphors of the East and West, states, “No other term has captured the quintessential *Zeitgeist* of a generation like *Gharbzadegi*” (74).

Jalel Al-e Ahmad was struggling to find his “authentic” self in the face of rapid changes taking place in Iranian society, and his knowledge of French existentialism contributed to his construction of “the West.”<sup>14</sup> Early in his career, Al-e Ahmad employed a combination of traditional and colloquial Persian literary styles that commented on the more surreal periods of Pahlavi monarchical governance. These included the enforced dress codes and the adoption of a German fascism as a nationalist ideology (Dabashi 1993; Sprachman 1982). Later, Al-e Ahmad encountered French existential thought, particularly the work of Jean Paul Sartre, Eugene Ionesco and Albert Camus, which mirrored his own experiences in Iran. Now, Al-e Ahmad had an example of Western thinkers voicing their own disapproval of “modernism” who discussed individual alienation in a manner that corresponded with his feelings concerning the rapid social change in Iran. Al-e Ahmad clearly regards his battle with the West and the “machine age” as a Sisyphean task.

Jaleel Al-e Ahmad's description of *gharbzadegi* as a pervasive force that affects all social life is similar to Michael Foucault's (1973) conception of Western power as a "pervasive, intangible network of force which weaves itself into our slightest gestures and most intimate utterances" (Eagleton 1991:7). The analogy Jaleel Al-e Ahmad used was that *gharbzadegi* acted an invasive disease that infected individuals to such a degree that their actions and thoughts were ordered entirely by "Western" norms.

I speak of being afflicted with "westitis" the way I would speak of being afflicted with cholera. If this is not palatable let us say it is akin to be stricken by heat or by cold. But it is not that either. It is something more on the order of being attacked by tongue worm. Have you ever seen how wheat rots? From within. The husk remains whole, but it is only an empty shell like the discarded chrysalis of a butterfly hanging from a tree. In any case, we are dealing with a sickness, a disease imported from abroad, and developed in an environment receptive to it. Let us discover the characteristics of this illness and its cause or causes and, if possible, find a cure. (1982:3)

The characterization of the West as an opportunist "disease," one that afflicts an individual's self-identity and causes the decay of traditional society, became a primary *diagnostic frame* for a generation of movement leaders from both the modern (Western-educated) left and the traditional (religious) right. In the past, the West was considered a problem because it was subjugating Iranians economically and militarily, possessed greater material wealth and was stealing the country's resources. The logical response to these *structural* problems was to gain Western technical

knowledge, nationalize important industries and duplicate Western technology with Iranian resources. The answer was a program of action designed to make Iran more Western.

Jalel Al-e Ahmad's observation was that one does not become "free" from the West by becoming Western. As such, the idea of *gharbzadegi* was perfectly aligned with traditional religious concerns regarding the influx of Western material philosophies (see Khomeini 1941). The religious elite had long thought the Western inspired educational system was making Iranians irreligious. For them, the West was insidious primarily because Western ideas were contributing to the decline of traditional Iranian religiosity. This critique is clearly evident in Fazlollah Nuri's anti-Constitutionalist tracts (see chapter 6) where he rejects constitutionalism as an idea because it is imported from the West. Jalel Al-e Ahmad's conception of Westoxification as an invasive disease ultimately found a receptive audience in the *madrassa* schools (Dabashi 1993). And Al-e Ahmad—like Ayatollah Khomeini—regarded Fazlollah Nuri's fight against "Western" constitutionalism as heroic (see below).

### *The Call for Clerical Activism*

Early in his career, Jalel Al-e Ahmad was critical of the orthodox religious traditionalists. In particular, he criticized their mobilization against Mohammad Mosaddeq. For example, in *By the Pen* ([1958] 1982)<sup>15</sup> one character, during a debate with some seminary students, exclaims, "how long do you intend to be seminary students? May God protect you, each one of you is old enough to be our father. Why don't you go help the people?" (92). He later states [italics added], "since you say you have contented yourselves *with some corner in the seminaries*,<sup>16</sup> how could you expect the people to come and listen to you?" (93). But after the 1963 protests led by Ayatollah Khomeini, he regarded religious clergy as the last bulwark against the influence of the West. The 1963 protest

occurred between the first and second printing of *Gharbzadegi*. In the second edition Jalel Al-e Ahmad added a long footnote advocating for a more activist clergy.<sup>17</sup>

I can now, one year later [after the 1963 protest], find the boldness to inform the leaders of the religious establishment that:

- A. If the clergy continued to ignore their own principles (one of which I mentioned);
- B. If they remain satisfied with the minutiae of religious life, proscribing this or that thing or person; and
- C. If they continue to forget that Shi'ism with its principles of *ejtehad* [individual judgment in religious law] and issuing writs is much better able to deal with new developments than Sunnism ...— we have no choice but to accept the fact that this last barricade against west-strickenness has lost its vitality and turned into some fossilized remain which belongs in a museum, or, at best, has become the last refuge of the country's reactionary forces.

The call for clerical activism was a common throughout the 1960s and 1970s. For instance, Ayatollah Khomeini ([1970] 1981) constantly assailed members of the clerical class to become more involved in politics and the daily life of Iranians. Those without traditional religious credentials, like Jalel Al-e Ahmad and Mehdi Bazargan, also regarded clerical quietism as a negative policy and thought that the clerical class could be fashioned into an activist political body. Other lay-religious leaders, such as Ali Shariati, regarded the religious elite as irredeemable supporters of a “fossilized” religion desperately in need of reform. Members of the clerical elite, particularly the followers of Ayatollah Khomeini and Ayatollah Motahhari, responded to this criticism by fashioning an activist political and social agenda that argued for the relevance of the

orthodox religion in Iranian society (see Khomeini [1970] 1981; Motahhari 1986; n.d.). Ultimately, this indictment against clerical “quietism” by Jalel Al-e Ahmad and others<sup>18</sup> was adopted by a generation of clerics<sup>19</sup> who would become the primary religious leaders of the Iranian revolution.

### *Jalel Al-e Ahmad and the Constitutional Revolution*

Jalel Al-e Ahmad’s assessment of the Constitutional revolution is an example of how some of the intellectual elite evaluated the Iranian experience with Western constitutionalism. Jalel Al-e Ahmad’s condemnation of the Constitutional revolution is also similar to Ayatollah Khomeini’s judgment. Both men regarded Shaykh Fazlollah Nuri, faced with the onslaught of Western inspired constitutionalism, as a heroic defender of Islamic values. Jalel Al-e Ahmad states (italics added):

From the time of the Constitutional Revolution, our clergy who were the last line of defense against the foreign onslaught, had retreated so deeply into their shells in the face of the preliminary wave of mechanization and had shut out the outside world to such an extent and had woven cocoons around themselves so well, that only the Day of Judgment could rouse them. They kept retreating step by step.

The hanging of the spiritual leader who favored “the rule of the Shariat” in the Constitutional revolution was in itself an indication of this retreat. I agree with Dr. Tondar Kiya who wrote that Shaikh Nuri was not hanged as an opponent of the Constitutional revolution (for in the beginning he was in fact a defender of it), but as a proponent of “the rule of the Shariat” and, I will add, as a defender of the integrity of Shi’ism. It was for this reason that in the wake of his death everyone was waiting for a writ [condemning the hanging] to be issued from Najaf [the traditional center of Shi’i learning]. And this was going on when the leader of our west-stricken

intelligentsia, Malkom Khan,<sup>20</sup> was a Christian, and Talebof was a social democrat from the Caucasus. In any case, from that day on we were marked with the brand of westitis. I consider the corpse of that great man hanging from the gallows, to be a banner bearing the emblem of the final victory of westitis over this country after 200 years of struggle.

*Today we stand under the banner, a people alienated from themselves; in our clothing, shelter, food, literature, and press. And more dangerous than all, in our culture. We educate pseudo-Westerners and we try to find solutions to every problem like pseudo-Westerners (32-33).*

At the outset of the Constitutional Period, the basic defect in the actions of our leaders (both those for and against the movement) was the fact that Islam, i.e. the rule of the Shariat, still provided the comprehensive totality that could act as a protector or a dam against the influence of machines and the West. It was for this reason that some rose up to defend religion and others attacked it. For the same reason “Constitutional Law” and “the rule of the Shariat” came to represent the two contrary notions of “religion” and “irreligion. (34).

At the same time, Jalel Al-e Ahmad remained critical of the quietist clergy, and explicitly charges them with inaction following the Constitutional revolution.

Thereafter theological schools were (in the twenty year period) banished to one or two cities in the country. The clergy’s influence on the workings of the judicial system and the parish record-keeping was diminished and wearing ecclesiastical

robes was forbidden. The clergy, on the other hand, in the face of all this pressure not only remained silent, but continued to be wrapped up in the petty details of prayer, or the problems of ritual purity or continued to be paralyzed by nagging doubts: Did they perform the right number of prostrations or not? The only thing they accomplished was to proscribe radio and television<sup>21</sup> which had found such a wide audience that nothing could stand in their way. In fact they could have and should have been trying to arm themselves with their enemies weapons and from their own transmitters in Qom and Mashhad (Vatican-style) challenge the westitis of the official and semi-official media. (35).

There is no way of knowing how Jalel Al-e Ahmad would have judged the Islamic Republic of Iran as formulated by Ayatollah Khomeini, but it is likely that he would have been temperamentally and spiritually opposed to the system that was ultimately established. Still, Jalel Al-e Ahmad's ideas were perfectly reconciled with those of the activist traditional clerics. Ultimately, his criticism of "Westernization" was easily reconciled with the longstanding concerns of the traditional religious forces in Iran.

### ***The Creation of an Islamic Ideology***

Many revival leaders did not have clerical credentials, but nonetheless used the appeal for a "return" to Iranian-Islamic cultural "roots" in their movement frames. Of the lay-religious leaders, Ali Shariati was the most popular and he regarded the clerical elite as both corrupt and ignorant (1979:38-69). He stated that Islam, as originally practiced by Mohammad and the Imams, did not sanction a hierarchal ordering of the religious faithful.

Shariati's conception of Islamic ideology (Islamology) was part of the general discourse<sup>22</sup> that followed the publication of *Plagued By the West (Gharbzadegi)*. Shariati and Jaleel Al-e Ahmad were contemporaries of one another, with Jaleel Al-e Ahmad's most influential work preceding Shariati's by roughly a decade. Indeed, a few years previous to Al-e Ahmad's sudden death in 1969 the two men met and found themselves in accord with one another (Dabashi 1993). Shariati refers to Jaleel Al-e Ahmad, and his ideas, in many of his published lectures.

*A Brief Sketch of Ali Shariati's Life*<sup>23</sup>

Ali Shariati was born in Khorasan in 1933. His family was religious. Shariati's father, Mohammad Taqi Shariati, was an activist Moslem preacher and high school teacher who had given up his turban, an outward sign of his association with the clerical class. Both father and son interacted with intellectuals of various political persuasions, and were active supporters of Mohammad Mosaddeq. As such, a young Ali Shariati was exposed to a wide range of political and social thought. Ali and his father were both briefly detained in 1956 for their support of Mosaddeq.

At the University of Mashad (1956-60) Ali Shariati studied French and Arabic literature. In 1960, he traveled to Paris after receiving a scholarship to study at the Sorbonne. He received a doctorate for the translation of, and commentary on, a Medieval Persian text into French. But he was primarily interested in sociology, philosophy and religious history (Rahnema 1998). At Paris, he was introduced to the work of Bergson, Camus and Sartre and attended lectures of prominent intellectuals and Marxists (Raymond Aron, Georges Gurvitch and Roger Garaudy). He was also impressed with the work of orientalist scholars Louis Massignon and Henry Corbin (Abrahamian 1989, Rahnema 1998). References to these and other Western academics are peppered throughout his lectures. But the social theory Shariati used—whatever its origins—was usually distilled down

its basic ideas and then re-interpreted to fit social conditions of Iran. Shariati was intrigued by other revolutionary movements<sup>24</sup> and was active in an expatriate student organization that was primarily an extension of the National Front but also had strong Marxist factions. He apparently submitted an article to a National Front publication entitled, *Mosaddeq: The National Leader, Khomeini: The Religious Leader*, that was inspired by the Qom uprising in 1963 (Matin-asgari 2002:72-73; Rahnema 1998). The rejection of this article may have help precipitate the end of his active involvement in nationalist movement politics.

His activism in France as a student caused his arrest in 1965 as he re-entered Iran. Following a brief detention he was employed first as a secondary teacher, but eventually found a post as a professor at Mashhad University where he insinuated that his degree was in history<sup>25</sup> (Rahnema 1998). He developed a popular following among students at the university, but most of his acclaim occurred after he moved to Tehran and began lecturing at the *Hosseiniyeh Ershad*, an innovative, privately funded school that sponsored lectures by acclaimed religious intellectuals. The lecturers included both laymen and innovative clerics. The school took its name from the traditional *Hosseiniyeh*, places where people gathered to tell the stories of Hossein and where the *taziyehs* were traditionally staged. A lecturer from 1967-1972, Shariati became the most renown of the eclectic group of religious nationalists, religious reformists and religious laymen active at the *Hosseiniyeh Ershad*.<sup>26</sup> He often lectured to standing room only crowds. Audiocassettes of his lectures were made and distributed by his admirers. Collections of his lectures were also published, and continue to be published, among his admirers<sup>27</sup> (see bibliography).

#### *A Modern Anjoman: The Hosseiniyeh Ershad*

Ali Shariati's fame was facilitated by the unique structure of the *Hosseiniyeh Ershad*. The school was a grass-roots *social movement organization* that was an amalgam of both "traditional"

and “modern” forms of Iranian education (see McCarthy and Zald 1977; McAdam 1992; Tilly 1978).<sup>28</sup> There were ongoing battles between factions within the *Hosseiniyeh Ershad* as to whether it was an innovative religious *madrassa*, or a modern educational institution anchored to a Moslem worldview. Ultimately, Ayatollah Motahhari and his supporters left the *Hosseiniyeh Ershad* when the trustees of the school, siding with Shariati and the lay-religious modernists, adopted a curriculum that was not tied to traditional religious scholarship (Rahnema 1998). Still, the *Hosseiniyeh Ershad* should be regarded as an amalgam of a religious *madrassa* and modern school. It was ultimately an innovative social movement organization, linked to both traditional and modern forms of discourse. This structure allowed Shariati to extend his modernist Islamic philosophy to a broad cross section of Iranian youths.

Shariati—depending on who was listening to him—was a lecturer, or lay-religious preacher, or some combination of both. In general, Shariati did not consider himself a religious preacher, but following his success at *Hosseiniyeh Ershad*, he wrote a letter to a Abdol Bazargan stating that “‘against his own will and against all odds’ he had become a preacher at a Hosseiniyeh” (Rahnema 1998: 234). As such, Shariati’s “lectures” were not really an academic enterprise. Ultimately, despite attempts to routinize the *Hosseiniyeh Ershad*’s curriculum there was no “official” program of study. The lectures were always open to the public, both men and women,<sup>29</sup> and people listened to Shariati because he was a superb orator. He could lecture, and preach, often doing both simultaneously. Still, Shariati wore Western dress when he lectured and he did not engage in the religious rituals that were performed by populist religious preachers who spoke in the mosques. Traditionalist preachers criticized him because—to their way of thinking—he expropriated religious themes and was afforded the esteem of a religious preacher, but steadfastly refrained from observing orthodoxies associated with preaching in a mosque (Rahnema 1998). Many of the

traditional religious elite feared, or resented, Shariati's anti-clerical discourse and his appeal among potential seminary students. They actively worked to undermine his appeal to the young (see Fischer 1980).<sup>30</sup> But even his clerical detractors, such as Ayatollah Motahhari,<sup>31</sup> later stated that Shariati's revolutionary vision was vital in that it introduced an Islamic ideal that was appealing to young, western educated, Iranians (see Abrahamian 1989; Rahnema 1998).

The *Hosseiniyeh Ershad* was, in some respects, a modernist version of a public *anjoman*. It was more a "society" of like-minded individuals than a school, and it became a place where people from different social backgrounds—although it was particularly popular with the young—could meet and discuss current political theory. In particular, this setting was ideally suited for Shariati's particular worldview and his particular rhetorical style. Ultimately, the center became a primary place where the *People's Mojahedin* recruited students to fight in the guerilla campaign against the state (Rahnema 1998).

As Shariati's acclaim grew Iranian state authorities more closely monitored his activities. He was arrested in 1972 following the closure of the *Hosseiniyeh Ershad*. After his release from prison in 1975 he was closely monitored by the Iranian secret police (SAVOK). He was allowed to leave Iran in 1977 and emigrated to London. On the day he was reunited with two of his children, but also discovered that his wife was not being allowed to leave Iran, he died following a massive heart attack. He was 44 years old (Rahnema 1998). There has been a persistent rumor, accepted as fact among many of Shariati's followers, that he was killed by the SAVOK (see Algar 1979; Abrahamian 1989; Akhavi 1980; Boroujerdi 1996; Dabashi 1993).

### *The Creation of the Revolutionary Ideal*

Shariati died the year the Iranian revolution began, but his impact was evident in that many revolutionary posters carried his image, and many revolutionary slogans were directly lifted from

the central ideas of his lectures (see Chelkowski and Dabashi 1999). He acted as an ideologue of the strongest of the socialist-Islamic parties, the *People's Mojahedin*, although he was never formally affiliated with this group (see Abrahamian 1989; Rahnema 1998). Although Shariati was an advocate for an Iranian-Islamic cultural revolution it is unlikely that he would have supported the governing system established after the revolution. Indeed, Shariati's anti-clericism and radical egalitarianism—a modern form of Islamic utopianism—would have made him a vocal opponent of a system that expanded clerical power into Iranian political life.

Shariati's self-conscious creation of a Moslem ideology makes him a perfect exemplar with respect to how social movement leaders use culture, ideology and resonant movement frames to create support for a social movement. With respect to the model used in this text Shariati should be regarded as a contributing theorist. In this regard, he was a self-conscious practitioner of social movement theory and intuitively knew that unifying ideology and mobilizing frames for social movement action had to be derived from cultural norms. For example:

We Easterners have been civilization builders and humanity's teacher throughout man's history, so much so that we now own a collection of vast and deep cultural, mental, and social experiences of humanity. Why can't we, by depending on ourselves, extract and refine all these spiritual resources (which have been sitting around idle), rejuvenate, and convert them into consciousness-raising and protesting forces? (Ali Shariati 1981:43).

In another lecture Shariati states that he has developed a methodology, or a *diagnostic framework*, to describe Iranian social conditions (*italics added*):

Tonight I would like to propose a method, rather than a thesis, having to do with the recognition of problems such as religion, society, the freethinker and his special role in society, and East-West relations; all of which have occupied the minds of the youth today. And since we are involved in East-West relations, we must define our position. My method tonight consists of explanations and analyses of historical problems, as well as a survey of thought and cultural evolution in various epochs of history...

I have been teaching the history of religion and cultural sociology, I have designed a method for explaining the historical evolution of thinking in various epochs of man's history. *This method may be of some help since most of the problems which are surveyed might not be understood without its aid.* (63)

With respect to ideology, Shariati helped introduce the concept to a generation of Iranians by defining it within the context of Iranian cultural norms:

What I would like to discuss now is ideology...

Mind you that this word has penetrated the Persian language. Presently, it is common in the colloquialisms of our youths, particularly our free-thinkers. However, I have not come across a precise scientific definition of ideology in Persian yet. This is why it is necessary to devote an independent conference to the topic...

And since ideology distinguishes an intellectual's type of thinking, an intellectual must have a precise conception of what it means. We live in an age in which our conscious and responsible generation is in the process of choosing an ideology. Such an ideology, as an independent topic, must come under scientific scrutiny. Although

it is impossible to do justice to the topic in one session, I will try and design and discuss it as far as possible. (82).

Ali Shariati also took the most appealing ideas from divergent traditions and willfully fashioned them together into a revolutionary ideology. He described Shi'ism as a "complete" revolutionary system, as "Islamology" (*Islamshenasi*), and as the "original" Shi'i ideal. His project was to reclaim the "real" Shi'i religion. His admirers tend to describe his project using similar language (italics added):

Shariati's works have had a major role in shaping and introducing the true principles of Islamic ideology and culture. As a scholar who studied the history of religions and one who had a practical view of the various aspects of Islamic world-vision, *he succeeded in presenting the reality of Islam* (Shariati 1981: "Preface" XIX).

Much of Shariati's work has been published as roughly transcribed and edited lectures that should not be read as a systematic, considered, account of his political and social thought. But Shariati was always explicit with respect to his primary goal, which was the creation and dissemination of an Islamic ideology that would enable an Iranian social revival. He assumed this would be a "progressive" step in Iranian social development. He consistently stated Islam, as a comprehensive system to order human affairs, was superior to Western materialism.

#### *Tawhid as the Moslem Ideal*

Shariati anchored his ideal society to the traditional Islamic concept of *tawhid*, the absolute unity of God. Shariati regarded this as the indigenous *Moslem ideal*. Shariati began with an

orthodox accounting of *tawhid*, the Moslem doctrine of monotheism, and expanded upon the concept so that it included an organic “oneness” of the Islamic community. Shariati then refashioned *tawhid* as the starting point for all Islamic knowledge, and believed that absolute unity—a utopian society free of class strife—would be the inevitable result of a community that accepted *tawhid* as their worldview.

He “proved” the concept of the *tawhidi* ideal using a dialectic process. Marx, no less a utopian than Shariati, also believed that a historical process would result in a utopian society. Shariati, enamored of Marx’s process of dialectic determinism,<sup>32</sup> nonetheless “stood Marx on his head” and argued that only a religious worldview could insure the realization of the utopian ideal. In effect, he refuted Marx’s “dialectic materialism” from the perspective of an Islamic Hegelian<sup>33</sup>.

*Tauhid*, then, is to be interpreted in the sense of the unity of nature with meta-nature, of man with nature, of man with man, of God with the world and with man. It depicts all of these as constituting a total, harmonious, living and self-aware system.

I have said that the structure of *tauhid* cannot accept contradiction of disharmony in the world. According to the worldview of *tauhid*, therefore, there is no contradiction between Man and nature, spirit and body, this world and the hereafter, matter and meaning. Nor can *tauhid* accept legal, class, social, political, racial, national, territorial, genetic or even economic contradictions, for it implies a mode of looking upon all being as a unity. (Shariati 1979:86)

Shariati then specified who the leaders would be (Islamic free-thinkers), how followers would be mobilized (by using traditional discourses), and how the cultural revolution would be

accomplished (through *tawhid*). Ultimately, the Islamic ideology that Shariati helped fashion was an important unifying anchor for many participants in the Iranian revolution.

*The Tawhidi Ideal of the People's Mojahedin (Sazman-e Mojahedin-e Khalq-e Iran)*<sup>34</sup>

The People's Mojahedin combined the dialectic determinism of Marx with the radical discourse of Shariati. They also adopted *tawhid* as their ideal. In their conception, similar to Shariati's, *tawhid* was a classless society based on Islamic principles. In 1975, members of the group splintered when some decided that orthodox Marxism was more attuned to the needs of their revolutionary program. The *People's Mojahedin* engaged in active armed struggle against the Shah in the early 1970s. They primarily planted bombs that targeted symbols of both the Shah and United States. These included state owned television and radio facilities and the headquarters of American petroleum companies operating in Iran. Their first action, mostly unsuccessful, attempted to disrupt the lavish ceremonies being staged in 1971-72 by the Shah that symbolically celebrated 2500 years of continuous monarchy in Iran. Many in the leadership were arrested in 1972 and their trials were covered in the Iranian press. Many people who later joined the movement were inspired by the defiance shown by the Mojahedin leadership during the trials. Following the trials the group periodically engaged in battles against security forces during a state crackdown on their activities from 1972-75. They later emerged, in 1981-82, as the primary opposition group to Ayatollah Khomeini's supporters (Abrahamian 1989).

Many members traced their early intellectual development to Ali Shariati and the *Hosseiniyeh Ershad* (see Abrahamian 1989; Rahnema 1998). Indeed, the ideology of the People's Mojahedin is generally a version of the ideas introduced by Shariati, amended to include active armed resistance. The group was anti-clerical, but initially adopted the Moslem concept of *tawhid*

as its unifying ideal. Mojjaba Taleqani—the son of Ayatollah Taleqani, a leader in the National Front—became a member of the People’s Mojahedin. While underground he moved more towards an acceptance of orthodox Marxism. In a letter (excerpted below) he described the progress of his political thinking from Shariati’s ideals to that of the People’s Mojahedin.

I strongly believed in this “militant religion” which has provided the banner of revolt for many people in the past and which produced such illustrious reformers and revolutionaries as Mohammad, Ali, and Hosayn. In truth, I considered this religion to express the genuine aspirations of the toilers and the oppressed against their exploiters and oppressors. I believed in the ideas expressed in the court speeches of the Mojahedin and in the book *Shenakht*. At the same time, I didn’t care much for the religious rituals and the selfish parochialism found on the Alavi School. The general atmosphere was also extremely anti-communist. Anyway, I was soon attracted to the militant Islam—especially when Shariati and others began to analyze Islam in a different way (of course, this trend had started earlier by the engineer Bazargan). But once the excitement began to wear off, I realized that their teachings could not show me the true road and illuminate the main problems of the struggle. Many others who felt as I did continued to remain active within the Hosaynieh-e Ershad...

The appearance of an organization whose ideology was both Marxist and Islamic appealed to me. This combination seemed to me to be ideal, and I thus accepted it whole-heartedly—especially when I saw that the ideology gave the organization strength, confidence, and practical tools for fighting the regime.... In those days I was under the impression that the term “classless tawhid society” meant the same as a “communist society”; as far as I remember the first time I saw this

phrase about tawhidi was in the court speeches of the Mojahedin heroes. I was also under the impression that religion, being a part of the superstructure, could itself change drastically once the social base had changed; and that consequently religion itself could become a progressive force. (Letter from Mojababa Taleqani to his father. Translated by Abrahamian 1989:159)

### *A Return to the “True” Religion*

Shariati analyzed orthodox Shi’i religious belief following the sociological approach of Max Weber. Shariati agrees that religions become, in the language of Max Weber, “bureaucratized.” But unlike a Western sociologist, Shariati was not disengaged from his own religion, and he was not describing religion as a detached observer.<sup>35</sup> In his conception, the “bureaucratized” religion of the Safavids—the current religion of the orthodox clergy—was not the “true” Islam. Shariati regards early religious movements as times of “real” religion. In effect, early religion is a time of true “faith” when individuals chose religion because religion is a “consciousness-generating enlightening movement” (Shariati 1981:89). His final innovation is that “pure” religion is described as “ideology.”<sup>36</sup> Shariati’s goal is to re-construct the original revolutionary “ideology” of Islam.

Throughout history, then, we come across two kinds of religions (or two historical epochs): a period in which religion appears in the form of ideology, or one in which religion is in the form of mores and folkways. All the great prophets, at the outset of their missions created a consciousness generating enlightening movement, and they voiced distinct human, group, and class mottos. Consequently, all those who joined them; slaves, scientists, or philosophers, did it consciously. But later these religions were transformed from “movements” into institutions; they became organized and

turned into the foundation of society. In this institutionalization stage, religion is social organization and bureaucracy. It becomes genetic and hereditary; once a child is born he is automatically a Muslim, Buddhist, socialist, or a materialist. At this point an ideology, religious or nonreligious, is no longer an ideology; it is a tradition which is not consciously chosen by the individual (1981:89).

After explaining his conception of religious “ideology,” Shariati states that Islam remains dynamic in Africa where individuals are converting to the faith because it is not encumbered by the “bureaucracy” of the Islamic faith in the Middle East (90-91). Later, Shariati rhetorically reclaimed the institutions that constituted the “original” Shi’i ideal.

#### *The Ideal Society: The Omma*

Shariati outlined his conception of the Islamic ideology (*Islamshenasi*) in a series of lectures. He uses traditional Moslem institutions—after he deconstructs them and builds them into progressive forces—in his conception of the Moslem “ideal.” He states that the ideal organization of society is based on the Islamic concept of the *omma* (Arabic: *umma*). The *omma* is, literally, the entire Moslem community.

The ideal society of Islam is called the *umma*. Taking the place of all the similar concepts which in different languages and cultures designate a human agglomeration or society, such as “society,” “nation,” “race,” “people,” “tribe,” “clan,” etc., is the single word *umma*, a word imbued with progressive spirit and implying dynamic, committed and ideological social vision.

The word *umma* derives from the root *amm*, which has the sense of path and intention. The *umma* is, therefore, a society in which a number of individuals, possessing a common faith and goal, come together in harmony with the intention of advancing and moving toward their common goal. (119)

In most regards Shariati's assignment of the importance of the *omma* is orthodox. And other thinkers have asserted that the *omma*, and traditional ways of deriving consensus, constitute an original form of Islamic democracy (see Donahue and Esposito [eds] 1982). Indeed, traditional Islamic clerics would be hard pressed to refute the importance of the *omma* in Islamic thought. But Shariati's other point was that the *omma*, not the religious elite (*oloma*), formed the foundation for progressive change.

*The Ideal Man: The Vice-Regent of God*

The construction of "*The Ideal Man: The Vice-Regent of God*" is useful for demonstrating why the rhetorical style of Shariati was compelling for many Iranians. If judged as philosophy, as a practical directive to his followers, or as a program of action, the work would obviously be a complete failure. As an aesthetic piece of rhetoric it is exceptional. In terms of the rhetorical construction and the use of religious imagery I think the work is comparable to Martin Luther King's. As many Americans know, King's speeches are powerful because, using the oral traditions of the black church, he combined ethical Christian virtue with the concept of American political equality:

As you know, if I were standing at the beginning of time, with the possibility of general and panoramic view of the whole human history up to now, and the

Almighty said to me, "Martin Luther King, which age would you like to live in?" — I would take my mental flight by Egypt through, or rather across the Red Sea, through the wilderness on toward the promised land. And in spite of its magnificence, I wouldn't stop there. I would move on by Greece, and take my mind to Mount Olympus. And I would see Plato, Aristotle, Socrates, Euripides and Aristophanes assembled around the Parthenon as they discussed the great and eternal issues of reality.

But I wouldn't stop there. I would go on, even to the great heyday of the Roman Empire. And I would see developments around there, through various emperors and leaders. But I wouldn't stop there. I would even come up to the day of the Renaissance, and get a quick picture of all that the Renaissance did for the cultural and esthetic life of man. But I wouldn't stop there. I would even go by the way that the man for whom I'm named had his habitat. And I would watch Martin Luther as he tacked his ninety-five theses on the door at the church in Wittenberg.

But I wouldn't stop there. I would come on up even to 1863, and watch a vacillating president by the name of Abraham Lincoln finally come to the conclusion that he had to sign the Emancipation Proclamation. But I wouldn't stop there. I would even come up to the early thirties, and see a man grappling with the problems of the bankruptcy of his nation. And come with an eloquent cry that we have nothing to fear but fear itself.

But I wouldn't stop there. Strangely enough, I would turn to the Almighty, and say, "If you allow me to live just a few years in the second half of the twentieth century, I will be happy." Now that's a strange statement to make, because the world

is all messed up. The nation is sick. Trouble is in the land. Confusion all around. That's a strange statement. But I know, somehow, that only when it is dark enough, can you see the stars. And I see God working in this period of the twentieth century in a way that men, in some strange way, are responding — something is happening in our world. The masses of people are rising up. And wherever they are assembled today, whether they are in Johannesburg, South Africa; Nairobi, Kenya; Accra, Ghana; New York City; Atlanta, Georgia; Jackson, Mississippi; or Memphis, Tennessee — the cry is always the same — "We want to be free." (Martin Luther King: I Have Been to the Mountaintop" Mason Temple in Memphis, TN on April 3, 1968)

Comparisons of rhetorical speech are difficult in translation, but there is enough similarity in Ali Shariati's "The Ideal Man" composition that it compares favorably with King's speech. In particular, the juxtaposition of opposites is used in both works. Likewise, Shariati also uses idealized religious imagery, particularly Sufi traditions. In this regard, the "ideal man" is clearly a manifestation of God. This allegory is most clear in the final lines of the work, rendered in verse, that states:

He who fled from God  
 Was tested and purged in the furnaces of this world—  
 Awareness, solitude, decision—  
 And now he knows  
 The path of return toward God,  
 That great Friend is awaiting him,  
 The path that leads to Him by becoming Him (123).

Shariati's use of Sufism—as well as the inclusion of religious figures that were not monotheist (Buddha, Lao-Tse and Confucius)—led many religious traditionalists to assert that Shariati was a divergent “Babi.” Still, Shariati was a dynamic speaker, and many found the following message appealing.

Take on the characteristic of God—this is our whole philosophy of education, our sole standard!... It is a progression toward the absolute goal and absolute perfection, an eternal and infinite evolution... (121)

He [ideal man] holds the sword of Caesar in his hand and has the heart of Jesus in his breast. He thinks with the brain of Socrates, and loves with the heart of Hallaj.<sup>37</sup> As Alexis Carrel<sup>38</sup> desired, he is a man who understands the beauty of science and the beauty of God; he listens to the words of Pascal and the words of Descartes.

Like the Buddha, he is delivered from the dungeon of pleasure-seeking and egoism; like Lao Tse, he reflects on the profundity of his primordial nature; like Confucius, he mediates on the fate of society.

Like Spartacus, he is a rebel against slave owners, and like Abu Dharr<sup>39</sup>, he scatters the seed for revolution to the hungry.

Like Jesus, he bears the message of love and reconciliation, and like Moses, he is the messenger of jihad and deliverance.

He is a man whom philosophical thought does not make inattentive to the fate of mankind, and whose involvement in politics does not lead to demagoguery and fame-seeking. Science has not deprived him of a taste of faith, and faith has not paralyzed his power of thought and logical deduction. Piety has not made him a

harmless ascetic, and activism and commitment have not stained his hands with immorality. He is a man of jihad [active struggle] and ijthihad [reason], of poetry and the sword, of solitude and commitment, of emotion and genius, of strength and love, of faith and knowledge. He is a man whom life has not made a one-dimensional, fractured and defeated creature, alienated from his own self.... (122).

As a practical matter, becoming an ideal man is impossible. Indeed, Shariati knows this is a man who “ought be but is not” (121). Still, the rhetorical juxtaposition of opposites makes the ideal appealing. Importantly, Shariati is making a case for the righteousness of political involvement. He is refuting the assertion that individual piety can only be achieved by cultivating a detachment with the physical world. In Iran—like the West—there was a common discourse that stated a pious man would never become involved in politics. The primary intent of Shariati’s message is that it is possible to become a man of action and also be a pious Moslem. In fact, being a man of action is how one becomes a pious Moslem.

#### *The Ideal Woman: Fatima is Fatima*

Revolutionary ideologies also construct ideal woman.<sup>40</sup> Moghadam (1997) states revolutions have two possible outcomes related to the “ideal” woman. These are, 1) the “woman in the family” patriarchal model, or 2) the “women’s emancipation” model. Moghadam regards the outcome of the Iranian revolution as reinforcing a “women in the family” patriarchal model (137-67).

Nonetheless, she also asserts that Iranian women, and men, were mobilized using a more secular, anti-imperial political philosophy. “It is more properly a populist, anti-imperialist social revolution. Islamization set in after the revolution, following a year and a half of intense political, ideological, and social struggles” (1994:191).<sup>41</sup>

Shariati used the daughter of the prophet, Fatima, as the exemplar of the “ideal” Moslem

women.<sup>42</sup> This was in line with his ongoing creation of an “Islamology” that used figures in Moslem culture as role models. With respect to Moghadam’s assertion regarding the timing of Islamization, it is apparent that many women found Shariati’s conception of the “ideal” woman compelling both during, and directly after, the revolution. Shariati’s conception of Fatima is hard to characterize, in absolute terms, as either a model for “liberation” or a model for the patriarchal status quo. For the most part, she is conceived of as a liberated, activist woman, engaged in the political and social world around her. At the same time, Shariati imbues Fatima with some “traditional” qualities and some traditional roles. As the revolution progressed, clerical traditionalists expropriated Fatima as the “ideal” Moslem woman, but their version of Fatima was different than Shariati’s. Indeed, their version<sup>43</sup> of Fatima’s life is a near perfect fit with Moghadam’s “patriarchal” model. Mir Hosseini (1999) states:

Since the revolution, “Fatima as role model for women” has become (like cultural invasion) a shibboleth used as a source of legitimacy for gender discourses. Fatima and her image have undergone a transformation. Her birthday (in the Islamic lunar calendar) was officially proclaimed mother’s day, and it is celebrated as Women’s Week. She no longer stands for protest, defiance, and justice, but for chastity, piety, and submission. (54)

### *Iranian Women’s Identities*

The appeal of Shariati’s work was that he posed questions concerning Iranian women’s identities that many women were confronting. In Shariati’s forward he describes the paradox confronting “modern” Iranian women:

Women who have remained in the “traditional mold” do not face the problem of identity and women who have accepted the “new imported mold” have solved the problem for themselves. But in the midst of these two types of “molded women,” there are those who can neither accept their hereditary traditional form nor surrender to this imposed new form. What should they do?

They want to decide for themselves. They want to develop themselves. They need a model, an ideal example, a heroine. For them, the problem of 'Who am I? How do I become?' is urgent. Fatima, through her own 'being', answers their questions (1).

And perhaps anticipating future criticism, from both the left and the right, Shariati concludes his introduction by stating:

I cannot say that this lecture is without need of criticism. Rather, the reverse is true. It is in great need, waiting for those with pure hearts, those who enjoy to guide, those who are willing to serve, rather than those who show hostility, abuse and make use of slander (1).

In a forward to *Fatima is Fatima*, Laleh Bakhtiar (1980), a supporter of the Iranian revolution, states with respect to Shariati’s lecture that:

He cries out the question which is upon all women's lips, "Who am I?" "Am I a mother?", "A wife?", "A daughter?", "A friend?", "A biologist?", "A chemist?", "A doctor, nurse, mid-wife, laborer, writer, human being...?" "Who am I?"

It is the very first time that an Iranian woman is confronted with this question. She knows, feels, senses the question with her innermost being but she has never had it

expressed for her before. Once expressed, the question, of necessity, begs for an answer which is a genuine and authentic part of that person...

With this as a base, you face the first obstacle. "How can I be authentic when I still do not know who I am?" He tells us, "You do not know who you are because you have no traditional models to turn to." That is, you have no direction, you have no orientation. Why? Because scholars for the last fourteen centuries have been too busy describing the details of devotions and by doing so, have inadvertently left the models aside. They failed to present Islam to the people in the people's language. Having awoken and become aware to the real Fatima presented by Shariati, Iranian women were able to arise and play a major role in the Islamic Revolution of Iran. They fought against oppression and injustice side by side with the men. Clothed in the modest dress of what Fatima might have worn, they found no impediments to their freedom to act, to fight, to resist.

After the Revolution, Iranian women who had asked themselves Shariati's question, "Who am I?," are trying to come to know themselves as being "like Fatima" for one must remember that only Fatima is Fatima (xi).

Shariati spent much of this lecture using the example of Fatima to reinforce other aspects of his revolutionary discourse. Shariati also reverts to essentialist arguments concerning the biological differences between men and women that affect their roles in society. At the same time, Shariati is extremely critical of the traditionalist roles most Iranian women were locked into

It is also apparent how sheltered, Eastern women suffer from social rules presented to them in the name of religion and tradition like the present day Islam.

They are presently denied learning, literacy, many of the human rights, social possibilities and freedom to develop. They are not able to explore and nourish the spirit and their thoughts. Even the rights and possibilities which Islam itself has given to women, have been taken away from them in the name of Islam. They have placed her in the same category as a washing machine. Her human values have been lowered to “mother of the child.” She no longer even has a name but is called by the name of her child even if her child happens to be a boy. She is called Hasan's mother. This is exactly like paralyzing her and then saying that because she is paralyzed, she is rived of everything. The sorrow lies here.

Thus we see the fate of women in our traditional, conservative society which has had false undertones of religion added to it. She grows up in her father's home without breathing any free air. She goes to her husband's home (her second lord and master) in accordance with an agreement which is made between a buyer and a seller. She is transferred to her husband's house where the marriage license or ownership papers show both her role and her price. She becomes a respectable servant. A married man means someone who has a servant who works in his house. She cooks food, nurses babies, watches the children and sees to the cleaning and ordering of the house. She manages the inside of the house.

She is a household laborer and a nurse but because she works without any wages, she has no rights. Because she does the work of a servant in the name of common law, ritual or civil law, and as she could not be a servant, she is called a lady. Because her lord is her husband, she is called wife. As she acted as a nurse to the children, she is also called mother.

Like “ideal man,” many parts of the lecture are rhetorically appealing. For example, Shariati concludes by stating that his intention has been to describe Fatima on her own terms. In Iran, women were (and are) assigned affluence in accordance with both the matrilineal and patrilineal heredity of their families. In effect, a woman’s story is always tied to a man’s. Shariati states he does not want to engage in this practice, that “Fatima is Fatima,” and her story is her own:

And I wanted to begin in this manner with Fatima. I got stuck. I wished to say, 'Fatima is the daughter of the great Khadijeh.' I sensed it is not Fatima. I wished to say, 'Fatima is the daughter of Mohammad ('s).' I sensed it is not Fatima. I wished to say, 'Fatima is the wife of Ali ('a).' I sensed it is not Fatima. I wished to say, 'Fatima is the mother of Hasan and Hosein.' I sensed it is not Fatima. I wished to say, 'Fatima is the mother of Zainab.' I still sensed it is not Fatima.

No, these are all true and none of them are Fatima.

***FATIMA IS FATIMA.***

The irony of this final pronouncement is that Shariati’s lecture was primarily an account of his modernist Islamic ideology with Fatima’s story tacked on at the end (see Mir Hosseini 1999).<sup>44</sup> And although Shariati tried not to, he still connected Fatima to the stories of the men around her. While Shariati’s analysis was innovative in the context of the time period, he did not undertake a radical re-ordering of the entire Islamic narrative concerning women. In particular, because Shariati’s program was wedded to establishing an idealized version of early Moslem society, he could not give a critical account of this period (see Mir-Hosseini 1999).

Indeed, Shariati's primary strategy was to cast early Islam as a period of greater women's rights. In chapter seven, "The Traditions of the Hejaz," Shariati uses a combination of essentialist and Marxist conceptions of labor to describe the condition of women during the "time of ignorance," that is, before Islam was introduced.

Her "being weak" pushes her towards slavery and slavery causes her human values to lessen.

She becomes a creature who is the slave of a man, the disgrace of her father, the toy of a man's sexual urges and the "goal" or slave of the home of her husband. Finally, this creature always shakes her man's sense of honor because she is the highest form of shame and disgrace. For the betterment of society and the relief of one's mind, how much better to kill her while still a baby so that the honor of her fathers, brothers and ancestors, all men for that matter, is not stained. As Ferdowsi tells us in the *Shahnameh*:

*It is better to bury women and dragons in the earth.*

*The world will be better off if cleansed of their existence.*

An Arab poet tells us, "if a father has a daughter, whenever he thinks of her future, he should think about three different son-in-laws: one, the house which will hide her; two, the husband who will keep her and three, the grave which will cover her! And the last one, the grave, is the best."

Shariati then describes how Islam revolutionized the status of women during the prophet's time by eliminating the conditions described above. As to why women remain subordinated in the current age, Shariati states that the rights granted women have been taken back by divergent

interpretations of Islam. “Even the rights and possibilities which Islam itself has given to women, have been taken away from them in the name of Islam.” In this respect, Shariati again created a Moslem ideal—a time of women’s emancipation—in his construction of Islamology. Now, a return to Islamic roots—the early Islamic ideal—also returns rights to women. At the same time, he does state that early practices (e.g. polygamy and traditional dress) in the Moslem communities were adopted due to conditions of that period, and that should be reconsidered in the context of the modern period.

The other primary point in Shariati’s lecture is an explicit rejection of “Western” woman as a model for Iranian women. In particular, Shariati applies a modernist perspective that questions whether “modern women” are really “free” in the West. Much of his critique mirrors his broader perspective concerning the decline of the West (see below) and of the individual alienation in the West. As applied to Western women, by rejecting some of their traditional roles (e.g. caring for the family)—by pursuing the “I” instead of the collective “We”—Western women is alienated and alone. In effect, Western women “becomes a realist instead of an idealist, using logic instead of emotion and romanticism, calculating economic benefits instead of love, aspiring to fulfillment of herself instead of her family” (Ferdows 1986:129).

*The Revolutionary Leadership: The role of the “free-thinker” in Iranian society.*

Shariati believed that “free-thinkers”—those who had been afforded the opportunity to pursue an education—had an obligation to reform Iranian society. Much of his advice was a pragmatic accounting as to how the educated elite should interact with common Iranian “masses.”

When we get together with the masses, do we know how to talk to them? What have we got to share with them? What message have we for them? This is a difficult

problem indeed. Should we, considering the fact that our society is a religious one, reject the opinions and the thoughts of the masses? Must we dictate to them? If so, are we not strengthening and making the masses the more determined in their religious stupor? If we denied their thoughts, have we not become estranged from them and relegated them into the lap of the reactionaries who are fighting us? We notice that in both cases the problem has remained unsolved. On the one hand, we are essentially still feeding upon the European intellectuals' thoughts of the last couple of centuries. To what extent can such thoughts, designs, and ideas illuminate our atmosphere as well as our responsibilities? (Shariati 1981:101)

Following this introduction, Shariati applies a Marxist analysis to social groups in Iran, and concludes that there is no large industrial proletariat in Iran, and that the bourgeoisie is in its “nascent stage.” As such, the language of European intellectuals is not going to have meaning for the common Iranian worker. In fact, he argues that in terms of economic development, Iran looks more like 13<sup>th</sup> century Europe than 19<sup>th</sup> century Europe.

Our free-thinkers are living in the 13<sup>th</sup> century but their words, thoughts, and ideas are borrowed from the Western European intellectuals of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries... (103)

From our masses point of view, the average citizenry is a villager. They are our listeners and you cannot talk to them the same way John Moore talked to the British workers in 1864. And so, it is a mistake to think that we are living in the 19<sup>th</sup> or 20<sup>th</sup> century, as well as a mistake to follow European intellectuals of these two centuries as our models. (104).

These passages demonstrate that Shariati was concerned with how movement goals were *framed* and knew that he had to attract movement supporters by making appeals to long held normative values.

### *Confronting the West*

Ali Shariati had a grudging admiration for Western scientific and technical development. Like Jaleel Al-e Ahmad, he wanted Iranians to pursue an indigenous model of social reform and social development. But Shariati was more optimistic than Al-e Ahmad that a middle response to Western hegemony—one that understood the West but was rooted in the traditions of the East—could be found. Moreover, he stated that imitation of Western ideas—if it was accompanied by conscious “choice”—was a reasonable decision. Still, Shariati framed the return to Iranian “roots” as a “response” to the power of the West.

Shariati also indicted the “westoxified” elite as “pseudo-Europeans” alienated from their own culture. The Westernized elite, despite their rejection of the values of Iran, were poor “imitators” of Western culture who would never, despite their efforts, be considered equal members of Western society. Likewise, Shariati regarded the primary thinkers of the Constitutional revolution as a “westoxified” elite who, upon returning from Europe, supposedly stated that: “You have only one way, to become Europeanized from head to toe” (1981:66-67). Still, Shariati rejected the idea that one could ignore the West. He stated that this was the strategy of the religious conservatives whose anti-Western discourse he regarded as “reactionary” and backwards, as opposed to considered and progressive.

While confronting the West (not in anger), make your choice consciously and independently, without following blindly, as a people familiar with their nation and their culture. And take the East and guide her along the same road, on which the West reached supremacy and power. This is neither imitation or absolute rejection of imitation. Rather, it is a conscious initiation and progressive process of making a choice that every human being must go through to make headway. We must neither remain blindfolded nor stare at the aggressive Western culture and civilization. We must observe “things” attentively. In short, if we chance towards the West, we will be trapped and swallowed. But if we hate her, we will be reactionaries and will fall prey to a surprise attack from behind.

The fact is we are standing in front of the West now. And every minute and second the currents of thinking, and various forms of living such as, material, spiritual, artistic, literary, and even moral standards, are flowing towards us. Therefore, it is necessary to know the West and how she reached the position where she is today. (69)

### *The Inevitable Decline of the West*

Ali Shariati also used the currents of French existentialist thought in his indictment of Western materialism. In a lecture in which he outlined competing “world-visions” before he introduces his own “religious world-vision,” Shariati surveyed the work of Jean Paul Sartre and Albert Camus. His primary point is that a “materialistic world-view” ultimately degenerates into the adulation of the self. Using Camus’ work, *The Plague*, he explores the proposition that: “If we remove God from the universe, every action is legitimate” (1981:13). This proposition appears true enough to Shariati; his response is that it is therefore important to keep God in the universe.

Moreover, the fact that Western world-vision “removes God from the universe” is his primary indictment against the West. In effect, Shariati believes that human life in the West—where “‘I’ replaces ‘God’”—is life bereft of meaning. In making this point he discusses art and theatre in the West, particularly Samuel Beckett’s play, *Waiting for Godot*. In Shariati’s opinion, art in the West no longer attempted to look for meaning in the world. The goal of the *theatre of the absurd* was to state “nothing of substance,” to make no value judgments, or order human activity as good or bad. It refused to imbue life with meaning. For Shariati, it is clear that any society that has reduced its art to “stating nothing” is not one that Iranians should emulate (1981:14-15). Following this survey of existentialist thought Shariati returns to a theme that appears throughout his lectures: ideology is the key to progress.

While the spirit ruling over the 19<sup>th</sup> century used to be ideology, the soul dominating the 20<sup>th</sup> century is futility. No longer is there anyone making ideology in the West today. Those who try to do so become laughing stocks. Every philosopher, thinker, and artist who tries to create or think in the 20<sup>th</sup> century must create something that conveys nothing! Why? Because the existing reality, the status quo, is absurd! To convey a message or to say a meaningful thing is to metamorphose life. If a man is displayed on the stage to be good or bad, the real human being is not being shown, because as long as the world has no meaning, man will not have one either (15).

Iranian thinkers like Ali Shariati pointed out the flaws of the West in order to construct a compelling Iranian Moslem identity. At the same time, the discourses of Shariati—and current modernist reformers like Mohammad Khatami (see chapter 12)—also challenge Iranians to dramatically reform their indigenous political and social culture. Indeed, this made Shariati

unpopular with religious traditionalists. Moreover, the modernist discourse tended toward a grudging admiration of Western material resources, and even Western political and social theory. Conservative religious factions usually rejected the modernist discourse for this reason. In the case of Shariati, he was often charged with being a “materialist” rather than a Moslem because of his admiration of Western science.

Many of the primary points of Shariati’s modernist discourse correspond with the popular currents of conservative thought in the West. Indeed, Iranians usually give attribution to many Western thinkers—liberal and conservative<sup>45</sup>—when they make their points concerning the decline of Western civilization. Moreover, prominent American conservatives<sup>46</sup> have been positing the moral decline of the United States to such a degree that it has become a unifying principle of popular conservatism in the United States. As such, it is not hard to find accounts of modern art and culture—written by conservatives<sup>47</sup> in the United States—that are similar to Shariati’s complaints of Western culture. Still, despite these similarities, Western conservatives are usually indignant with respect to these charges when Moslem intellectuals make them. Why? Obviously, the response to Moslem intellectual criticism of the West has less to do with the arguments,<sup>48</sup> and more to do with who is making them. Westerners do not like to be lectured by Easterners concerning the moral depravity of Western society. If someone is going to do the lecturing, it should be confined to those who can claim membership in that society.

Likewise, Easterners take offense at being lectured by Westerners concerning the backwardness of their political, economic and social systems, even if they agree with the tenor of the debate. In effect, the arguments are often less important than who is making them. This dynamic is also why religious modernists, such as Shariati, make complicated arguments concerning the superiority of Western science, but nonetheless maintain the cultural superiority of the Moslem

society. In effect, Shariati simultaneously confronts the West, which he often admires, but also critiques it in order to maintain his integrity as an Iranian and a Moslem. Ali Shariati also made arguments concerning the superiority of the Iranian cultural systems over those of the West for practical purposes. Most obviously, this was done to instill a group pride in the cultural traditions of Iran and to cast Moslem thought as a modernizing force. In this respect, Shariati's discourse made it possible for many Iranians to contemplate the West, and Western ideas, but retain their identity as Iranian Moslems.

Shariati was not too concerned with giving an impartial accounting of Western culture. Instead, he was actively looking to evaluate the negative aspects of Western culture in order to make a return to Iranian Islamic roots more appealing. Shariati worked to create a Moslem-Iranian identity that was attractive to young Iranians who found aspects of the West appealing, but were not comfortable within Western cultural traditions. Ultimately, Shariati was successful in instilling a sense of pride based on a common cultural identity among many Iranians who were caught in the currents of rapid, largely Western inspired, social change.

Some observers of the Middle East regard the modernist perspective of Western decline—common in the Middle East in countries other than Iran—as an indication of an inferiority complex that Middle Easterners have developed with respect to Western culture (Ajami 1998; Lewis 2001). This line of reasoning generally asserts that during the past few centuries of Middle Eastern interaction with the West, the West has clearly demonstrated its cultural and political superiority with respect to its militarily, economic, scientific and technical power. Middle Easterners, rather than face this fact, have instead developed the frame of Western decline, largely wishful thinking, that has prevented people in the Middle East from reforming their social and political systems.

The primary problem with this argument is that there is little reason to believe that “blaming the West” is connected with *social, political and economic stagnation* in the Middle East. In particular, the exact opposite occurred in Iran in that this discourse helped fuel the Iranian revolution. As such, it was a pro-active and enabling social and political discourse. In this respect, much political and social development is preceded by the development of a legitimating idea that claims the superiority of one system of belief over another. Importantly, the superiority of a revolutionary “ideal” is not usually evaluated according to *immediate* material well-being after a revolution. Indeed, rapid economic growth following revolution would be anomalous.<sup>49</sup> Moreover, conflict with other nation states is not usually considered an indictment of revolutionary ideas. Most often, people believe that these conflicts demonstrate the strength of the revolutionary ideal. For example, the American revolution was fueled by a belief that new American political values were superior to those of the British. The success of the American revolution was regarded as an independent confirmation of this fact, despite the economic hardships and prolonged period of conflict with the British following American independence. Indeed, when the British burned the White House to the ground in 1812, Americans did not see this as a confirmation of the superiority of the British political and social system, and suddenly decide that American revolutionary ideas were wrong.

Iranian conservatives use the same reasoning with respect to the success of the Iranian revolution, the period of war with Iraq, and the continued conflict with the United States. Many regard the fact that the revolution succeeded, despite American efforts to prevent it, as an independent confirmation concerning the strength of Iranian social and political ideals. For conservatives, the continued rhetorical assaults from the United States constitute further evidence that the West both fears, and is envious of, the superiority of the Iranian social and political system.

This is a common diagnostic frame that many post revolutionary movements use to support and enable political ideology. Moreover, this type of frame—one that asserts the superiority of a social and political system over another—is common in all social revolutions. Indeed, it is likely a primary step in determining the success of any new social and political system. Of course, difference among different cultural and political systems is usually later reconciled. For instance, despite a long period of animosity towards each other, and centuries of intermittent armed conflict, the French and Germans now coexist peacefully. Likewise, decades of cultural and religious conflict between the Iranians and Saudi Arabians, they appear to have recently established a working relationship between their governments.

Many of Shariati's followers portray his lectures as social science,<sup>50</sup> or philosophy, but they are best evaluated in terms of their contribution toward “making” a new Iranian-Moslem identity that was used to confront the West. Shariati made arguments, not social science. He was admired because he made a case for the superiority of a reformed Islamic world-view. In doing so he selected aspects of Western culture that reinforced the superiority of his “religious world-vision.” This strategy was essential for establishing a group solidarity among many young Iranians that ultimately contributed to the success of the Iranian revolution.

### *Confronting the West: The Clerical Response*

The monarchy must go. The Shah is corrupt. His hands are dripping with blood. He is a foreign agent. He is the Yazid of our age.

Ayatollah Khomeini, 1977<sup>51</sup>

Ayatollah Khomeini was the most important clerical leader of the Iranian revolution. This study will primarily use examples from his treatises and speeches as an exemplar of traditionalist

revival thought. It will also survey the strategies Khomeini employed in crafting resonant movement frames used to mobilize supporters. Seyyed Ruhollah al-Musavi al-Khomeini (1900-1989) was born 180 miles south of the Iranian capital of Tehran in the town of Khomein. He was one of six children in a religious family. His father was killed when Khomeini was six. Khomeini's grandfather, father and father-in-law all attained the highest level of standing in the Shi'i Islamic tradition. Khomeini followed in this tradition, studying religious philosophy as a student in Qom (Moin 1999).

Khomeini's (1941) first published treatise, *Unveiling the Secrets*, condemned the increasing secularization of Iranian society and criticized Reza Khan Shah for increased dependence on the West. During debate that followed Ayatollah Borujerdi's death in March 1961, Khomeini was the foremost member of a group of clerics who were exhorting the religious leadership to take more activist positions concerning Iranian social problems. Khomeini was often viewed in the West as an orthodox member of the Shi'i religious establishment, but this perspective fails to recognize that he had consistently challenged the conservative religious leadership in Iran. In this respect, Khomeini's assertion that *active* religious guidance is necessary for governing legitimacy was a break from traditional Shiite religious thought.

In 1962-63 Khomeini led a series of demonstrations in Qom—a center of Iranian Shi'i learning—against the “White Revolution” reforms instituted by the Shah. As a result of his activism Khomeini was jailed briefly, but following his release he continued to criticize the Iranian government. He was exiled by the Shah to Turkey in 1964 and immigrated to southern Iraq a year later. While in Iraq Khomeini produced *Guardianship of the Islamic Jurists* ([1970] 1981) which outlined his governing philosophy, and the argument that the religious elite should have oversight in the political system.

Khomeini was expelled from Iraq in 1977. He immigrated to Paris, made contact with other Iranian exiles. A series of widespread demonstrations against Mohammed Reza Shah erupted throughout 1977-78 and ultimately forced the Shah to leave Iran in January 1979. Khomeini returned to Iran in February 1979. Soon, his followers established legal standing for the religious elite in the new Iranian Constitution. They also waged a violent two-year campaign that suppressed the communist, secular nationalist and modernist religious groups who became opposed to Khomeini's concept of Islamic governance.

*Ayatollah Khomeini: The Call for Clerical Activism*

The clerical class in Iran during the post-1963 period has generally been divided into two broad groups. Individuals labeled as "traditional" or "quietist" were opposed to clerical activism in politics. They argued that combining the ethereal quality of religious belief with the mechanizations of politics would make religion as mundane as politics. These "quietist" consistently argued that religious belief should transcend political considerations.

Ayatollah Borujerdi, the prominent religious leader from the post-war period up until his death in 1961, was an advocate of this position (see Akhavi 1980). He was not entirely apolitical. He often lobbied Mohammad Reza Shah, and actively protected, and expanded, the traditional role of the religious elite in Iran following the abdication of Reza Shah. Indeed, just before his death he was pressing his representatives in Tehran to lobby against the "White Revolution" reforms proposed by the Shah. In particular, the land reform component of this program threatened the relationship that the religious elite had with the landowning class. Moreover, members of the religious elite—and the various institutions that they controlled—had considerable land holdings themselves (Akhavi 1980:96-100). Ayatollah Borujerdi likely regarded the White Revolution as an attempt by government to expand into a sphere of traditional religious authority. In the past, when

the central governance of Tehran did not threaten clerical authority, Borujerdi refrained from active political involvement.

Following Borujerdi's death in 1961 the debate over clerical activism became a prominent discourse.<sup>52</sup> Later, the White Revolution programs of the Shah became a target among the more activist clerics. In particular, extending political and voting rights to minorities and women had long been an anathema to most in the clerical class. Indeed, precedence for this stance had been established among the opponents of the 1907 constitution who argued that Moslems should be afforded greater rights than non-Moslems. Ayatollah Khomeini, on at least one occasion, gave a speech that was steadfastly opposed to enfranchising women. Apologists<sup>53</sup> for Khomeini often state this was not a prominent part of his anti-Shah discourse in 1963, and that later, during the 1979 revolution, he supported women's rights to vote. Still, during the 1963 discourse most of the religious elite regarded extending women the right to vote—and extending rights to non-Moslems—as contrary to the Moslem faith (Akhavi 1980).

In the ongoing discourses of lay-religious figures such as Mehdi Bazargan and Jalel Al-e Ahmad there was a consistent call for greater clerical activism in politics. Other critics regarded the traditional clerics as “fossilized” and out of touch with the currents of the modern world. Both of these arguments clearly had an affect on a generation of activist clerics who trained the primary religious leaders of the Iranian revolution. Foremost among these clerics was Ayatollah Khomeini ([1970] 1981), who often indicted apolitical religious leaders using the same language as Shariati and Jalel Al-e Ahmad:

Present Islam to the people in its true form, so that our youth do not picture the akhunds as sitting in some corner in Najaf or Qum, studying the questions of menstruation and parturition instead of concerning themselves with politics, and

draw the conclusion that religion must be separate from politics. This slogan of the separation of religion and politics and the demand that the Islamic scholars not intervene in social and political affairs have been formulated and propagated by the imperialist; it is only the irreligious that repeat them. Were religion and politics separate during the time of the prophet (peace and blessings be upon him)? (38).

A generation of seminary students took the charges against clerical quietism seriously and actively worked to reform the traditional institutions of the religious elite. Clerics such as Ayatollah Motahhari—often Khomeini’s representative in Iran during his period of exile—actively studied, and then directly refuted, Western philosophical traditions that were popular among Iranian students. For instance, Ayatollah Motahhari (1986) studied Marx, and then refuted Marxism from the perspective of a reformed Islamic worldview. Ayatollah Motahhari argued that the traditional religious institutions—and the scholarship they generated—could address the questions of the modernity. Like lay-religious leaders, the orthodox religious elites in Iran were inclined to regard the West as immoral. Indeed, religious traditionalist—before lay-religious and nationalist reformers adopted the theme—had long believed that Western ideologies were destroying indigenous cultural values of Iranians.

Like many lay-religious leaders, traditional clerics also advocated for a “return” to indigenous religious values. Of course, they took issue with the charge that they were an irrelevant, “fossilized” institution of no consequence in modern Iran. And while activist clerics, like Khomeini, clearly resented the fact that people outside the tradition assaulted the clerical institutions, this did not prevent them from making similar indictments against apolitical religious leaders. Still, the activist steadfastly defended these same leaders from criticism made by outsiders.

Traditionalist reformers like the Ayatollah Khomeini were not inclined to study modernist Western philosophy of Jean Paul Sartre, Eugene Ionesco, Albert Camus, Karl Marx and Frantz Fanon. A notable exception in this case was Ayatollah Motahhari. So the activist clerical response, while clearly innovative within the context of the tradition they were working within, was never as dynamic as that created by lay religious leaders such as Ali Shariati. In this regard, reform clerics were working within the confines of a long Iranian-Islamic clerical tradition. As such, these religious scholars were “activist” members of the “traditional” Iranian religious elite. Indeed, it is important to recognize that these leaders had considerable authority because they remained inside the clerical class. They were regarded as radicals by many of their peers, but they did not want to destroy traditional religious institutions. These activists were working to reform Iranian Islamic traditions and to institutionalize an activist political agenda as a normative value for a new generation of clerics. They were largely successful in this endeavor.

There were exceptional clerical activist who participated in the innovative discourses being established by lay-religious leaders. For example, Ayatollah Motahhari participated—with Ali Shariati—in the program of study at the *Hosseiniyah-e Ershad*. Ultimately, Ayatollah Motahhari broke with this institution as Shariati’s prominence grew (see Rahnema 1998). In this regard, Ayatollah Motahhari, who likewise quoted Western philosophers such as Bertrand Russell, Rene Descartes and Thomas Hobbes, still maintained membership within the clerical class and made an argument for the continued relevance of the religious elite. Ayatollah Motahhari was later canonized as the “official” ideologue of the Iranian revolution after a radical Islamic group opposed to clerical authority assassinated him, in May 1979.

*The 1962-3 Qom Protests*

The “White Revolution” of Mohammad Reza Shah, in both its form and language, attempted to expropriate the most dynamic themes of the nationalist and communist movements of the 1940s-50s. It nominally included a land reform bill and extended rights for both non-Moslems and women. It also attempted to further modernize the national bureaucracy and educational system.<sup>54</sup> Soon after Mohammad Reza Shah unveiled this national plan for development he started to face increasing opposition from the traditional clergy. In particular, the clergy had long objected to the idea of political “equality” being extended to non-Moslems and women. Soon, clerical preachers began to cast the Shah in increasingly unflattering terms. To this end, in early 1963, the military entered, and then ransacked, a religious seminary located in Qom. During the course of this event, a young *seyyed* was killed (Akhavi 1980).

Ayatollah Khomeini, already an activist in the war of words against the Shah, began using the invasion of the seminary as a focal point in his speeches (see Akhavi 1980; Moin 1999; Khomeini 1963a). Khomeini anchored his rhetorical speech to the symbols of the Shi’i faith using strategies similar to those employed during the Constitutional revolution. For instance, Khomeini (1963a) used the fortieth day of the assault on the seminary—the traditional period of mourning for a religious martyr—to issue a declaration that challenged the Shah’s governing authority. First, he catalogued the assaults against religion undertaken by the Shah—the invasion of the seminary, the killing of a *seyyed*, the forced conscription of seminary students<sup>55</sup> and allowing non-Moslems to become judges—and then stated:

I have repeatedly pointed out the government has evil intentions and is opposed to the ordinances of Islam. One by one, the proofs are becoming clear... The strategy of this government and certain of its members is to bring about the total effacement of

the ordinances of Islam. As long as this usurpatory and rebellious government is in power, the Muslims can have no hope of any good (175).

Later, Khomeini added another grievance that was clearly inspired by the Nationalist movement of Mohammad Mosaddeq:

I don't know whether all these uncivilized and criminal acts have been committed for the sake of the oil in Qum, whether the religious teaching institution is to be sacrificed for the sake of oil (175).

Moin (1999) states Khomeini's vocabulary was now more nationalist in tone: "Iran's interest and glory' now entered the new political vocabulary of the clergy as a whole, widening the appeal of Khomeini among lay political activist" (96). As the conflict escalated, periodic threats and harassment were directed against the clergy and their followers by members of the armed forces and the SAVOK. Eventually, the Shah offered the clerical elite in Qom the opportunity to migrate to Najaf. This was an offer of traditional banishment in return for their safety. Khomeini, then the other preeminent clerics, refused the offer (Moin 96-97).

The most dramatic event during this protest period was the speech given by Khomeini (1963b) on June 3, 1963, the day of *Ashura*. He delivered the speech at the seminary that had been attacked by the Shah's troops. Previously, representatives from the Shah had delivered personal messages to Khomeini telling him that if he blasphemed the Shah the seminary would be invaded and that his supporters would be killed (Moin 1999). Khomeini's speech opened as follows:

It is now the afternoon of Ashura. Sometimes when I recall the events of Ashura, a question occurs to me: if the Umayyads and the regime of Yazid ibn

Mu'awiya wished to make war against Husain, why did they commit such savage and inhumane crimes against the defenseless women and innocent children? What was the offense of the women and children? What had Husain's six month-old infant done? It seems to me the Umayyads had a far more basic aim: they were opposed to the very existence of the family of the Prophet. They did not wish the Bani Hashim to exist and their goal was to root out this "Godly tree."

A similar question occurs to me now. If the tyrannical regime of Iran simply wished to wage war on the *maraji*, to oppose the *ulama*, what business did it have tearing the Quran to shreds on the day it attacked the Fayziya Madrasa? Indeed, what business did it have with the madrasa or with its students, like the eighteen year old sayyid who was killed? What had he done against the Shah, against the government, against the tyrannical regime? We come to the conclusion that this regime also has a more basic aim: they are fundamentally opposed to Islam itself and the existence of the religious class. They do not want us to exist; they do not wish any of us to exist, the great and the small alike. (177)

The speech employed all of the rhetorical strategies used by the clerical elite in previous movements. There is the direct comparison of the Shah to Yazid, the individual responsible for the martyrdom of Hossein. There is the death of a young *seyyed*—a man who claimed lineage to Hossein—martyred at the seminary and now allegorically a part of the same struggle fought at Karbala. And there is the clerical class, defenders of Islam, and now, also the defenders of the Iranian nation. According to Moin (1999), the march in support of Khomeini in Tehran on the day of *Ashura* drew as many as 100,000 people. The protesters also employed slogans that compared

the killing of the seminary student with the martyrdom of Hossein. The crowd was so large, and had enough *luti* supporters, that it effectively neutralized the forces of the Shah, including those of the infamous Shaban “the Brainless” (Moin 1999:106). Smaller demonstrations continued the following day with some nationalist supporters of Mosaddeq in attendance. That day, 122 people were arrested. On June 5<sup>th</sup> the Shah imposed martial law and arrested Ayatollah Khomeini and other prominent clerical dissidents. Despite the imposition of martial law, thousands continued to protest. The number killed during the Qom protest by the Shah’s security forces is hard to account for, but in popular lore thousands<sup>56</sup> of protesters were killed (Moin 1999:112).

*Anti-Imperial Frames: The Speech Against Extra-Legal Status of American Military Personnel*

Members of the Shah’s military and secret police debated what should be done with Khomeini after his arrest. Ultimately, rather than jailing him indefinitely, or killing him and facing the possibility that he become an inspirational martyr, he was released under the supervision of the Iranian security force (SAVOK). The assumption was that his experience in jail combined with the overt surveillance of his activities would prevent Khomeini from continuing his rhetorical assaults against the Pahlavi monarchy (see Moin 1999). Supporters of the Shah, through the state run press, argued the Qom uprising was the provocation of “foreign agents” and that local leaders (a reference to Khomeini) were in their pay. This was the standard response with respect to any protest that was directed against the Iranian state. Later, articles appeared in state run presses that stated the religious leadership in Qom was in full support of the “White Revolution” (Moin 1999).

Khomeini did not stop his rhetorical assaults on the regime despite continued harassment by SAVOK. The intransigence of Khomeini and his followers was not supported by most of the clerical class in Iran. As Khomeini continued his battle with the Shah he became increasingly

isolated from the majority of *mojtehads* who were arguing that an accommodation with the Pahlavi monarchy be reached. Khomeini, experiencing increasing isolation from the clerical elite, made a conscious decision to frame his speeches in a manner that would appeal to nationalist groups in Iran (Moin 1998:121). The event that caused Khomeini's exile was a speech he gave outside his home during the religious celebrations of Fatima's birthday concerning the granting of capitulatory rights to American military personnel stationed in Iran.

During the Fall of 1964 a law introduced by the Shah and passed by the parliament (*majles*) stated that American military personnel stationed in Iran would not be subject to Iranian law, and that civil or criminal infractions by Americans would be handled through the American court system. For Khomeini, this was a clear indication that the Shah was entirely under the influence of the Americans. Moreover, that the sovereignty of Iran had been "sold" (Khomeini 1964:181). The strength of his proclamation was reinforced by the fact that it occurred during a religious holiday in which Shi'is make a pilgrimage to Qom and listen to speeches made by esteemed religious leaders. Usually, the celebration of Fatima's birthday was joyous, but Khomeini stated early in his sermon that (*italics added*): "Iran no longer has any festival to celebrate: they have turned our festival into mourning. *They have sold us, they have sold our independence*: but still they light up the city and dance" (181 [*italics added*]). The speech includes mostly nationalistic themes and includes very little religious allegory. Some anti-imperialist themes included:

If some American servant, some American's cook, assassinate your *marja* in the middle of the bazaar, or runs over him, the Iranian police do not have the right to apprehend him! The dossier must be sent to America, so that our masters there can decide what is to be done! (181-82)

They have reduced the Iranian people to a level lower than a dog<sup>57</sup> belonging to an American. If someone runs over a dog belonging to an American, he will be prosecuted. Even if the Shah himself were to run over a dog belonging to an American, he would be prosecuted (182)

Iran has sold itself to obtain the dollars. The government has sold our independence, reduced us to the level of a colony, and made the Muslim nation of Iran more backward than savages in the eyes of the world (182)

If the religious leaders have influence, they will not permit this nation to be the slaves of Britain one day, and America the next! (183)

What disasters this loan has brought down upon the head of the nation already! This impoverished nation must now pay 100 million in interest to America over the next ten years. And as if this were not enough, we have been sold for the sake of this loan! (184)

Are we to be trampled underfoot by the boots of America simply because we are a weak nation and have no dollars? America is worse than Britain; Britain is worse than America. The Soviet Union is worse than both of them. They are all worse and more unclean than each other. But today it is America that we are concerned about (185).

With respect to the “White Revolution,” a program now endorsed by a rubber-stamp parliament (*majles*), Khomeini stated:

What is the Majlis doing? This illegal, illicit Majlis; this Majlis that the *maraji* have boycotted with their *fatvas* and decrees; this Majlis that makes empty noises about independence and revolution, that says: “We have undergone a White Revolution!”

I don’t know where this White Revolution is that they are making so much fuss about. God knows that I am aware of (and my awareness causes me pain) the remote villages and provincial towns, not to mention our own backward city of Qum. I am aware of the hunger of our people and the disordered state of our agrarian economy. Why not do something for this population, instead of piling up debts and enslaving yourselves! (185)

And with respect to the policy of clerical quietism, Khomeini asserted:

Those gentlemen who say we must hold our tongues and not utter a sound—do they still say the same thing on this occasion? Are we to keep silent again and not say a word? Are we to keep silent while they are selling us? Are we to keep silent why they sell our independence? (185)

Khomeini also offers the example of the late Hasan Modarres, a clerical member of the parliament (*majles*) during the first world war and later the foremost oppositional figure the Reza Khan Shah. He was assassinated in 1936. Khomeini refers to the heroic stance made by Modarres against the Russians. He states:

That is the conduct of a true religious leader: a thin, emaciated man, a mere heap of bones, rejects the ultimatum and demand of a powerful state like Russia. If there were a single religious leader in the Majles today, he would not permit these things to happen. It is for this reason that they want to destroy the influence of the religious leaders, in order to obtain their aims and desires (187).

And later, referring directly to the fact that the constitution provided for a five member committee with religious oversight to the Majles:

.... according to Article 2 of the Supplementary Constitutional Law, no law is valid unless the mujtahids exercise a supervisory role in the Majles. From the beginning of the constitutional period down to the present, has any mujtahid ever exercised supervision? If there are five mujtahids in the Majlis, or even a single religious leader of lesser rank, they would get a punch in the mouth; he would not allow this bill to be enacted, he would make the Majlis collapse (188)

And finally, in an explicit denunciation of the state and its authority:

We do not regard as law what they claim to have passed. We do not regard this Majlis as a Majlis. We do not regard this government as a government. They are traitors to Islam, who are traitors to the Qu'ran. (188)

Soon after this speech Khomeini was deported to Turkey where he remained in exile until 1965 whereupon he migrated to Najaf, the traditional center of Shi'i learning located in southern Iraq. During his time in Iraq (1965-77) Khomeini continued to write and produce treatises that were

smuggled into Iran. Likewise, he periodically met with other oppositional figures in the Iranian resistance. And, despite his exile—and perhaps because of it—Khomeini’s acclaim grew among different groups that were opposed to the Shah. Most regarded him as a heroic figure because he was among the few who openly opposed the Shah. Moreover, the fact that he had enough esteem to raise considerable crowds during the 1963-64 period was a demonstration to many that the clerical class retained considerable support among segments of the Iranian population. He was considered a possible ally among many dissidents.

*In Exile: A Combination of Anti-imperial and Religious Frames*

While in exile, Khomeini, operating from the holiest places in the Shi’i religious tradition, continually used religious events—the pilgrimage period to Mecca, the occasion of *Ashura*—to reinforce his anti-imperialist messages. After Khomeini returned to Iran he continued to use religious events as an occasion to issue political condemnations of the United States and other states in the Middle East. During the pilgrimages to Mecca, Khomeini urged his followers to spread their political views, and many used the occasion to unfurl banners that assaulted the United States government. For many traditionalist throughout the Middle East this politicizing of religious ceremonies was considered distasteful, and Saudi security forces often arrested, and assaulted, Iranian nationals who engaged in these practices.

The following is an excerpt of the first *haj* treatise Khomeini (1971a) asked his followers to share with other Moslems making the pilgrimage to Mecca. The message uses many of the anti-imperial frames that were developed by nationalists.

Now that, because of the apathy and negligence of the Moslem peoples, *the foul laws of imperialism have clutched at the heart of the lands of the people of the*

*Qu'ran, with our national wealth and resources being devoured by imperialism* despite our supposed ownership of them, with the poisonous culture of imperialism penetrating to the depths of towns and villages throughout the Moslem world, displacing the culture of the Qu'ran, recruiting our youth en masse to the service of foreigners and imperialists, and corrupting them day by day with some new tune, some new deceptive formula—now that these disasters have descended upon us, it is incumbent on you, O believed Muslims, who have gathered here in the land of revelation to perform the rites of pilgrimage, to make use of this opportunity to find a solution to these problems that beset us. (195)

Addressing the *hajjis* became an annual event, one that has been continued by Khomeini's successor in Iran, Ayatollah Khamenei. During 1978, Khomeini, now operating from Paris as open protest occurred in Iran, issued the following message to the pilgrims:

Now, O visitors to the sacred House of God, I present you with a report on the problems afflicting the Muslim people of Iran, and I request aid from Muslims in every part of the world. For fifty years, Iran, which has been in the grip of the Pahlavi dynasty, a self-proclaimed servant of foreign powers. During those dark years, the great people of Iran have been writhing under police repression, suffocation, and spiritual torture.

*The Shah has given foreigners all the subterranean wealth and the vital interests belonging to the people. He has given oil to America; gas to the Soviet Union, pastureland, forests, and part of the oil to England and other countries. The people have been deprived of all the necessities of life and kept in a state of backwardness. The imperialist system has taken control of the army, the education,*

and the economy of our country, and has taken away from our people all opportunity for development (1978e: 237).

*Khomeini and Cultural Defense Against Westoxification*

Khomeini expropriated many of the modernist discourses that had been fashioned by Islamic lay-leaders such as Ali Shariati. Unlike Shariati—and likely taking his cues from the work of Ayatollah Motahhari—he fashioned his “response” to the West as a return to the true “culture.” He did not describe religion as an ideology. Still, although the tenor of his speeches is very different than the manner with which Shariati addressed people, he still proclaimed *tawhid* as a unifying ideal in Islam. Moreover, in the following message to the pilgrims (1980c), he states that the adoption of “true” Islam is a means of combating the “Westoxified” elite. This speech occurred during the first tumultuous year following the expulsion of the Shah when there was considerable struggle between moderate factions (communist, social democratic and moderate Islamist) and the activist religious clergy. Khomeini begins by addressing a number of ongoing events related to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, conflict with Iraq and the hostage crisis. He then calls for greater unity using the traditional concept of *tauhid*.

Muslims of the world over who believe in the truth of Islam, arise and gather beneath the banner of *tauhid* and the teachings of Islam! Repel the treacherous superpowers from your countries and your abundant resources. Restore the glory of Islam, and abandon your selfish disputes and differences, for you possess everything! Rely on the culture of Islam, resist Western imitation, and stand on your on two feet. Attack those intellectuals who are infatuated with the West and the East, and recover your true identity. Realize the intellectuals in the pay of foreigners have inflicted

disaster upon their people and countries. As long as you remain disunited and fail to place your reliance in true Islam, you will continue to suffer what you have suffered already. We are now in an age when the masses act as the guides to the intellectuals and are rescuing them from abasement and humiliation by the East and West, For today is the day that the masses of the people are on the move; they are the guides to those who previously sought to be guides themselves (302).

With respect to the concept of nationalism, Khomeini now condemns it as an organizing ideal for the state while also maintaining that the “love of the fatherland”—the frame commonly used to introduce nationalism previously—is virtuous:

For years the government of Iraq has been busy promoting nationalism, and certain groups have followed the same path, setting the Muslims against each other as enemies. To love one’s fatherland and its people and to protect its frontiers are both quite unobjectionable, but nationalism, involving hostility to other Muslim nations, is something quite different. It is contrary to the noble Quran and the orders of the Most Noble Messenger. Nationalism that results in the creation of enmity between Muslims and splits the ranks of the believers is against Islam and the interests of the Muslims. It is a stratagem concocted by the foreigners who are disturbed by the spread of Islam. (302)

Khomeini gave an extremely important speech on the anniversary of the 1963 Qom protests. For this speech, Khomeini (1979f) returned to the *madrassa* where he had delivered his famous *Ashura* speech in 1963. In this speech, delivered six months after his return to Iran,

Khomeini now regards the 1963 uprising as a revolt against “Westoxification.” Moreover, at this time of revolutionary flux, Khomeini marks the 1963 protest as the beginning of the broader revolutionary movement. This is done to refute the claims being made by secular factions that they were responsible for the success of the 1978-79 revolution. He states with reference to the 1963 movement: “Those who did not participate in this movement have no right to advance any claims. Who are they to change the course of our nation now, and what are the groups that call for a change in direction? Who are those who wish to divert our Islamic movement from Islam?” (269). He then answers this question by stating the opposition is the Westoxified elite who are still under the control of foreign ideas. Moreover, he directly refutes the religious modernists, and is perhaps directly referring to Ali Shariati’s work, when he states it is impossible to have Islam “minus the clergy” (271). With respect to the “westoxified” opposition he states:

Xenomaniacs, people infatuated with the West, empty people, people with no content! Come to your senses; do not try and westernize everything you have! Look at the West, and see who the people are in the West that present themselves as champions of human rights and what their aims are. Is it human rights they really care about, or the rights of the superpowers? What they really want is the rights of the superpowers. Our jurists should not imitate them (270).

The reference to “human rights” is directed toward a society that had been established during this period, consisting of Islamic jurists, who objected to the conduct of the revolutionary courts, particularly the summary execution of individuals who were judged to be against the revolution (Algar 1981:316). This speech is remarkably different than previous speeches given by

Khomeini (1979a) which were much more inclusive. For example, upon his arrival back to Iran on Feb., 1 1979 he stated:

I offer my thanks to the nation: to all the religious scholars, who have toiled with such devotion during these recent events; to the students, who have suffered so heavily; to the merchants and traders, who have undergone hardship; to the youths of the bazaars, universities, and madrassas of the country, who have shed their blood in the course of events; to the professors, judges, and civil servants; to the workers and peasants. You have triumphed because of your extraordinary efforts and unity of purpose (252).

***When Did the Revolution Start? Who Started It? When Will It Be Over?***

The previous survey of Islamic revival thought outlined two broad areas of discourse resonant among many Iranians during the period of the Islamic Revival. As such, the ideas presented in the work of Jaleel Al-e Ahmad, Ali Shariati and Ayatollah Khomeini tended to be debated among all movement groups operating in Iran. In terms of the actual affiliation of people to different movement groups the Iranian landscape—just before the revolutionary period—is notable for how remarkably fractious the different groups were. In times of social and political flux it is natural that many different groups vie for political power, but by any standard the number of specific groups who were, to varying degrees, activist in the campaign against the Shah was remarkable. Moreover, there was continuous fracturing among the Islamic, Marxist and Social Democratic groups who all had very different *specific* revolutionary programs. This made the post-revolutionary accounting of the contributions that were made, or not made, by specific movement factions particularly acrimonious.

Khomeini felt the revolution began during the 1963 protest in Qom, that the clerical elite started the revolutionary movement, and that the revolutionary struggle would never end. Indeed, this version has been codified into the Iranian Constitution which states, under the heading “The Dawn of the Movement”:

The devastating protest of Imam Khomeini against the American conspiracy known as the "*White Revolution*," which was a step intended to stabilize the foundations of despotic rule and to reinforce the political, cultural, and economic dependence of Iran on world imperialism, brought into being a united movement of the people and, immediately afterwards, a momentous revolution of the Muslim nation in June 1963.

Obviously, each of these points is debatable. For example, many believe the revolution was triggered by the guerilla movements of the early 1970s that were undertaken by a small, but extremely dedicated group of radical Moslem and orthodox Marxist groups. They periodically assaulted members of the Shah's government and occasionally engaged in open combat against the security forces. Most of these movement supporters had been killed, or jailed, by security forces in the middle 1970s, but some were released from prison just previous to the widespread protest in 1978. Many Iranians regarded them as revolutionary heroes (see Abrahamian 1989).

By way of contrast, the supporters of Ayatollah Khomeini engaged in mostly passive resistance to the Iranian regime, and very few of Khomeini's immediate supporters took up arms against the Shah in the early 1970s. In this regard, the overtly “revolutionary” organizations like the People's Mojahedin can make a legitimate claim to have “sparked” the 1978-79 revolution (see Abrahamian 1989). Of these groups, the “Islamist Mojahedin” and the “Marxist Mojahedin”—

initially a single group that fractured when some members accepted a more orthodox Marxist perspective—had the most popular support.

Of the individuals discussed in this chapter, Ali Shariati—while not a member of these groups—is usually considered a primary ideologue adopted by radical Marxist-Islamist groups that engaged in direct armed conflict with the Shah’s security forces. Moreover, Shariati’s lectures at the *Hosseiniyeh Ershad* were used as occasions by the People’s Mojahedin to recruit new members. At the same time, several Mojahedin leaders, speaking with Shariati privately—and occasionally challenging him publicly—sometimes stated that his “talk” of cultural revolution, without an explicit recognition that revolution would require armed rebellion, was disingenuous and helped maintain the status quo (Rahnema 1998).

Other movement factions, particularly the remnants of the National Front Movement led by Mehdi Bazargan and Ayatollah Taleqani, regarded the revolution as an extension of the anti-imperial struggle undertaken by Mohammad Mosaddeq in 1953. They sometimes claimed Shariati as an ideologue as well, although Bazargan and Taleqani are considered the group’s primary theorists. The “Freedom Movement” in Iran consisted of an older generation of Mosaddeqist who were middle class, social democratic and personally religious. They were not overtly revolutionary, but were continually active in the Iranian resistance against the Shah. They can rightfully claim to have helped fashion the revolutionary movement. Like the supporters of Khomeini, most were not engaged in active arm struggle against the Shah, but they were active in an international campaign that demonstrated human rights abuses in Iran. Both Ayatollah Taleqani and Mehdi Bazargan were repeatedly questioned by SAVOK and routinely jailed for their activities—mostly publicizing their dissent in open forums—during the 1960s-70s. Ayatollah Taleqani—who had discovered and revitalized the tracts of constitutionalist supporter Shaykh Mohammad Hossein Na’ini (discussed

in chapter 9)—had considerable popular and religious support in Tehran. He died shortly after the revolution. For many, the international human rights campaign, coupled with a series of protests led by academics in 1977, provided the revolutionary “spark.” Many of these leaders were associated with the Freedom Movement. This campaign was non-violent and centered on forcing the Shah to allow for the legal establishment of political parties. A ten day poetry reading in October of 1977 undertaken on the anniversary of Jaleel Al-e Ahmad’s death—a writer whose work was now banned from public discussion in Iran—was an important early symbolic protest against the Shah in 1977 (see Chehabi 1990).

Mehdi Bazargan later became the first Prime Minister of the Iranian Republic. Ayatollah Khomeini publicly endorsed him. He spent his brief tenure as Prime Minister trying to carve out a political niche for social democratic reformers and the technocratic elite before being publicly dismissed by Khomeini. The symbolic event that ostensibly led to his dismissal was his decision to shake hands with Zbigniew Brzezinski, the national security advisor for the United States, at a meeting in Algeria in 1979.

The last revolutionary group was the remnants of the socialist and communist networks that had been established by the Tudeh in the 1940s. In particular, there were periodic strikes throughout the 1970s undertaken at many of the most important industrial facilities and petroleum plants in Iran. Most often these strikes were related to wage and worker safety issues, but were also rhetorically tied to the need for greater political freedom. The Shah routinely jailed, and tortured, the leaders of these strikes who claimed allegiance to a variety of nationalist, socialist and Islamic parties. While the degree of overt Tudeh party influence in these strikes is debatable, the Tudeh was responsible for the organization of the industrial labor force in the 1940s this example was followed throughout the strikes in the 1970s. Moreover, the remnants of the Tudeh and other socialist parties

mobilized industrial workers throughout the 1978-79 revolution. In this regard, the Tudeh and other socialist oriented parties can rightfully claim to have affected the revolutionary outcome (see Abrahamian 1982; Bayat 1987).

Academic observers also debate why the Iranian revolution occurred and who controlled the revolutionary ebb and flow. Some concentrate on structural factors as causal explanations for the revolution. These would include the rise in economic expectations coupled with inflation, uneven patterns of rural and urban development, and Iran's structural position in the semi-periphery of the world system (see Boswell 1989). While there are merits to this perspective, the obvious liability is that it implicitly denies the uniqueness of Iranian culture, and does not account for past episodes of symbolic protest that were templates for the 1978-79 movement. Moreover, there were similar structural conditions in other Middle Eastern countries during this period, but very little revolutionary activity in the Middle East.<sup>58</sup>

The perspective of this work is that culture, ideology and movement frames were of primary importance in the creation of the Iranian revolutionary movement. It endorses the perspective<sup>59</sup> that the revolution was the culmination of nearly a century of social movement activity. In this regard, unifying reference frames bound all the component groups together during the spectacle, the mass demonstrations throughout 1978-79, which were directly responsible for the deposal of the Shah. Moreover, the ebb and flow of protest throughout 1978-79 were directly anchored to the symbolic content of Moslem holidays that were now occasions for protest against the Pahlavi monarchy (see Fischer 1980; Chelkowski and Dabashi 1999). Indeed, it was the spectacle of the ongoing, mostly peaceful, protests that occurred throughout 1977 and 1978 that made the Iranian revolution unique. In particular, the demonstrations that occurred on the day of *Ashura* in December 1978, with millions of people demonstrating in all the major Iranian cities—perhaps the largest political protest

in the history of the world—was a unique historical event made possible by a unique Iranian-Islamic culture. It was also facilitated by the previous century of movement activity.

***The Symbolic Protest of 1977-78***

*Ayatollah Mahallati:* Who took our oil?      *Crowd:* America!

*Ayatollah Mahallati:* Who took our gas?      *Crowd:* Russia!

*Ayatollah Mahallati:* Who took our Money?      *Crowd:* Pahlavi!

*Refrain:* Death to this Pahlavi Dynasty! Death to the Pahlavi Dynasty!

*Chant:* Cannon tank, machine gun,  
They have no more effect

*Chant:* The Shah is an ass.  
He must be chained.

(1978 Ashura march in Shiraz led by Ayatollah Mahallati. Translated by Fischer 1980:190)

Observers of the revolutionary movement of 1977-78 have noted that the ebb and flow of the protest activities during this period was anchored to Moslem religious events and the traditional burial rights afforded to religious martyrs. Cultural traditions of Iran “staged,” or in the language of this work, “framed” ongoing social protest (see Bakhash 1984, 1985; Fischer 1980; Chelkowski and Dabashi 1999). In this regard, the Iranian revolution unfolded in slow motion over two years that was marked by increasingly larger demonstrations that often occurred in conjunction with important religious Moslem festivals. Throughout 1978 there was also a widespread general strike among all the important segments of the Iranian economy. These protests culminated with a massive demonstration on the day of Ashura in December 1978. The Shah left the country voluntarily shortly after this event. Ayatollah Khomeini returned to Iran in February 1979.

In terms of the pacing of the revolutionary movement, and the initial “victory” over the Pahlavi Shah, it is remarkably similar to the Constitutional revolution. It will be recalled that the Constitutional revolution was precipitated by a series of symbolic protests, each attracting increasing support from the different groups of Iranians, until the Qajar Shah, just before his death, relented to the demand that a Constitutional assembly be formed. In both cases, following the “victory”—the high point of movement unity among the various groups that participated in the movements—the different factions began debating exactly what the future Iranian political system should look like. In both cases, more bloodshed occurred after the initial movement demands had been met. In both cases, the clerical elite used the occasions of *Ashura* and the month of *Moharam* to assail the integrity of the Shah. In both cases, liberal reformers—the *anjomans* during the Constitutional revolution and the “modern” social democratic and communist parties during the revolution—regarded the clerical elite as necessary allies. Still, those in the modern political parties, supported by the middle class and led by a Western educated elite, ultimately thought their ideas would prevail in the new governing system established. Anti-imperial frames, with respect to liberation from the West (first the British and now the Americans) and the “East” (first the Russians and then the Soviet Union) were a common feature of both movements.

The important difference in the organizing framework of the Constitutional revolution and the Iranian Revolution was that it became impossible—in the context of the 1978 movement—to assert that Iranians should emulate examples of Western government. Indeed, the unifying frame of the 1978 period was that Iran’s experiment with the West, and with Western constitutionalism, had been an abysmal failure and had directly contributed to the current conditions that the revolutionaries were fighting against. The West and the Shah were, symbolically, one and the same. In 1978 nobody proclaimed—even if they believed it to be true—that Iranians should “awaken” and

look at the examples around them in the world, take note of the material advances of the East and West, and then emulate these systems as a means of rejuvenating Iranian society. Khomeini often used the rhetoric of “awakening,” but in 1978 it was a Moslem “awakening” that allowed Iranians to recognize the insidious nature of the West. The “awakening” was a call for a return to Iranian Moslem culture in order to prevent Western ideas from debasing the Iranian revolution.

For moderate reformers, social democrats and communist factions, this dominant frame left very little room for them to maneuver because, ultimately, they wanted to introduce democratic governing arrangements that were similar to those in the West. Indeed, during debate over the new Iranian constitution an elaborate game was played that generally involved an accounting—from each of the factions debating the constitution—as to why their ideas were not Western. The threshold of *not being Western* became one of the standards that had to be met in formulating the new constitution. As a practical matter, this was an impossible standard to achieve, and even Khomeini recognized that the new Iranian constitution included Western political ideas (see Schirazi<sup>60</sup>1998). The events described below are not a complete accounting of the entire history of the 1978-79 movement, but include the most important demonstrations that were anchored to religious occasions.

#### *Moharam and the Cycle of Forty Days During 1977-78*

Most mark the events that occurred during 1977 as the beginning of the revolutionary movement. These events may have been aided by the President Carter’s human rights campaign, although the Carter administration always publicly supported the Shah until his departure from Iran in January 1979. In August of 1977 the Writers Association for the Defense of Prisoners began holding periodic poetry readings in Tehran. The primary goal of this group of intellectuals was to

protest the Shah's attempted implementation of a one party system, and to pressure him to recognize dissident political organizations. Each poetry reading was supported by an increasing number of student activist and clashes with the security forces inevitably occurred. Activists involved in organizing these meetings, as well as those who attended, were routinely detained and sometimes beaten publicly by Iranian security forces. Ultimately, security forces closed Tehran University in response to the demands presented by the Writers Association. Concurrent with these ongoing events, Ayatollah Khomeini's son died on October 23, 1977. On October 26 there was a large service in Tehran to commemorate the death, and there was an increase in public discussions of Khomeini among his followers.

Shortly after these events the Shah undertook a trip to the United States where he was greeted by organized protest staged by Iranian students and Iranian expatriates. On Nov. 15, 1977 in Washington D.C., pro-Shah and anti-Shah demonstrators engaged in a battle in front of the White House during a welcoming ceremony for the Shah. Tear gas was fired into the crowd by the police and eventually wafted on to the White House lawn. Many American newspapers ran pictures of President Carter and Mohammad Reza Shah rubbing their eyes as a result of the tear gas (Matin-asgari 2002: 58). Shortly after the Shah returned from his trip security forces disrupted a meeting of as many as 1,000 National Front supporters (Moin 1999:186)

Concurrent with the *Moharam* ceremonies of 1977-78 (they fell in late December and early January) the Shah implemented several civil holidays that celebrated the accomplishments of the White Revolution. The regime mobilized crowds to show support for the reforms of the Pahlavi monarchy, and these were countered by small demonstrations against the Pahlavi monarchy during the religious processions that marked the month of *Moharam*. Later, the Shah sanctioned an article in a state controlled newspaper that publicly blasphemed Khomeini. Supporters of Khomeini

protested against the article, and on January 9<sup>th</sup> some Qom seminarians staged a public sit-in. This was followed by a march in which the protestors presented twelve demands that were remarkably diverse, and inclusive, with respect to groups that were now protesting against the Shah. The demands included the return of Ayatollah Khomeini, re-establishing the 1907 constitution, and reopening Tehran University (closed as a result of the poetry readings). Police fired on as many as 4,000 protestors, killing at least six protestors (see Moin 1999:186-87; Fischer 1980:194).

Following the killing of the seminary students in Qom, a series of clashes occurred that corresponded with the forty day mourning period that was afforded to religious martyrs. On the fortieth day that marked the death of those killed during the protest in Qom, new protestors, in other cities, took to the streets to commemorate the martyrs' death. This caused further confrontations with security forces. The cycle began in Tabriz on February 18 when people had gathered to commemorate the Qom martyrs. The clash with security forces in Tabriz ultimately contributed to wide scale rioting being directed toward businesses such as banks, movie houses and liquor stores that now were associated with the West. In general, property rather than individuals were targeted during these early protests (Bakhash 1994). Later, religious minorities became targets of protest activity (see Fischer 1980). In the Tabriz protest, tanks and infantry troops were used to restore order. Reported fatalities throughout this period are unreliable, but likely between 9-70 people were killed during these demonstrations. Following the next forty-day cycle, on March 30, there were demonstrations in as many as fifty-five cities that resulted in further clashes with security forces, the most violent occurring in Yazd. And again, forty days later, demonstrations of a comparable number occurred in most major Iranian cities. Following these demonstrations Ayatollah Shariatmadari's house was invaded and security forces killed two members of the olama. Sharaitmadari, primarily a quietist Ayatollah who had become increasingly engaged in organizing

the general strike against the Shah, was the highest ranking member of the clerical elite in Iran. On May 11<sup>th</sup>, during a meeting held in the mosque located in the Tehran bazaar, police surrounded the mosque and then fired tear gas and live ammunition when people emerged (see Fischer 1980: 198-99).

### *Black Friday (Ramadan) 1978*

Ramadan, the traditional month of fasting in the Moslem tradition, fell from August 5<sup>th</sup> through September 2<sup>nd</sup> in 1978. The Pahlavi regime, likewise, staged festivals and other events that were designed to supplant the traditional fast. Throughout the month periodic outbreaks of protests and violence occurred. Most of the competing festivals were canceled. On August 19<sup>th</sup> the Rex theatre was burned to the ground while hundreds were attending a movie. While likely perpetrated by people who were offended that the theatre was open during Ramadan, the event was blamed on the Shah's security forces. Thousands of people attended the funeral services for the victims. The leading religious leaders called for the Shah to abdicate. Sporadic violence continued during further commemorations of the previous martyrs. A massive protest, following the last day of Ramadan—with upwards to a half million people participating—occurred in Tehran. Fischer (1980) notes that the protest routes now included areas of middle class Tehran. The Shah imposed martial law the day following this protest. Nonetheless, a crowd began to spontaneously gather in Jaleh Square and the Shah's security forces assaulted the demonstrators. Rioting occurred for several hours afterwards with Islamist guerilla organizations targeting security forces. The event was dubbed, in Iran and abroad, as the "Black Friday" massacre.

### *Moharam 1978*

Ongoing social protest, and the nationwide strike, continued after “Black Friday,” and it quickly became evident that the Moslem month of *Moharam*, which began on December 2, 1978, was going to be a period of increased social protest. In the days leading up to the event the Shah’s security forces threatened, cajoled, warned and otherwise did everything in its power to prevent massive anti-Shah demonstrations during the 10 days that marked the martyrdom of the Imam Hossein. Khomeini (1978g), from his exile in Paris, stated (*italics added*):

With the approach of Muharram, we are about to begin the month of epic heroism and self-sacrifice—the month in which blood triumphed over the sword, the month in which truth condemned falsehood for all eternity and branded the mark of disgrace upon the forehead of all oppressors and satanic governments; *the month that has taught successive generations throughout history the path of victory over the bayonet; the month that proves the superpowers may be defeated by the word of truth; the month in which the leader of the Muslims taught us how to struggle against all the tyrants of history*, showed us how the clenched fists of those who seek freedom, desire independence, and proclaim truth may triumph over tanks, machine guns, and the armies of Satan, how the word of truth may obliterate falsehood. (242)

On the ninth day of Moharam, on the eve of Ashura, Ayatollah Taleqani, released from prison just a month earlier, was symbolically at the front of a march through Tehran that consisted of as many as 500,000 people. The following day, the day of Ashura, as many as two million people in Tehran marched. Likewise, there were massive demonstrations in all of the major Iranian cities. Guerilla movements continued to target the Shah’s security forces. There was an open call, among

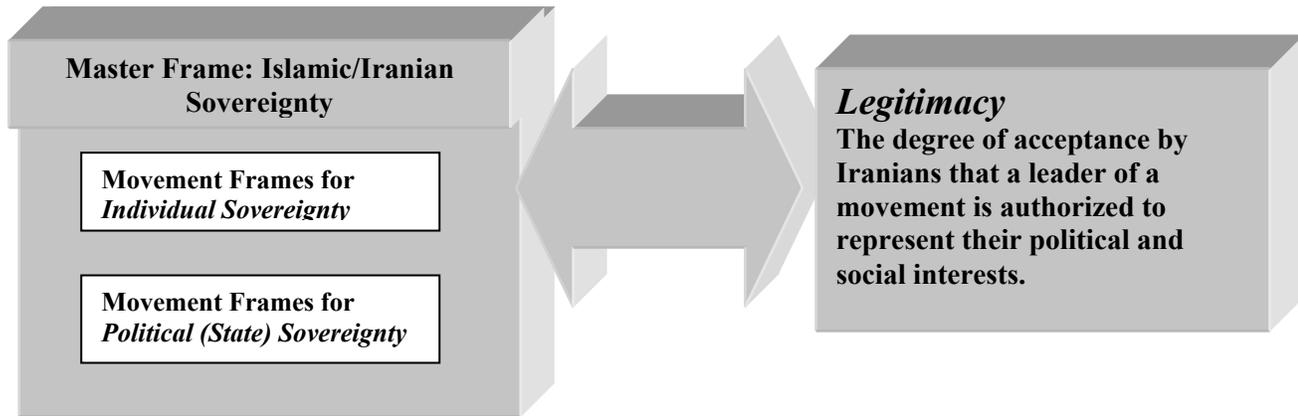
all the significant factions of Iranian society, for the abdication of the Shah. Following Ashura, the Shah attempted to stage counter demonstrations. These often consisted of the armed forces, and other people in the regimes' pay, attempting to force people to turn out in favor of the Shah. Increasingly, there was violence between the security forces and supporters of the ongoing revolution. Increasingly, all movement groups began to look to Khomeini for cues as to when to engage in mass demonstrations, although socialist groups later staged demonstrations that protested the growing influence that Khomeini exercised after the Shah was deposed.

For roughly a month after Ashura, with the continuing cyclical protest occurring during the celebrations of martyrs—and with most of the Iranian workforce on strike—it became apparent that the Shah no longer had complete control over the army and other security forces. He left the country on January 16, 1979. Prime Minister Shapur Bakhtiar, a former National Front member who had been invited to form a reform government by the Shah on December 29, was out of office a month later. Khomeini returned to Teheran on February 1, in excess of a million people lined the streets of Teheran to greet him.

### ***The Interaction of Culture, Ideology and Frames of Sovereignty During the Islamic Revival***

The master frame for social movements in Iran was centered on the need to end Western and Russian influence—cultural and political—in Iran. I labeled this *master frame* sovereignty, which was debated at two levels: 1) National sovereignty, which concerned how Iran should achieve political independence from the influence of the Great Britain, the United States and Russia, and 2) Individual sovereignty, which concerned how individual Iranians respond to Western ideas and Western materialism. Figure 11.1 shows the interaction of this frame with movement legitimacy.

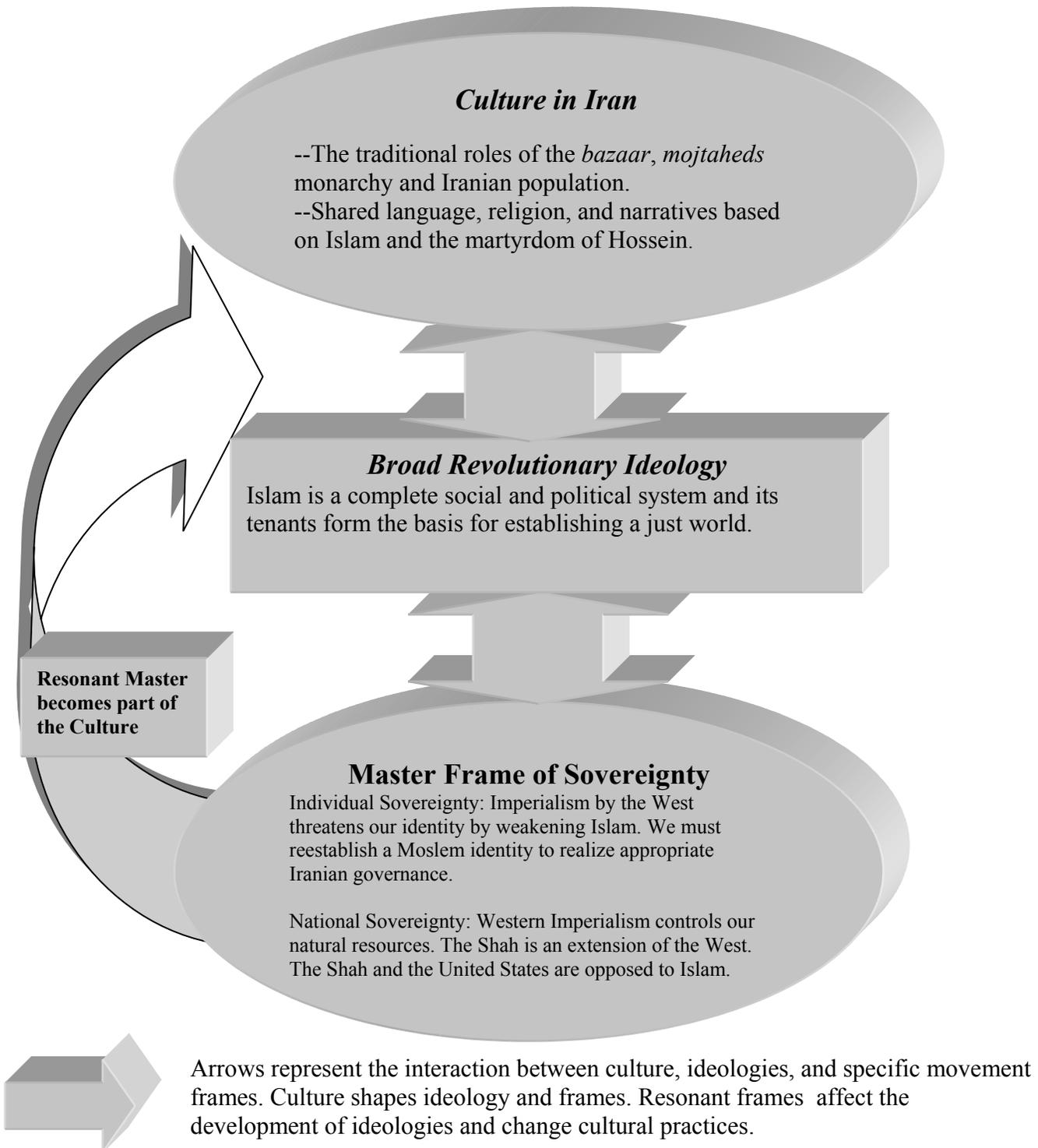
**Figure 11.1 The Master Frame of Sovereignty and the Affects on Legitimacy**



What is apparent during the revival period is that both national and individual sovereignty in Iran became conceived of as acts of cultural appropriation. Previous to this period, during both the Constitutional revolution and the Nationalist movement, there were strong movement groups that regarded Western models of social, economic and political development as a template for the rejuvenation of Iranian society. Opposition movement groups during these periods rejected “constitutionalism” and the political systems of the West as inappropriate for a Moslem country. During the Islamic revival in Iran most factions regarded “Western” models of social and economic development as inappropriate for Iranian society. Moreover, “the West” became, for the most part, synonymous with the United States. This was largely a result of the support that the United States had extended to the Pahlavi Shah during, and after, his struggle against Mohammad Mosaddeq. Soon after the reestablishment of the Shah, both religious layman and the more orthodox religious elite began to conceive of the Westernism as a pervasive “disease” that was contributing to an erosion of Iranian culture. In effect, both individual and national sovereignty became conceived of as a return to the “roots” of an indigenous Iranian culture. Indeed, leaders of the Islamic revival in Iran made their primary motives clear in that they consistently told followers that reestablishing *Moslem*

*culture* was the appropriate response to Western imperialism. Figure 11.2 shows the interaction between culture, ideology and framing among revival Islamic groups that supported the Iranian revolution

**Figure 11.2 The Interaction of Culture, Ideology and Frames Among Revival Leaders**



With respect to *national sovereignty*, the primary concern of all movement groups involved in the revolution was to end American influence in the Iranian political system. Indeed, both Marxist and Islamic regarded the Shah's government as an extension of the authority of the United States. Islamists tended to adopt the concept of "Westoxification" in describing the pervasive nature of the West. In effect, "Westernism" had infected the Shah, infected Iranian social institutions, and revolution was the purifying antidote. Marxist groups were more inclined to see the Shah as a manifestation of the capitalist system imposed on Iran by the West, and more inclined to continue to see events in Iran through the lens of social class, but they did expropriate elements of the "Westoxification" discourse. Following Khomeini's ascension to power in 1979-80, both the remnants of the Tudeh and the People's Mojahedin decided internally that Khomeini's primary goals could be considered "anti-imperialist." For this reason they initially supported Khomeini as he, and his supporters, systematically expanded their control over the new Iranian government. Later, throughout 1980-82, during a power struggle between Khomeini and the first elected President of the Islamic Republic, Hasan Bani Sadr, both parties became openly opposed to Khomeini's authority. Ultimately, following a widespread mobilization for Bani Sadr by the People's Mojahedin—and following Khomeini's subsequent dismissal of Bani Sadr as President—supporters of Khomeini repressed both parties.

The frames of *individual sovereignty* during the revolution were much more difficult to identify. There was a primary frame to the degree that all participants in the revolution assumed that the political system established after the revolution would be uniquely "Iranian" and non-aligned. But it quickly became apparent that each of the component factions of the revolution had very different programs in mind with respect to the individual rights people would enjoy in the new Iranian system. Moreover, when leaders of each movement faction were pressed on the specifics

of their governing ideals before the revolution, many gave ambiguous answers that were designed to appeal to the broadest cross section of the Iranian public. For example, when Khomeini was in exile in Paris both the foreign press and representatives of different Iranian student groups occasionally asked him what kind of political system he favored for Iran in the future. Inevitably, he gave answers that were construed as support for the establishment of a democratic system that respected, but was not directly governed by, the religious elite. These answers were directly contrary to the positions in his published work on the subject (Khomeini [1970] 1981). By this time Khomeini was surrounded by a cadre of supporters—many who had recently joined him in Paris—who often presented Khomeini’s ideas, wittingly and unwittingly, so that they appeared moderate and democratic (see Moin 1999). At this time it is unlikely that Khomeini, in exile as events unfolded throughout 1978, was aware that many Iranians would come to regard him as the spiritual leader of the revolution.

Overall, there was generally a broad frame of individual sovereignty that assumed political rights in the new system would be based on a unique Iranian-Moslem political culture. But movement adherents in Iran interpreted the “return” to cultural and political traditions in a variety of ways. Ultimately, the specific rights of individuals in the Iranian system were negotiated, and fought over, during the ratification of the Constitution in 1980. Khomeini’s vision, outlined in *Islamic Governance*, became the governing ideal of the Islamic Republic (see chapter 12).

### ***Looking to the Future: The Current Discourse on Islam as Ideology***

The following chapter gives a brief account of the current governing arrangement that was established after the revolution and the objections that the current reform movement have to this arrangement. The creation of an “Islamology” was important to the Revolution’s success and it

shaped the post-revolutionary governing system. In the post-revolutionary period different movement factions constructed the new governing system of the Islamic Republic using the discourses of a “return” to true religion. As it turned out, once the details of the revolutionary program were worked out, different factions discovered that their respective views of Islamic governance were quite different. For example, the radical egalitarianism of Shariati was not the guiding principle of post-revolutionary governance of Iran. Indeed, Shariati would have regarded Khomeinism as a continuation of “Safavid” Shi’ism.

For Iranians who regard the revolution as negative event—religious traditionalist who objected to describing Islam as “ideology” and Western educated leftist who objected to “Islamology” being described as a “progressive” force—Ali Shariati is often the primary figure indicted as being responsible for the “hijacking” of the revolution by the traditionalist factions. Even among his admirers, such as Abdol Karim Soroush (2000)—a religious laymen who uses Islamic thought in his own discourse—Shariati is now criticized for reducing Islam to ideology. In fact, the primary goal of Soroush is to undo this particular discourse of Shariati. The most consistent theme in Soroush’s program—and one that has made him the preeminent leader in the ongoing New Religious Thinking movement—*is that Islam is not an ideology*.

It is remarkable how quickly the primary premise of Shariati’s program—that making Islam into ideology would be a positive development—has now become the primary indictment against the current Iranian regime by reformers. In this respect, roughly twenty years following the revolution, current social movement leaders are trying to turn the unifying “ideal” of the revolution—that Islam is a progressive ideology—on its head.

This argument has been made in the past. Indeed, it was the primary argument made by quietist Ayatollahs who stated that mixing Islam with politics would reduce religion to the profane.

Ultimately, their concerns may prove correct. Not surprisingly, these traditionalists—often deeply conservative religious leaders—now find themselves aligned with both secular politicians and liberal Islamic factions. Each groups share the same goal, which is to return Islam to the realm of the sacred, and politics to the realm of the profane. Of course, given that the modus operandi of the Iranian revolution was an attempt to make politics sacred, and that the revolution was, and will likely remain considered, a sacred event; reformers have faced a considerable challenges in framing their movement goals as a continuation of the revolutionary ideal.

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<sup>1</sup> For a much more thorough accounting of the history, definitions, and discourses of “ideology,” see Eagleton (1991).

<sup>2</sup> For examples of work that argue that ideologically inspired movements are coming to an end, see Bell (1988), *The End of Ideology* and Fukuyama (1992) *The End of History*.

<sup>3</sup> But it should be recognized that other religious laymen, such as Mehdi Bazargan and Abdol-Hasan Bani Sadr, had considerable popular support and also shaped the discourses of the revolutionary movement. See Dabashi 1993 for a good overview concerning the political thought of these revolutionary leaders

<sup>4</sup> Religious leaders who remained in Iran, particularly Ayatollah Motahhari and Ayatollah Taleqani, also made significant contributions to the concepts of Islamic governance (see Dabashi 1993 for an overview).

<sup>5</sup> See also Della Porta 1996 and Tarrow 1983, 1998

<sup>6</sup> Reza Khan was notoriously brutal, see Abrahamian (1982) fro some specific incidences.

<sup>7</sup> See discussion of Jalel Al-e Ahmad in this chapter. Ahmad ([1962] 1982) was among those who were surprised by the sudden clerical activism.

<sup>8</sup> Matin-asgari (2002) offers a good account of the Iranian student opposition movement that grew out of support for various nationalist and communist parties during the 1940s-50s. It was not involved in the Qom protest initially, but did support the jailed clerical dissidents. Student seminary students, living in Iran, were active in this movement.

<sup>9</sup> Mohammad Reza did try to bring the religious elite under the authority of the state repeatedly. He was, to degrees, successful, but the religious clergy always retained some independence. See Fischer (1980) regarding state-olama conflicts regarding control of religious shrines in Qom, and the relative degrees of clerical independence in Iran when compared with other Middle Eastern states.

<sup>10</sup> I generally used Boroujerdi (1996) and Dabashi (1993) concerning the details of Jalel Al-e Ahmad’s life experiences.

<sup>11</sup> Many of these accounts are autobiographical. For instance, Al-e Ahmad was briefly employed as a school principle and used this experience in a fictional work, *The School Principle* (1958 [1974]). In this work, Al-e Ahmad uses a modern secondary school as a metaphor to describe social change occurring in Iranian society. The protagonist in the novel—the school principle who has replaced a recently jailed Tudeh party member—is temperamentally unsuited for a job that requires him to become an agent of the modernizing ideals of the Iranian dictatorship

<sup>12</sup> Jalel Al-e Ahmad does claim to have invented the term, which appears to have been part of the intellectual discourse of the day, but his conception became dominant.

<sup>13</sup> I generally used Paul Sprachman's (1982) translation, which he rendered as "Plagued by the West," and more generally translated gharbzadegi as "Westitis." See also Algar's (1984) translation "*Occidentosis: A Plague from the West.*"

Jalel Al-e Ahmad translated some of the work of Albert Camus, Eugne Ionesco and Jean Paul Satre. He draws a direct parallel between Ionesco's absurdist play, *Rhinoceros*, and ongoing events that he is observing in Tehran. Ionesco's play is a comment on the German occupation of France and the herd-like societal accommodation of the French to the occupying force and its ideology. At the end of *Plagued By the West* Al-e Ahmad, with respect to *Rhinoceros*, states: "I have, however, always hoped to translate this play into Persian one day and in commentary here and there show how my esteemed fellow Tehranis are also gravitating towards 'rhinocermism,' the last solution to the problem of confronting the machine" (110).

<sup>14</sup> In particular, Jalel Al-e Ahmad's conception fits perfectly with the discourse of modern critical theory widely developed by the Frankfurt school and Michael Foucault. Westoxification was easily reconciled, as an idea, into the Marxist inspired movements of the 1970s.

<sup>15</sup> Ostensibly a fictional story that chronicled the rise of the Calendars, it was primarily an allegorical account of the period of governance (1951-53) by supporters of the National Front. In this work the traditional clerics are not portrayed positively.

<sup>16</sup> This specific characterization of *tollabs* sitting in "the corner of the seminaries" occurs repeatedly, across all the literature reviewed in this work. For example, see the quote in this chapter by Khomeini who uses the same language.

<sup>17</sup> Jalel Al-e Ahmad was also influenced by the text, "Religious Authority and the Clergy" (*Bahth-e darbara-e marja 'eyyat va rawhaniyyat*), that had contributions by Mehdi Bazargan and Ayatollah Taleghani, which was published following the death of the preeminent Ayatollah of the period, Ayatollah Burjerdi. It was debating clerical activism with respect to who should be the next clerical leader. Al-e Ahmad mentions the work in the footnote. See Akhavi 1980 for overview of "Religious Authority and the Clergy."

<sup>18</sup> These would include Mehdi Bazargan, Ayatollah Khomeini and Ayatollah Taleqani and Ayatollah Motahari.

<sup>19</sup> These would include such prominent members of the current clerical leadership such as Ayatollah Khamenei and Hashemi Rafsanjani.

<sup>20</sup> Malkom Khan, and the Adamiyat Anjoman (Society for Humanity) are discussed in the Chapter on the Constitutional Movement.

<sup>21</sup> The religious elite initially stated that Islamic law did not sanction radio and television.

<sup>22</sup> There are differences between lay religious leaders, for instance, Bazargan always conceived of his program as a continuation of the National Front Movement that recognized Iranian religiosity. He is best described as a social democrat who regarded the religious elite as partners. Leaders in the People's Mojahedin rejected clerical authority. Still, all were preoccupied with establishing an Iranian Moslem ideology of governance.

<sup>23</sup> This "brief" sketch of Shariati's life has become common in the academic literature. Recently, the first complete biography of Shariati was written by Ali Rahnema (1998) and he did a considerable service by investigating the various conflicts that have been associated with Shariati's work. I also drew from accounts by Algar (1979) Abrahamian (1989) and Dabashi (1993).

<sup>24</sup> For example, he frequently made references to Che Guevara and also translated Franz Fanon's indictment of France's war in Algeria, *The Wretched of the Earth*,

<sup>25</sup> Shariati's credentials have been a source of controversy. Rahnema's (1998) account is the most thorough, and he believes that Shariati was not allowed, because of his scholarship, to change his major to sociology or history while in Paris. Nonetheless, he pursued these topics on his own and spent very little time working on the translation that served as his dissertation. He provided commentary to the translation and the title of his degree, which is listed his dissertation

title, was likely represented to the Iranian authorities as a degree in history. See Algar 1979; Abrahamian 1989; Bourjerdi 1996; Dabashi 1993; Rahnema 1998. Hamid Algar has translated the work of many Iranian revolutionary leaders, including Ali Shariati and Ayatollah Khomeini. He has been accused (see Gellner 1982) of being less than “objective” in his accounts of these leaders and the most incendiary elements of the revolutionary discourses these men developed. Moreover, he has been accused of publishing an interview with Mehdi Bazargan—after Bazargan had been dismissed as the first Prime Minister of the Iranian Republic—that Bazargan assumed was off the record. This caused Bazargan considerable trouble with the Iranian revolutionary authorities (see Chehabi 1990). Algar is clearly an admirer of the Islamic revolutionary leaders in Iran, but his translations are still among the best available. I find his admiration of the revolutionary leaders of Iran to be useful in that it gives the reader a sense of the reverence with which these leaders are regarded by followers. Shariati’s translated work is uneven, and I often ran across translations of the same work that varied significantly, although the overall tenor of the works was similar. Some (see Abrahamian 1989) think that translations done by Shariati’s “California disciples” reflect his most immature work. In general, I think the degree of contention concerning Shariati and his legacy, among academics and his supporters, is representative of the degree that people feel a personal affinity with his work, and the degree to which they want to maintain, and perhaps inflate, both his academic and political achievements. The more compelling the historical figure—in both the East and West—the more people debate their legacy

<sup>26</sup> There were tensions between those who regarded Shariati as an innovative and provocative Islamic thinker, and those laymen (e.g. Hossein Nasr) and clerical elite (e.g. Ayatollah Motahhari) who found Shariati’s views on Islam facile, divergent and sacrilegious. See Rahnema (1998) for the particularly divisive conflict between Shariati and Motahhari, and also Fischer (1980) and Boroujerdi (1996) for further examples.

<sup>27</sup> Many of Ali Shariati’s lectures—reprinted from pamphlets distributed by his followers are available on the internet. For a list of these sources, see the bibliography. The total amount of material is considerable, and generally gives a good indication of the energy that Shariati brought to the task of publishing his ideas. Moreover, it is a good indication of the degree of continued affinity that Iranians have with his work. The reprinted lectures are best read in congruence with Rahnema’s (1998) biography of Shariati. At different periods of Shariati’s life he came under considerable pressure and surveillance by the SAVOK. There has been considerable debate concerning his later work, which may have been coerced by the SAVOK during his period of imprisonment

<sup>28</sup> These are all studies in how innovative social movement organizations structure movement outcomes.

<sup>29</sup> Women were admitted, but segregated from the men. They did not have to observe traditional dress.

<sup>30</sup> See Michael Fischer’s (1980) excellent study of the Qom madrasas where seminary students, who are being taught that Shariati’s message is deviant, nonetheless tell Fischer that they greatly admire Shariati. Fischer has a good accounting of the “fallacies” that the traditional religious elite found, and published, in Shariati’s work.

<sup>31</sup> Motahhari and Shariati were contemporaries who both taught at the Hosseiniyah Ershad, but became increasingly embittered toward one another. Motahhari, and Khomeini ultimately defended Shariati against accusations that he was a wicked “free-thinker” and “Babi” after Shariati’s death, but the impression is that this was done for practical reasons concerning Shariati’s considerable support among the young, rather than due to an affinity with his ideas. See Rahnema 1998.

<sup>32</sup> See, for example, how Shariati (1979:97-118) uses the dialectic process and still manages to refute Marx’s “materialism,” in his lectures entitled “The Philosophy of History: Cain and Abel” and the “Dialectic of Sociology.”

<sup>33</sup> This was my first impression of Shariati when I read his work as a student. Recently, Mirsepassi (2000) has more fully developed this idea in a comparison of the discourses of Al-e Ahmad and Shariati to those of the German intellectuals (including Hegel). He thinks the discourses are similar, both describe alienation and authenticity in response to modernization.

<sup>34</sup> The best text on the People’s Mojahedin is by Ervand Abrahamian (1989).

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<sup>35</sup> Shariati often described his inquiry as “scientific” and “rational” but much of the vocabulary of “scientism” and “rationalism” was directed toward the clergy, who also claimed to use scientific “proof” in their own pronouncements.

<sup>36</sup> Not surprisingly, among Shariati’s critics were also orthodox Marxist who stated, correctly, that Shariati seriously misread the Marx and the Western debate concerning “ideology” in general.

<sup>37</sup> A famous Sufi mystic, he was persecuted by the orthodox in his lifetime.

<sup>38</sup> Carrel appears in much modernist Islamic thought. His life, and work, is appealing to modernist in that he was a scientist—a Nobel prize winner for his work on suturing and organ transplants—but also devoutly religious. Much of his written work argues that religious belief and science can, and should, be reconciled.

<sup>39</sup> In Shariati’s conception, the ideal Shi’i “revolutionary” figure from the past, largely obscure before Shariati made him a popular figure.

<sup>40</sup> See also Mies (1986) and Papanek (1994).

<sup>41</sup> This proposition is extremely controversial Obviously, religiously oriented factions disagree.

<sup>42</sup> See chapter four for a very brief description of Fatima’s life.

<sup>43</sup> See Gorji and Ebtaker (1997) “The Life and Status of Fatima Zahra” for a recent example. Likewise, the Leader Khamenei’s speeches on “Women’s Day” are available online at [www.Islam-pure.de/imam/speeches/](http://www.Islam-pure.de/imam/speeches/).

<sup>44</sup> Mir-Hosseini (1999) reads Shariati’s speech in much the same manner. Moreover, she is at the forefront of a critical evaluation of modernist, and traditional, conceptions of gender in Iran.

<sup>45</sup> This happens repeatedly with respect to the work of Samuel Huntington, which is widely quoted by prominent liberals and conservatives in Iran. Indeed, if Huntington ever experiences a decline in his considerable reputation in the West, he will find an eager audience for his ideas in Iran.

<sup>46</sup> These would include former government officials such as William Bennett, populist but extremist conservatives such as Patrick Buchanan, and the more erudite, and orthodox, conservatism espoused by George Will. Of course, like conservatives in Iran, they vary in terms of how each describes moral decline, and in their prescriptions as to how social morals should be reestablished.

<sup>47</sup> For instance, see George Will’s column of June 25, 2002, which lambaste modern art in general, and “Holocaust art” specifically. Will also takes a rhetorical jab at those inclined to “take God out of the picture” in public schools. Currently, much conservative discourse has latched onto maintaining the pledge of allegiance in American public schools, which expresses the view that Americans are “one nation under God.” In style and reasoning, the most sophisticated arguments for maintaining these cultural traditions tend to correspond with Islamic modernist critiques.

<sup>48</sup> For the record, I personally disagree with the general characterizations of Western moral decline, in both their Moslem and Western form.

<sup>49</sup> In terms of the success or failure of the Iranian revolution, it seems too early to make a judgment as to whether it will ultimately “succeed” or “fail” as a political system. Currently, individual Iranians are, in terms of their material well-being, not better off as a result of the revolution. Still, in terms of evaluating other areas of social progress, such as increased literacy rates among both men and women, Iran is one of the more progressive countries in the Middle East. Moreover, in terms of political participation—despite the continuing authority of the conservative clerical elite—Iran looks more democratic than most countries in the Middle East. In effect, an evaluation of whether the Iranian revolution was progressive or retroactive depends on how it is being evaluated. Most importantly, despite ongoing social and economic problems in Iran, many Iranians continue to regard the revolution—evaluated in broad terms—as a progressive step in their social and political development

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<sup>50</sup> See the introductions to Shariati's (1978; 1981) collected works that have been translated into English

<sup>51</sup> In Abrahamian 1989:9.

<sup>52</sup> Primarily debated by Islamic and lay scholars in a collection of essays: *Inquiry into the Principle of Marja'iyat and Religious Institutions (Bahth-e darbara-e marja 'eyyat va rawhaniyyat)*. See Fisher 1980:150-65, also Abrahamian 1982, Akhavi 1980, Keddie 1981 and Jalel Al-e Ahmad's [1963] 1982.

<sup>53</sup> Khomeini's position with respect to women's rights moderated somewhat over time, although one of his first acts was to abolish the family code law and enforce traditional dress for women. Recently his positions are undergoing a fairly extreme revision since his death. For instance, see the interview with Khomeini's granddaughter Zahara Eshraqi (2001) which portrays him as fairly egalitarian with respect to this issue.

<sup>54</sup> Assessing the actual impact of these programs is difficult, but they clearly did not fulfill their grand rhetorical ambitions. The land reform degenerated largely into a land- grab, with the Shah himself owning wide tracts of land that had been expropriated from both the peasants and together clerical institutions. Women did receive the right to vote, and the non-Moslem minorities clearly enjoyed some benefits, such as increased employment in the bureaucracy

<sup>55</sup> Many prominent leaders of the revolution were conscripted during this time, including Hashemi Rafsanjani. Later, Khomeini stated that the conscription would backfire as these "good men" would spread Shi'i beliefs throughout the army. In many respects, this is exactly what happened. (Moin 1999:98 and Khomeini 1963b)

<sup>56</sup> Khomeini ([1979:268] usually stated that fifteen thousand died, and this was often accepted as fact among many historians (see Algar 1980:17) although the number appears to have been much less, likely in the hundreds (see Moin 1999).

<sup>57</sup> Dogs are considered unclean in the Moslem tradition, and as such, most traditional Iranians would not have kept them as pets.

<sup>58</sup> Counties in the Middle East would appear to have had the most in common with the "structural" conditions that existed in Iran with respect to the global economy, rapid modernization, and the specific social structures of the tribe, peasants, and urban bazaar. Still, some have compared the Iranian and Nicaraguan revolutions to one another. Indeed, some structural conditions, such as the human rights campaign pressed by the Carter administration, likely had an effect on these two very disparate revolutionary movements (see Boswell 1989), but is also apparent that distinct cultural conditions—and cycles of past conflict—were contributing factors as to why revolution occurred in both Iran and Nicaragua.

<sup>59</sup> See Arjomand 1984, 1988; Keddie 1980, 1982, 1983; Foran 1993; Moaddel 1993. Parsa 1989. In particular, the work of Nikki Keddie is exceptional in that she was primarily a historian of Iranian movements before the revolution occurred, but demonstrated a willingness to wade into the larger debates concerning "revolutionary" theory. She was remarkably well placed for this kind of endeavor. Because she had a thorough knowledge of Iranian history she could refute the most egregious errors that some academics made when they attempted to paste the Iranian experience into a broader revolutionary theory. At the same time, she was more than willing to investigate, with an open mind, the structural theories of revolution and often used the strengths of many divergent academic theories in her own work. For a particularly interesting example see a volume that Keddie (1995) edited, *Debating Revolutions*, which was a series of exchanges between theorists that originally occurred in *Contention*. In particular, her deft dismantling of the strengths, and weaknesses, of Jack Goldstone's (1991; 1995) arguments concerning the "predictability" of revolution is very entertaining. All of the contributions are excellent, but Tilly's (1995), Arjomand's (1995) and Wasserstrom's (1995) correspond with the general perspective I have adopted in this text. I also find much to admire in Goldstone's (1991) and Foran's (1993, 1997) work. Both Goldstone and Foran's theories of revolution tend to regard structural conditions (demographic and economic shifts) as causal, but they also attempt to incorporate aspects of political and social culture into their analysis.

<sup>60</sup> Schirazi (1998) points out that the attempt to excise the Iranian Constitution of its "Western" ideas was an impossible endeavor. He believes that the constitution is contradictory in that it grants "sovereignty" to the people, but also institutionalizes a Shi'i hierarchy.