

The crimes perpetrated against women and the plots devised against them by imperialism and the Pahlavi regime

Loss of self-esteem and Westernisation

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They disseminated propaganda with the aim of making you ladies lose your self-esteem and of Westernising you. Beauty products had to come from the West, the latest fashions had to be brought in from the West, and you had to change every day in keeping with the changes in fashion. Everything of yours came from the West. This is what they propagated and everyone fell into this habit (of copying the West).

If word arrived that in England, for example, such and such was the fashion, and then all previous models would have to be discarded in favour of the new one. When they were designing a dress for Farah, for her coronation I think it was, the designers flew back and forth many times at immense cost all for the sake of one dress! What is amusing then is that according to the newspapers, she used to say 'our children share their clothes, the younger wearing the elder's hand-me-downs'!!

This said by someone who sends her designers abroad three times simply to get the design right, and spends I don't know how much, 150,000 tumans or so, on the design of just one dress! What was their aim behind all this? They simply wanted to shut your eyes (to other things). (410)

3 May 1979 (12 Urdibihisht 1358 AHS)

They (the Pahlavis) completely did away with promoting human values in Iran, replacing them instead with values from the West. And it wasn't the good Western values they proceeded to spread among us,

rather the corrupt ones. It was perhaps during the period of the son (Muhammad Riza) that most of our spiritual values were destroyed. But in his time (the time of the father, Riza Shah), one could say the oppression was more noticeable. They tormented the women more than, as indeed they did all the people. (411)

2 July 1979 (11 Tir 1358 AHS)

I can say that during the reigns of this father and son, our ladies suffered more than any other segment of society. Perhaps most of you cannot remember what they did to the ladies in the time of Riza Shah, what calamities they created on the plea of wanting to make Iran like Europe, of wanting to modernise Iran and bring half of its population into society. You have no idea what they did to the ladies. (412)

2 July 1979 (11 Tir 1358 AHS)

As long as these ladies (I am not referring to you ladies, you are of the people, I mean the other ladies) continue to direct their attention to such things as fashion that must come from the West – the latest mode there having to be copied here – as long as they keep imitating the West, they will not enjoy any self-esteem nor be independent. If you want to be independent, if you want to be seen as, or rather if you want to be a truly independent nation, you must stop imitating the West. Don't even hope for independence before you can do this. (413)

8 September 1979 (17 Shahrivar 1358 AHS)

All the things they used to pervert our youth were gifts from the West. Their plan was to devise the means to pervert both our men and our women, to corrupt them and thus prevent them from their human development. (414)

13 September 1979 (22 Shahrivar 1358 AHS)

Those who want to see women as playthings in the hands of dissolute men are traitors. Women should not be tricked, they shouldn't imagine their station in life calls for them to come out into the streets dressed up and made up, with no veil and scantily dressed. This is not the role of women; this is the role of a doll. (415)

1 February 1980 (12 Bahman 1358 AHS)

For during this past half-century of blackness and bondage, this opprobrious Pahlavi era, the poisonous pens of the misguided and the words of benighted speakers sought to give women the status of a commodity, and those women who were vulnerable were drawn to centres that the pen is ashamed to mention.

Anyone wishing to know something of these crimes can refer to the newspapers and magazines of the Riza Khan era, to the poems of the blackguards and scoundrels of that period, that corrupt period from

the compulsory unveiling of women onwards. One can find out about the social gatherings of those days and the centres of corruption that existed.

Shame on those people. May the pens of such intellectuals be broken. Do not think that the crimes perpetrated on the plea of freedom for women and freedom for men had nothing to do with the plans of the world-plunderers and the international criminals. (416)

5 May 1980 (15 Urdibihisht 1359 AHS)

Another thing about which I have spoken on previous occasions is that they instilled in us the idea that it was either the European culture or nothing at all. If a young man or lady were to dress from head to toe in European fashion, this showed that they were really somebody, whereas if they were to dress like the other Muslims, they would be considered extremely backward. European styles were the criteria, the type of clothes one wore, these determined backwardness or progressiveness. Everything we used had to be from the West. They turned us into a country of consumers. (417)

8 March 1982 (17 Isfand 1360 AHS)

Those who can remember those days know only too well what this criminal traitor did with the aid of his perfidious agents who had no homeland, and what measures they took to lead the innocent women astray, to turn them into consumers and drag them into corruption in order to expedite the success of their plans.

It is enough for the present generation, who did not experience those black days, to look at the books, poems, writings, plays, songs, newspapers and magazines of that period and the centres of corruption, the gambling houses, liquor stores and cinemas which are all vestiges of those times. Alternatively, they can speak to those who lived through that period and ask them what acts of oppression and betrayal were carried out against women, this segment of the population that nurtures human beings, in the guise of advancing their position. (418)

14 April 1982 (25 Farvardin 1361 AHS)

When you looked at society, at men and women both, you saw that it was their appearance that determined their worth: what kind of clothes they wore, how they were tailored, what kind of make-up they wore. Whoever dressed better and with greater chic was held in higher esteem by the people. A woman who copied the European style of dress and make-up commanded more respect and admiration from most other women than those who didn't. The value system was based on the material. (419)

26 December 1982 (5 Dey 1361 AHS)

Throughout the not-too-distant past, especially in the recent centuries, we were deprived of progress in any form. Perfidious statesmen, and the Pahlavi family in particular, along with the dissemination of propaganda discouraging domestic achievement and instilling in the people a lack of self-worth and a

feeling of self-contempt, worked together to stop us doing anything that would ensure our development.

They imported goods of every sort, preoccupying the men and women, particularly the young generation, with all kinds of make-up, styles and luxury goods imported from abroad. They kept them busy with infantile games, made them feel they had to compete with one another socially, turned them into ardent consumers – which is a sorrowful tale in itself – sought to corrupt the youth, who are the active members of a society, by opening centres of fornication and by inflicting scores of other similar adversities upon us, all with the sole intention of keeping our country in a state of backwardness. (420)

5 June 1989 (15 Khurdad 1368 AHS)

Unveiling

Unveiling

The clergy say this shameful unveiling (of women), this ‘movement of the bayonet’,¹ is detrimental to the country both in a material and spiritual sense and is prohibited by the laws of God and the Messenger.

The clergy say this basin-shaped cap,² the cast-off of the foreigners, brings shame to an Islamic country, is damaging to our independence and is forbidden by God’s law.

Kashf al-Asrar p. 213.

Of course, they regard the civilisation and advancement of the country as being dependent upon women’s going naked in the streets, or to quote their own idiotic words, turning half the population into workers by unveiling them (we know only too well what kind of work is involved here). They will not agree to the country’s being administered rationally and in accordance with God’s law.

Kashf al-Asrar p. 224.

A government which, contrary to the laws of the land and everything considered just, appoints a group of predatory animals as police in every town and city to fall upon chaste Muslim women, who have committed no crime, and by force of the bayonet to tear their veils from their heads and confiscate them, to kick these defenceless women causing some of the pregnant ones amongst them to miscarry their innocent, unborn babes, we call a tyrannical government, and say assisting or working with it in any way is tantamount to blasphemy.

We say a dictatorial government is an oppressive one, and those who work for it are tyrants and oppressors. If you have anything to say on this matter do so, so that their infamy may be added to.

The oppressed masses of Iran today also abhor the agents of the dictatorial regime of that day who so mistreated their innocent women and children the way they did, and perpetrated such shameful injustices against them. Indeed, whoever regards them as decent, honourable people is himself devoid

of honour and justice. Those newspapers that back the oppressive actions of the runaway dictator, the most painful of which is the unveiling of women, are actually aiding the savage principles of dictatorship and should be burnt in public.

Kashf al-Asrar p. 239.

When men see that the police, instead of keeping the peace, use their boots and bayonets to force their innocent women to remove their veils or to establish brothels, and that they themselves are mistreated so that the disgraceful basin cap (Pahlavi cap) can be imposed on them, do you still expect them to accept taxes as the legitimate right of the state?

Kashf al-Asrar p. 250.

These lascivious animals who, on the plea of wanting to develop the country, engage in bacchanalian revelry with the young daughters of the people, continue to persist with this heinous policy of unveiling – which cast the modesty and correctness of our susceptible youth to the winds and was one of Riza Khan's biggest acts of treason against this country – oblivious to the fact that very soon, if God wills, the religious people will raise an iron fist and deliver them a blow such that it will knock these feelings of lust right out of their foolish heads.

Kashf al-Asrar p. 283.

So where is the prosperity and happiness that this country has been so fortunate to have had so far? Yes, it amounts to nothing other than a basin-shaped hat, the cast-off of others, the unveiling of women, which committed modesty and chastity to the flames, and several boulevards for which our resources of wealth and moral excellence were forfeited.

Kashf al-Asrar p. 292.

They forced the women to attend certain gatherings. They forced the men to attend those corrupt gatherings they held with their wives and daughters. The situation was the same in every city, even in Qum, the spiritual centre of the country. (421)

2 December 1962 (11 Azar 1341 AHS)

Twenty-odd years have passed since the scandalous forced removal of the Islamic veil took place. Check and see what you have done. You've put women into the offices, and every office they've been put into has become paralysed. (422)

2 December 1962 (11 Azar 1341 AHS)

Why are the events of the 7th January (17 Dey)³ freely celebrated? These things create hatred. Don't make the country's king hated. We advise you not to turn the 7th January into a day of celebration. We

believe this to be a heinous act. Protect this country. The events of 7th January do not signify progress. (423)

2 December 1962 (11 Azar 1341 AHS)

God only knows how this nation of Iran suffered when he forced the women to remove their veils. The veil of humanity was rent asunder. God knows which women he dishonoured in this way, which people he humiliated. He forced the *`ulama* at bayonet-point to attend celebratory parties with their wives, which they did with heavy hearts and which ended with the people crying.

Other people as well, different groups in turn, were invited and obliged to attend parties with their wives. This was the freedom for women, which Riza Shah enforced. He used bayonets and the police to compel the respected people, the merchants and the *`ulama*, to attend these parties on the excuse that he himself had organised them. At some of these celebrations – as the regime called them – the people cried so much that those agents with a sense of shame regretted having forced them to attend. (424)

9 January 1978 (19 Dey 1356 AHS)

Could any Muslim agree with this scandalous uncovering of women? The women of Iran have themselves risen up against the Shah and given him a punch in the mouth with the cry: “We don’t want to live this way! We want to be free!” To which this good-for-nothing replies: “But you are free! The only thing is that you cannot go to school wearing a chador or head-covering!” You call this freedom? (425)

18 February 1978 (29 Bahman 1356 AHS)

Today is 7th January (17 Dey), I can remember, as perhaps this man (the Shah) does, indeed anyone of our age may recall what wickedness this man (Riza Shah) perpetrated around this time. Such pressure he put this nation under, such repression; what disgraceful acts were carried out against so many honourable women because of him; so many miscarriages occurred around the time of 7th January.

Such acts of aggression this man's agents and executioners perpetrated against the men, how outrageously they violated the rights of the women and dragged them from their homes. These are the deeds your father perpetrated; they are beyond description. His true character will be evident in the next world; we could not understand him properly while he was in this world, we could not understand what kind of an animal he truly was. (426)

7 January 1979 (17 Dey 1357 AHS)

God only knows what this father and son⁴ have done to this country of ours. Throughout its history Iran has not witnessed the likes of such acts of treason. All the monarchs throughout the 2,500 years or more of monarchical rule in Iran were traitors; even those who were reputed to be good were traitors, yet their treachery did not reach the bounds which that of these two did. Indeed, no one really knows to what bounds Riza Shah and his son’s treachery did in fact reach, the extent of their crimes was huge, but the

extent of their treachery was even greater.

What scenes we witnessed during the reign of Riza Khan, a reign that perhaps most of you cannot remember. In Qum and indeed in all the towns and cities in accordance with the wishes of those who instructed him and in the name of *kashf-i hijab*, he violated that which is inviolable in Islam; he violated that which is sacrosanct to the believers and to our respected women. What his agents did to our veiled ladies! How they treated them! They tore off their chadors and scarves and confiscated them. I myself witnessed these scenes, and you have witnessed what this son did to this country on the plea of creating a 'great civilisation'. (427)

8 March 1979 (17 Isfand 1357 AHS)

You have no idea what they did to the ladies of Qum. There was a police chief there, I don't know if he's still alive or not, who treated the women very badly. One day, so it was said, he had a nosebleed, as he sat there with blood dripping from his nose, his eyes fell on a lady wearing a chador or a scarf. Paying no heed to his nosebleed, he jumped up and attacked her. This is how they treated the women in those days, and in this recent period you yourselves witnessed what they did to this nation, what killings they perpetrated in all cities, what calamities they brought about in Qum alone. (428)

28 March 1979 (8 Farvardin 1358 AHS)

News came from villages, towns and cities that could not be repeated. Our ladies had information that blackened the face of history. You don't know what events took place here, in Qum, the spiritual centre. You have no idea what a spectacle they created, how they brought the women out and forced them to attend parties celebrating the unveiling. (429)

23 April 1979 (3 Urdibihisht 1358 AHS)

The goal was to pervert not to reform. The goal was to stop the country from developing. Thus, from this we can deduce that the unveiling which Riza Khan pursued in imitation of Turkey and the West and in accordance with the mission with which he had been assigned was against our country's interests. (430)

16 May 1979 (26 Urdibihisht 1358 AHS)

You must realise that all the inhabitants of our country were subjected to pressure. During that period, when the former ruler (Riza Shah) took steps to enforce the unveiling and drag the nation into depravation and ruination, perhaps Qum, and Tehran too, suffered more as a consequence than anywhere else. Pressure, however, was brought to bear on the people everywhere. (431)

13 June 1979 (23 Khurdad 1358 AHS)

He did things that caused much opprobrium, like the unveiling. You have no idea what a calamity the unveiling at that time was for the people; you can't imagine what his agents did to the people and the

women causing much public discontent. But their power was great and people had no leadership, they couldn't do anything in the face of such power; the grudges, however, were many. (432)

27 May 1979 (6 Khurdad 1358 AHS)

You may not remember most of what went on, but I can remember what they did at the time of Riza Khan in the name of uniformity of dress and unveiling, how the taboos of this country were torn apart, how they bullied and how miscarriages occurred as a result of their attacking the women in order to rend their chadors from their heads. (433)

5 November 1979 (14 Aban 1358 AHS)

In the final years of my period in Qum, perhaps it was in my last year there just before the uprising of the 15th Khurdad,⁵ I heard that the government was planning for some women to gather at the tomb of Riza Shah and commemorate the unveiling of women.⁶ Some government officials in Qum came to see me and I told them each to inform their ministries that were this plan to be carried out, I would call on the nation to hold a day of national mourning for those killed in the massacre perpetrated by the regime at the Gauhar Shad mosque.⁷

They reported what I'd said to them and subsequently the government changed its plans. Be that as it may, the circumstances that the regime had created were in direct contradiction to what the nation had to do. (434)

10 September 1980 (19 Shahrivar 1359 AHS)

The goal behind the unveiling affair was not, as they purported, to bring the women, say ten million women, into society and get them involved in social affairs. Rather it was an order that they had received from abroad and which they carried out with the intention of leading us into captivity.

Perhaps none of you can remember the affair, you may have been too small at that time, but the bitter taste of the unveiling, which later Riza Khan's son called creating 'free men and free women' remains in my mouth. You don't know what they did to the esteemed ladies, indeed to all segments of the society. Merchants, tradesmen and clergymen all were forced to attend parties (celebrating the unveiling) along with their wives; if they refused, they were beaten and subjected to verbal abuse.

Their aim was to use the women as a preoccupation for the youth so that they would not get involved in fundamental issues. They employed different methods to stop our youth and our academics from pondering their own situation and that of their country, the unveiling, with the disgraceful acts they perpetrated, being one of them. Respectable women were mistreated, clergymen likewise, agents even approached the late Mr. Kashani and told him he had to attend the parties too, but he sent them away, protesting that they were only obeying orders, with a flea in their ear.

In towns and villages everywhere throughout the country the story was the same. The deeds they

perpetrated in Qum were so opprobrious they defy description. And this was all in order to bring the young people, the gullible young people, men and women, together socially and preoccupy them with one another, so that they became indifferent towards the fundamental problems facing the country.

They created centres of fornication and other forms of corruption for the same reason; from Tehran to Tajrish hundreds of these centres were opened. So as you see they used the women, and consequently our youth, our people, did not attend to the basic problems, as they should have, neither the men nor the women. (435)

10 September 1980 (19 Shahrivar 1359 AHS)

Through the ignominious scheme for the unveiling of women devised during the reign of that dim-witted thug Riza Khan, they conspired to change this beloved segment of the population whose role it is to develop society, into one that would corrupt society. And their plan was not aimed only at you ladies. It also sought to corrupt the young men too by luring them into centres of corruption, and to train them in such a way that were their country to fall into the hands of others they would remain indifferent or even assist in its capitulation. (436)

16 March 1981 (25 Isfand 1359 AHS)

Those of you who say the Riza Shah period was better than the present,⁸ what was life like for you at that time? Not only you, but our late Shaykh⁹ too, may God's blessings be upon him, what was his situation at that time? The late Shaykh `Abdulkarim Ha'iri wrote a letter to Riza Shah about one affair, which may have been the unveiling, but he didn't receive a reply. However, his prime minister told him his concerns had been reported to His Imperial Majesty to which the latter had retorted: 'He had better mind his own business.' (437)

21 March 1982 (1 Farvardin 1361 AHS)

Perhaps I know better than most the problems, which beset this country throughout the reigns of this father and son, for there are not many, like me who have lived long enough to witness events in both eras. Most of you ladies will not be able to remember the period of Riza Shah, perhaps there are only a few among you who can recall those sad times.

During that era, on the plea of wanting to make one half of the population of Iran (i.e. the women) active members of society, that villainous scoundrel perpetrated the crime of the unveiling, and instead of making half the population active, to a great extent he paralysed the other half, that is the men. Those dolls he and his regime created and put in all the offices, simply prevented others in the office from working effectively, and those they put on the streets led our youth astray and robbed them of their activeness. They claimed to want to bring Eastern civilisation into Iran, but in the process, they destroyed the great Islamic civilisation in the country. (438)

13 March 1982 (22 Isfand 1361 AHS)

The oppression suffered by the esteemed ladies of Iran under the *taghuti* Pahlavi regime was not suffered by the men. Those ladies who felt obliged to act in accordance with Islamic principles, who accepted the precepts Islam laid down for them and dressed accordingly, suffered in different ways under both Riza Shah and Muhammad Riza.

I can remember what happened to the ladies during the time of Riza Shah, and it's a good thing that you cannot, for what occurred was so horrendous it defies description. One cannot begin to put into words the oppression suffered by this class of the nation during the period of that corrupt shah, nor determine the extent of the pressures they were subjected to and the tragedies they were made to endure.

Under Muhammad Riza the situation changed and the depth of the crime deepened. While under Riza Shah the women were bullied, pressurised, beaten, arrested, had their chadors ripped off them and their hair pulled, Muhammad Riza took a radical stand against women's modesty, indeed against everything in Iran, the women being just one aspect.

Each of them adopted his own special method, devised his own particular plot to drag the women into corruption and rob our society of its modesty and decency. Praise God though, the Iranian women resisted, and apart from a group of their relatives or women infatuated with the West or connected to the regime, the rest of the sisters resisted this onslaught. (439)

8 April 1984 (19 Farvardin 1363 AHS)

The undertaking to remove the veil of modesty from the heads of virtuous Muslim women was spurred by carnal desires and is now rampant in the country at variance with religion and the laws, yet no one utters a word against it. (440)

The year 1946

At that time the propaganda was such that women did not dare come out dressed the way they should (according to Islamic precepts). Those who wanted to keep their *hijab* either did not leave their homes at all or they came out only when darkness had fallen, and crept surreptitiously from one place to another. As we observe, everything else was the same. (441)

27 August 1985 (5 Shahrivar 1364 AHS)

Women's entry into rubber-stamp parliaments and other assemblies

Women's entry into rubber-stamp parliaments and other assemblies

From the time this ignorant, despicable government¹⁰ came into power, its target has been Islam. In the newspapers they wrote in big, bold print that they had given women the right to participate in elections, but this was just a devilish ruse to deflect public criticism from the true intention, which was to eliminate Islam and the Qur'an from the process.¹¹

Consequently, when we first met here to discuss the issue,¹² our minds were initially distracted by the matter of women's participation. Later, after studying the issue more closely, we realised that it was not about women, this was only a minor point; it was about opposing Islam. (442)

30 March 1963 (10 Farvardin 1342 AHS)

Imam's telegram to the Shah

Imam's telegram to the Shah

In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful

His Imperial Majesty,

Greetings and good wishes. According to that which has been published in the newspapers, the government has not made Islamic qualifications a prerequisite for candidates and voters in the elections for the Provincial and County Councils, and has given women the right to vote. This is of great concern to the religious authorities and other Muslims.

As Your Majesty knows, the well being of this country lies in the preservation of Islamic decrees and in the people's peace of mind. Therefore, it is requested that you order for those issues, which contravene the official religion of this country to be excluded from the programmes of the government and political parties so that you will be the recipient of the Muslim nation's prayers. (443)

Ruhullah al-Musawi

9 October 1962 (17 Mehr 1341 AHS)

Telegram to Assadollah `Alam

Telegram to Assadollah `Alam

In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful

Tehran – The Honourable Mr. Assadollah `Alam, Prime Minister of Iran.

This long recess of the Parliament proves that the government is considering procedures, which are against divine laws and clearly contradict the constitutional law. Know for certain that any violation of

Islamic and constitutional laws, as well as those enacted by the Consultative Assembly (Parliament), will make His Excellency and the government seriously accountable before Almighty God, the Muslim nation and the law.

The entry of women into Parliament, Provincial and County Councils and Town Councils contravenes the indisputable laws of Islam,¹³ the interpretation of which, according to the text of the Constitution, is given over to the learned *'ulama* and the *maraji'*, no one else having the right to interfere.

The jurists of Islam and the Muslims' *maraji'* have issued an edict forbidding it. Such being the case, women's franchise and right to be elected at any level contravenes Article 2 of the Supplementary Constitutional Law. Similarly, the National Consultative Assembly's Electoral Law ratified in Rabi' II 1325 deprives women of the right to vote or be voted for in Provincial and County Council and Town Council elections. Refer to Articles 7 and 9 of the Provincial and County Council Bill and Articles 15 and 17 of the Municipal Law. Thus, granting the women such a right would be an infringement of the law.

Likewise the abrogation of the qualification that electors and candidates must be Muslim, which is stipulated in the said law, and replacing the policy of swearing the oath on the Holy Qur'an to one which stipulates swearing on a 'holy book', are an infringement of the said law, are dangerous for Islam and the independence of the country, and have been carried out either unintentionally or, God forbid, with malice aforethought.

Now that His Majesty has referred the learned *'ulama's* request to the government, and has passed on the responsibility for dealing with this matter to your government, it is expected that, in compliance with the unassailable laws of Islam and the country, this matter be rectified as soon as possible, and that you are careful to avoid a repetition of anything similar.

If the honourable prime minister is uncertain about anything, he can do us the honour of visiting us here in Qum so that any ambiguity can be removed in his presence, and he can be notified of matters which are in the interests of the country but which cannot be put down on paper.

Finally, I would like to remind you that the learned *'ulama* of Iran and the major centres of Shi'ite learning, along with other Muslims, will not remain silent on issues that contravene the inviolable *shari'a* laws. Through the power and strength of Almighty God, issues that contravene Islam will not become official. (444)

20 October 1962 (28 Mehr 1341 AHS)

The opinion of the maraji'-i taqlid and the Grand Ayatullahs of the Qum religious seminary on the decree concerning the

Provincial and County Council elections which opposed both shari'a and statute law

The opinion of the maraji'-i taqlid and the Grand Ayatullahs of the Qum religious seminary on the decree concerning the Provincial and County Council elections which opposed both shari'a and statute law.

In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful

There is no power and no strength save in God the Almighty

Because the government of Mr. `Alam has, by means of legislation, with surprising haste and without first giving due thought to the articles of the constitutional law, granted women the right to vote and be voted for in elections, it has become necessary to notify the Muslim nation of Iran of a few points so that they know under what conditions and what kind of governments they are living. Thus, we would like to draw the public's attention to the following:

1 – The Interior Minister in a proposal presented to the Prime Minister wrote: “As you are well aware, in the preamble to the constitutional law it clearly stipulates that each citizen of the country is entitled to participate in the approval and supervision of public affairs, and according to Article 2 of the constitutional law, the National Consultative Assembly represents all the inhabitants of the country of Iran who participate in the political and economic affairs of their homeland.

Consequently, excluding the class of women from the voting process is not only impermissible according to the constitutional law and its supplement, but in view of the phrase ‘each citizen of the country’ in the preamble to the law and the phrase ‘all the inhabitants of the country’ mentioned in Article 2, it contravenes these as well.

The Cabinet has approved the deletion of paragraph one of Article 10 and paragraph two of Article 13 of the National Consultative Assembly Electoral Law, and also the qualification ‘male’ from Articles 6 and 9 of the Senate Electoral Law.”^{[14](#)}

Additionally, the Interior Ministry has been charged with the duty to obtain authorisation for this legislation when Parliament convenes. Thus it is necessary to explain the problems with the above argument.

a) – If the participation of women in elections can be reconciled with the constitutional law, as the Interior Minister and the Cabinet too apparently seem to think it can, then the approval of the Cabinet is meaningless, for it is as if they were approving the participation of men in the elections. If, on the other hand, it is correct to seek their approval, then it is obvious that in the opinion of the Cabinet the participation of women is at variance with the constitutional law.

b) – If the non-participation of women is in their eyes contrary to the constitutional law, then the Cabinet's act of commissioning the Interior Minister to obtain authorisation for this legislation when the deputies convene has no basis, and if it needs authorisation, then it is obvious that the government views the participation of women as being contrary to the constitutional law. Wouldn't it have been better had the Cabinet not employed a little thought and deliberation before introducing legislation which gives rise to such clear contradictions?

2 – The preamble to the constitutional law does not constitute a part of the law; it is simply the words of the shah of the time and does not carry any legal weight. However, the Interior Minister, either for want of sufficient deliberation or in order to deceive, has used it to draw his conclusions. However, had he studied it to the end before doing so, then it would have been made clear to him that according to that same preamble, women do not have the right to participate in elections because it is written therein: 'Now that the National Consultative Assembly, in conformity with our holy intentions, has convened.' This being the case, if the participation of women was envisaged, then how could the Parliament open 'in conformity with our holy intentions' without their presence?

So it is obvious that women did not have the right, and this phrase makes it clear that the first session of Parliament was held in conformity with the Shah's intentions, for women did not participate.

3 – From the previous explanation it is evident that the meaning of 'all the inhabitants of the country' in Article 2, is not that which the Cabinet understands it to be. Rather its meaning is that the representative for Tehran represents the entire nation, as does the representative for Qum.

They do not represent their own constituency as stipulated in Article 30 of the supplement to the constitutional law. The reason behind this claim lies in the fact that more than ten classes of the population do not have the right to vote even though they also form 'all the inhabitants of the country.' Thus, they must accept that either depriving these other groups of participation is unconstitutional or the participation of women is.

4 – Supposing there is a mistake in the interpretation of this article, according to Article 27 of the Supplementary Constitutional Law, the explanation and interpretation of the law is one of the prerogatives of the National Consultative Assembly, which the ministers do not enjoy.

5 – It is the opinion of the government that women and other excluded groups have the constitutional right to participate in elections. Thus, from the beginning of the constitutional period up to the present all the parliaments have been formed in contravention of the constitutional law and were illegal because women and more than ten other groups have, according to the Electoral Law, not been allowed to participate, and this contravenes the constitutional law.

In this case it becomes necessary to point out many irregularities, which stem from that:

a) – All the laws effective in the country from the beginning of the constitutional period to the present

were null and void and must be declared to be so.

b) – In the view of Mr. `Alam's government, the Constituent Assemblies that have been convened were unconstitutional and were consequently null and void. According to the law, to make such a claim is a crime and the person making it must be indicted.

c) – The government of Mr. `Alam is illegal, as were all the governments formed since the beginning of the constitutional period up to the present. Consequently, an illegal government has no right to issue decrees or anything else, on the contrary its interference in the country's affairs and its handling of the treasury is a crime and is subject to prosecution.

d) – According to the government of Mr. `Alam, all the agreements signed with foreign governments, among them oil agreements, are null and void, and this must be declared to be so to the nation.

6 – The deletion of the first paragraph of Article 10 and paragraph 2 of Article 13 of the National Consultative Assembly Electoral Law approved in Shawwal 1329 AS, and the deletion of the qualification 'male' from paragraphs 6 and 9 of the Senate Electoral Law approved on 14 Urdibihisht 1339 (4 May 1960), based on the preamble to the constitutional law and Article 2 of this law, is illegal, and the government has no right to do this because it itself has no basis in the law. Additionally, the government does not have the right to annul legislation approved by the Parliament, and according to the text of Article 28 of the Supplementary Constitutional Law, the executive power will always be separate and distinct from the legislative power.

This lists the illegal aspects of an illegal law. This law also contravenes Article [215](#) and Article 27 of the Supplementary Constitutional Law.

Despite the pressures and difficulties that the government has imposed and will further impose on them, and the insults that it will continue to hurl against them, the clergy consider it their religious and moral duty to point out to the Muslim governments and people both the advantages and the harm that may ensue from these actions.

They consider it incumbent on them not to withhold their friendly advice from the authorities and, in the face of this worrying suppression of the press and police repression, whereby people are carried off to prison and subjected to abuse and torture simply for printing or circulating a leaflet containing advice and guidance, to let mankind know what these actions portend for this poor, weak and hungry nation, the signs of which are already becoming apparent one after the other.

The clergy observe that the government has made the official religion of the country a plaything, and in meetings it allows it to be said that steps have been taken to establish equal rights for men and women. Islam has stipulated what action must be taken against anyone who, because of his belief in equal rights for women, annuls the unequivocal and mandatory laws of Islam concerning inheritance, divorce and the suchlike.

The clergy observe that the pillars of this country's economy are crumbling; the market is on the verge of collapse as demonstrated by the ever-increasing number of files on bad debts. Likewise, the country's agriculture is tottering on the brink of ruin because while each province of this country should be able to meet the agricultural needs of the whole land, bills for the import of wheat, or, as was said to be the case recently, for flour, are approved every so often on the plea of the possibility of a drought or some other excuse, thus making the land, along with Iranian mills, idle.

Faced with this deplorable situation, the government, instead of trying to find a solution, keeps itself and the people preoccupied with issues such as women's franchise, with granting rights to women and bringing half the Iranian population into society and other such deceptions which will bring nothing but misery, corruption and fornication.

The gentlemen don't realise that Islam shows a special regard for women in all aspects not found anywhere else. It has brought respect for their social and moral standing which prevents the kind of social mixing of the sexes that is incompatible with women's modesty and virtue, and this is not because Islam thinks, God forbid, that they are legally incompetent or they are prisoners. Is entering these parliaments the only sign of them not being incompetent?

If such is the case then it must be said that all those in the land and naval forces, the officers and members of the security and police forces, the immediate members of the royal family and those under 20 years of age are also among the legally incompetent and prisoners.

In their declarations of 2-3 months ago, the clergy foresaw this turn of events you are witnessing today and predicted that similar incidents would happen in the future, and this they stated unequivocally therein.

Now too today, they announce an even greater danger and express their grave concern about what the consequences of these attacks on the *shari'a* law and the Constitution may mean for the independence and economy of this country, indeed for all aspects of this country's life.

Consequently, the clergy hereby discharge the important duty they have in this matter, of which the entire nation is aware, and state most categorically that the government's recently introduced legislation concerning the participation of women in elections has no legal force according to both the *shari'a* and the constitutional law.

Furthermore, despite suppression of the press, pressures brought to bear by the police and the prevention of the printing and publication of notices, such as this one, containing exhortations and facts, they will take steps to publish such notices to the best of their ability so that the governments cannot say we introduced legislation and the *ulama* did not object. God willing, the clergy will take measures at the appropriate time to stop this law being practised.

The nation of Iran also opposes this kind of legislation, as demonstrated two-three months ago, when

the pressure and intimidation were a little less, in the telegrams and communications sent from all around Iran in which they declared their acceptance of the Islamic *'ulama's* authority and called for the annulment of the government's illegal legislation concerning the Provincial and County Council Elections.

The government in turn acceded to the nation's request and turned the matter over to the Parliament. However, now that it has gained sway over the nation through imprisonment, persecution and abuse of the clergymen and pious elements in society, the government is, with blatant disregard for the laws of Islam, the Constitution and electoral laws, adopting measures the consequences of which are dangerous and alarming for Islam and the Muslims.

May God awaken our governments from this sleep of ignorance and have mercy on the Muslim nation and country.

O Lord we complain to Thee for the loss of our Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him and his descendants, for the absence of our Imam, the multitude of our enemies, the fewness of our number and the domination of life and circumstances. Then greet Muhammad and his family, assist us in all affairs by quick victory from Thy side, to eradicate pain and ennui and to provide us with aid and power that Thou cherish, for you are the Lord and Master of rights to unveil. We are from God and to Him is our return. [16](#)

Murtaza al-Husayni al-Langarudi, Ahmad al-Husayni al-Zanjani, Muhammad Husayn Tabataba'i, Muhammad al-Musawi al-Yazdi, Muhammad Riza al-Musawi al-Gulpaygani, Sayyid Kazim Shari'atmadari, Ruhullah al-Musawi al-Khomeini, Hashim al-Amuli, Murtaza al-Ha'iri. (445)

March 1963 (Isfand 1341 AHS)

What is there for this "developed nation" to learn? What do you think? What's your opinion? Do you really think that words are sufficient? Can development result from sending a few women to the Majlis (Parliament)? Have the male members of the Majlis actually accomplished anything for you so far which leads you to believe that your women may now do so? We believe that sending women to the Majlis will result in nothing but immorality, and we believe that in ten, twenty or thirty years' time you will see that we were right. We in no way oppose women's progress, but we do oppose fornication and other such sinful deeds. (446)

15 April 1964 (26 Farvardin 1343 AHS)

Those lords seated in their palaces speak of 'the developed nation'; does a 'developed nation' die of starvation?! `Ali, upon whom be peace, the emir of Islam, used to eat barley bread, but now they spend five hundred thousand or one million tumans, if not more, for the receptions arranged in honour of their masters; and all they ever talk about is the 'development' programme! They maintain that our country is on a par with advanced countries, but how can the admission of a few women to Parliament cause a country to be developed? [17](#) You won't put the country right by implementing Israel's policies. (447)

10 April 1964 (21 Farvardin 1343 AHS)

Claims made about equal rights for women

Claims made about equal rights for women

The ruling regime (of the Shah) in Iran infringed upon the holy Islamic laws and is now set to violate the unequivocal and mandatory laws of the Qur'an. The honour and dignity of the Muslims are about to be violated and through legislation, which contravenes shari'a, law and the Constitution, the tyrannical regime means to put chaste women to shame and humiliate the Iranian nation.

The tyrannical regime intends to introduce legislation and implement equal rights for men and women, in other words it means to trample underfoot the incontrovertible and mandatory laws of Islam and the Most Noble Qur'an. They want to force 18-year-old girls to do military service and drag them to the barracks. At the point of the bayonet they mean to force young, chaste Muslim girls into centres of fornication. (448)

1962 (1341 AHS)

They yet again espoused equal rights for women in all aspects, which means in effect trampling underfoot the unequivocal and mandatory laws of Islam and disclaiming some clear Qur'anic ordinances. Afterwards, they again saw that this was the cause of certain resentment, objection and difficulties and so once more they denied the issue; it was disclaimed by the minister in one place and by the commanding official in another. [18](#)

In the press it was quite explicitly reported that women's conscription was in the process of being legislated. Nevertheless, when they saw that the matter gave rise to opprobrium and that the people and even the regime's henchmen were truly perturbed, again they said that it was a lie. [19](#) Indeed, they wanted to open a lawsuit because of it – a most foolish, ludicrous intention. [20](#) (449)

30 March 1962 (10 Farvardin 1341 AHS)

This year (1962) was a bad year because these events took place, and yet it was a good year because you gentlemen, by confronting oppression gave new life to Islam. Had you not shown resistance, God knows that by now they would have fully executed all of their evil schemes. It was your resistance which caused them to deny their former intentions, whereby they said: "Of course divorce is a man's prerogative, when did we ever say otherwise?" [21](#)

Whilst one voice from the "People's Party" [22](#) can be heard advocating full and equal rights, another voice from the other Party asks: "When did we say that divorce is a woman's prerogative?" Hence, on one occasion they espouse equality in all spheres of life, but on another they advocate something quite different. Again they speak in similar terms with regard to inheritance and women's conscription,

advocating one thing one minute and denying it the next. As for women's conscription, we read about it in your (the Shah's) very own newspapers, which write whatever the security forces dictate to them. (450)

30 March 1962 (10 Farvardin 1341 AHS)

The clergy observe that the government has made the official religion of the country a plaything, and in meetings it allows it to be said that steps have been taken to establish equal rights for men and women. Islam has stipulated what action must be taken against anyone who, because of his belief in equal rights for women, annuls the unequivocal and mandatory laws of Islam concerning inheritance, divorce and the suchlike. (451)

March 1963 (Isfand 1341 AHS)

I must draw the honourable gentlemen's attention to the past and present actions of the tyrannical regime. In the past, it abused Islam and the Qur'an, and tried to put the Qur'an in the same category as other misguided books. Now, with the announcement of equal rights, a number of the mandatory and unequivocal laws of Islam will be effaced. Recently, the justice minister abolished the requirement that judges be Muslim and male. (452)

April 1963 (Urdibihisht 1342 AHS)

The tyrannical regime imagined that with this talk about equal rights it could open the way for advancing its evil goal, which is to deliver the final blow to Islam. But they didn't count on the reaction they would have to face. (453)

2 May 1963 (12 Urdibihisht 1342 AHS)

It is necessary for me to point out to the respected gentlemen that there is every indication the tyrannical regime intends to disregard mandatory and unequivocal Islamic laws and perhaps, God forbid, take even more drastic measures. Repeatedly in their meaningless, absurd speeches they have spoken openly about equal rights for men and women in all political and social aspects, which would involve changing some ordinances of the Most Noble Qur'an.

Yet when they came up against strong objections from the Muslims, they made excuses worse than the offence itself and hypocritically denied the whole issue. They don't realise that we know them only too well, and have no confidence in what they say. (454)

2 May 1963 (12 Urdibihisht 1342 AHS)

. . . One thing is certain – if, gentlemen, you take a look at the Baha'i almanac of two or three years ago, you will read: "Abdul Baha²³ advocates equal rights for men and women"; and this is the line that has been adopted by them. Then the ignorant Mr. Shah also steps forward and talks of equal rights for men

and women! You poor wretch, they have purposely set you up so that they can say that you are a Baha'i, and so that I in turn denounce you as an unbeliever and you are finally got rid of. Don't continue in this way. (455)

3 June 1963 (13 Khurdad 1342 AHS)

We have evidence that suggests that the tyrannical regime, due to its evil nature and to meet its own needs, is set on fundamentally destroying Islam. The armed attacks on the centres of religious jurisprudence; the aspersions cast on the good name of the *maraji'* and the jurists of Islam; the imprisonment and persecution of students of the Islamic schools; the disrespect shown the Most Noble Qur'an and other sacred things, all clearly point to this.

The announcement of equal rights for men and women in all aspects, the annulment of the requirement that candidates and electors must be Muslim and male, and the abolition of the same requirement for judges, are other patent signs. (456)

6 May 1963 (16 Urdibihisht 1342 AHS)

Beware the wrath of Almighty God. If because of your²⁴ silence Islam is dealt a blow, you will be responsible before God and the Muslim nation. "Scholars must, through their knowledge, challenge a heresy, otherwise God's curse will be upon them."²⁵

Express your loathing for this equal rights idea and your repugnance for the participation of women in social affairs, which will give rise to numerous acts of corruption. Assist the religion of God and remember, "*If ye will aid (the cause of) God, He will aid you and plant your feet firmly,*" (Qur'an 40:7).

Do not let the police and others intimidate you, for they, like you, have a duty to perform and they are compelled to do what they do. If the truth be told, many of them actually support you and despise the regime. (457)

18 May 1963 (28 Urdibihisht 1342 AHS)

Conscription of girls into the military

Conscription of girls into the military

Do not deceive our girls and carry them off to the barracks; do not betray the honour of the Muslims. Will you once again deny this bitter reality, now that it is being practised, as you did previously saying that those who espouse such a notion should be prosecuted? Do you deny the atrocities, which took place during the twenty-fifth anniversary celebrations (for the Shah's rule) and the thoroughly benighted things you did therein? (458)

16 April 1967 (27 Farvardin 1346 AHS)

They invite and encourage girls to join the Literacy Corps and then declare that first they have to do military service. When they see the matter gives rise to opprobrium, they begin to deny it and in the press it is announced that the bill for female conscription is in the process of being prepared. Even then they continue to deny it and resort to preposterous excuses. (459)

2 May 1963 (12 Urdibihisht 1342 AHS)

Mixing of the sexes

Mixing of the sexes

It is a good idea for you to compare the time the boys and girls of our country spend learning matters of worship and religious culture with the time they spend together in the cinemas, theatres, dance halls and swimming pools, and on other such activities which have torn the veil of modesty from them and smothered the spirit of piety and valour in them, so that it is made clear just what you consider to be time wasted and what you consider to be time well spent.

Kashf al-Asrar, p. 194

The result they obtained from the Sepah Salar School, which they made the school of theology, was unfavourable. Students there who were to qualify the following term as clergymen and to go out into society to purify the morals and spirit of the future generations were forced into a line to exercise and dance with half-naked girls. Now too, as long as the schools are in the hands of the government and its agents, the same sorry state of affairs will persist.

Kashf al-Asrar, p. 201

The clergy say that these coeducational schools, mixing young girls and lustful young boys, destroy chastity and manliness. They are both a material and spiritual detriment to the country and are forbidden according to God's command.

Kashf al-Asrar, p. 213

Islam shows a special regard for women in all aspects not found anywhere else. It has brought respect for their social and moral standing which prevents the kind of social mixing of the sexes that is incompatible with women's modesty and virtue, and this is not because Islam thinks, God forbid, that they are legally incompetent or they are prisoners. (460)

March 1963 (Isfand 1341 AHS)

If the religious leaders have influence, they will not permit the Parliament to come to such a miserable state as this; they will not permit the Parliament to be formed at bayonet-point, with the ignominious results that we see.

If the religious leaders have influence, they will not permit girls and boys to wrestle together, as recently happened in Shiraz.

If the religious leaders have influence, they will not permit people's innocent daughters to be under the tutelage of young men at school; they will not permit women to teach at boys' schools and men to teach at girls' schools, with the resulting corruption.

If the religious leaders have influence, they will strike this government in the mouth; they will strike this Parliament in the mouth and chase these deputies out of both its houses! (461)

26 October 1964 (4 Aban 1343 AHS)

. . . Instead of thinking up ways to improve the economy, to prevent the bankruptcy of the respected traders, to provide bread and water for the destitute during the winter months ahead and to find employment for the young graduates and others in society, the ruling clique is bent upon destructive measures referred to above and upon such measures contributing to moral corruption as the employment of women teachers for boys' high schools and men teachers for girls' high schools, upon insisting on employing women in government offices to spread corruption. (462)

26 October 1964 (4 Aban 1343 AHS)

Islam prevents lustful behaviour. It will not tolerate men and women going swimming together half-naked in the sea. During the period of the *taghut*, such things occurred and the women would then go into the towns dressed in their bathing costumes. Today, if they did such a thing, the people would skin them alive. The people are Muslim, they won't allow men and women to frolic in the sea together the way they used to.

This is their idea of civilisation. This is the kind of civilisation they want, the kind of freedom. They want the Western form of freedom, which allows men and women to go swimming together in the sea half-naked.

This is the kind of civilisation that those gentlemen want. This is the kind of civilisation that was imposed on our country under the former regime, whereby men and women could swim together in the sea and the women could enter the seaside resorts with hardly any clothes on, and the people would not dare say a word.

We know what to do with them today should they try to do such a thing. Indeed the government has taken measures to prevent it. According to the Interior Minister, a stop has been put to such behaviour, and if the government does not stop it, the people will.

Do you really think the people of Mazandaran or Rasht will allow a repeat of such behaviour on their beaches today? Are the people of Bandar Pahlavi so incapacitated that they would allow men and women to go into the sea and carry on as they did at that time? Do you really think the people will let

them do such things?

This is the kind of civilisation and freedom that they want. They want to be free to gamble, they want to see men and women frolicking together half-naked and doing other things together. (463)

28 June 1979 (7 Tir 1358 AHS)

Once again those venal writers are at work, their pens hired to lead our youth astray. Some of the newspapers have even turned to this problem of the beaches and the shameful activities, which normally go on there, saying to stop them, would be reactionary.

Nowadays it seems civilisation consists of nothing other than men and women frolicking about together in the sea, and anything short of this is reactionism. Civilisation, it seems, entails the youth spending nearly all their time at the cinema, for it to take over their lives, all their ideals and desires to be found therein. (464)

21 July 1979 (30 Tir 1358 AHS)

In the summer they would get the resorts by the seas and lakes ready to attract the young. Men and women would mix together freely there, making use of the facilities, which were available free of charge, and doing whatever they wanted. This wasn't something that developed naturally; it was all part of a special plan, a plot devised to stunt the natural and human development of the young people by keeping them busy with such pursuits. (465)

21 July 1979 (30 Tir 1358 AHS)

One of the things they encouraged at the seaside was the mixing of the sexes. They didn't do this out of wanting our youth to enjoy themselves; rather their aim was to drag them into corruption. (466)

21 July 1979 (30 Tir 1358 AHS)

. . . The mixing of the sexes at the seaside was one such plan. The people must try hard to stop it themselves. The police and government must prevent it. Let the radio be used to propagate against it and to advise the people of its pernicious and corrupting nature. (467)

21 July 1979 (30 Tir 1358 AHS)

A man (I don't know who) at the seaside was quoted in a magazine as saying that segregating men and women was a disgrace, that civilisation meant boys and girls playing together in the sea!! Is this what civilisation is?! (468)

22 July 1979 (31 Tir 1358 AHS)

These *akhunds*[26](#) won't let men and women frolic about together in the sea. These *akhunds* won't let

these young people of ours be free to frequent bars, casinos and houses of ill repute. (469)

8 September 1979 (17 Shahrivar 1358 AHS)

The pretence of women's freedom during the regime of the taghut

The pretence of women's freedom during the regime of the taghut

The tyrannical regime, which grants freedom to no one in this country and which for years has deprived the nation of freedom in order to advance its aims, thought that on the plea of granting women freedom, it could deceive the Muslim nation and implement Israel's malicious goals. Oh Muslim nation! I have repeatedly warned you of the danger, and do so again. (470)

2 May 1963 (12 Urdibihisht 1342 AHS)

It's all too easy to talk about 'men's freedom' and 'women's freedom', but will it be achieved by mere words? And anyway, do men themselves really enjoy 'freedom' in this country that you now want to offer 'freedom' to women? Exactly what is it men are free to do? (471)

15 May 1964 (25 Urdibihisht 1343 AHS)

To speak of freedom for women in a country whose people in these past 50 years of despotic Pahlavi rule have not had even a whiff of freedom, is both ludicrous and deluding. (472)

22 January 1978 (2 Bahman 1356 AHS)

It is the Shah's regime, which by immersing the women in immoral issues actually strives to prevent their freedom; Islam is strongly opposed to this. This regime has trampled on the freedom of women and destroyed it, just as it has that of the men. Like men, women too have filled Iranian jails. It is this corruption, which threatens and endangers their freedom, and we want to free them from this. (473)

6 May 1978 (16 Urdibihisht 1357 AHS)

Unfortunately, women have suffered from victimisation in the past, notably in two periods. The first was during the Age of Ignorance, the period before the advent of Islam. During this time, women were oppressed; they were treated like animals, even worse than animals. Then Islam came and bestowed its blessings on mankind, it dragged women out of that state of oppression, it pulled her from that slough of ignorance.

The second period when women have been oppressed occurred in our Iran, during the reigns of the former Shah (Riza Khan) and his son (Muhammad Riza). In the name of wanting to liberate women, they oppressed the women; they committed outrages against them. They dragged them down from that

position of honour and esteem that they occupied, from that spiritual position that they enjoyed, making them instead mere objects.

In the name of freedom, freedom for women and freedom for men, they deprived men and women of their freedom. They corrupted our women and our youth. The Shah (Muhammad Riza) believed women should be 'ravishing and beguiling' as he put it. Of course it was because he had allowed the animal aspect of his nature, the base animal aspect with its concern for the physical, for the material, to overcome him that he viewed women as such.

Accordingly, he pulled women down from their position as human beings to the level of an animal, and on the plea of wanting to give women status, he dragged her down from the status she had to a lower one. He turned women into dolls, whereas women are human beings, great human beings. (474)

16 May 1979 (26 Urdibihisht 1358 AHS)

The Shah speaks of freedom for women, freedom for which women? Today in Iran women of character, who are seeking their basic human rights and who make up the majority of women in Iran, are all opposed to the Shah and are demanding his overthrow.

All of them know that freedom for women in the Shah's logic means dragging them down from their status as human beings and treating them as nothing better than objects. Freedom for women in the Shah's way of reasoning means filling the prisons with Iranian women who are not prepared to yield to the moral degradations he promotes. (475)

15 December 1978 (24 Azar 1357 AHS)

During their reigns, Riza Khan and Muhammad Riza Khan vulgarised women, dragging them down from that status they once enjoyed, doing the same to the men and youth too. Numerous centres of corruption were created for our youth. In the name of freedom, in the name of progress, in the name of civilisation, they dragged our youth into corruption. In the name of freedom, they deprived us of all freedoms.

Those who lived through the Riza Khan period understand perfectly well what I am talking about, they witnessed for themselves what we were put through and what our respected women were put through, just as those who lived through Muhammad Riza's era saw what went on then. With deceptive words and bombastic terms, they set our country on a course for destruction. And worse than everything else, much worse, was the fact that they corrupted our youth.

Our human resources were put in a state of backwardness because of them. Women during the time of Riza Shah and Muhammad Riza Pahlavi were oppressed creatures and did not know it. It is doubtful that women were subjected to as much oppression during the Age of Ignorance as they were during the reigns of these two men, or as much degradation.

In both periods (the Age of Ignorance and under the Pahlavis), women were oppressed. In the first, Islam came and rescued them from their bondage, and in this period too I hope that Islam will be able to take their hands and save them from the maelstrom of abjectness and oppression. (476)

16 May 1979 (26 Urdibihisht 1358 AHS)

. . . The Pahlavis had no intention of granting the ladies freedom, because during their rule the men weren't given it either. Neither the ladies nor the men were free. They saw freedom to lie in allowing other things, all of which were corrupt. (477)

2 July 1979 (11 Tir 1358 AHS)

They claimed to have freed half the population, but on the plea of doing this, they deprived the entire population of freedom. (478)

3 July 1979 (12 Tir 1358 AHS)

With deceptive words and bombastic terms, in the name of this and that, they destroyed the power of our youth. How they harped on about wanting 'free men and free women', how 'everyone in the country is now free, the peasants are no more, now they are farmers'. (479)

5 July 1979 (14 Tir 1358 AHS)

It is that kind of freedom that you want. The kind through which you can nurture indifference in our youth so that they have no interest in what goes on. The big powers can come and take all our resources and they are too preoccupied with enjoying themselves to care. Places were opened to provide for their enjoyment, bars and cinemas were opened and young men and women were encouraged to go there together. Thus, in the name of freedom, they dragged both into corruption. Our country was plundered, but those who were free, those who acted with licence, were indifferent. (480)

24 August 1979 (2 Shahrivar 1358 AHS)

They purported that they had created free men and free women, and, for example, that they had freed some fifteen million women. But what kind of freedom was it that they gave? Were the men free that they were going to make the women free? What kind of freedom did these 'free men' and 'free women' enjoy? What kind of freedom did any of us enjoy?

Yes, in some areas there was freedom, in frequenting the centres of corruption, which the regime encouraged. Those women and young men who were in the same class as them were free in those centres to do whatever they wanted. On these beaches, you all know what went on. The people there acted with licence.

This is what being a 'free woman' and a 'free man' meant. Otherwise, which section of the press was

free at that time to speak out? Which one of you was free to utter a word? That which they wanted to be free was corruption and that which brought corruption, affliction and that which brought affliction. During these few years they destroyed our youth. (481)

16 September 1979 (25 Shahrivar 1358 AHS)

When you look at it, you see that the women realised what kind of circumstances the previous regime wanted to bring about for them in the name of creating 'free women and free men', and that this talk of freedom was just a sham, a deceptive ruse. During his (the Shah's) reign, nobody was free, neither men nor women, the press nor the radio.

True freedom did not exist, just plenty of talk and propaganda about it. The kind of freedom they envisaged for our country – and today too some of the writers are suggesting the same – was the kind that dragged our young boys and girls into corruption, the kind that I call an 'imported freedom', an 'imperialist freedom', a gift the imperialists give to countries they want to make dependent. (482)

17 September 1979 (26 Shahrivar 1358 AHS)

The clergy are not against progress, but they are against Muhammad Riza's kind of progress. They are against this civilisation, this 'gateway to civilisation', which destroyed everything, we had. They are against this 'free men and free women' idea that he espoused, not freedom per se. Freedom is one thing, but should it be of the uncontrolled kind that causes harm? Does freedom mean allowing people to do whatever they want, regardless of the consequences? (483)

17 September 1979 (26 Shahrivar 1358 AHS)

The bit of freedom that existed in our country during these periods was a pernicious, corrupting freedom. It was the freedom to drink alcohol, the freedom to gamble, the freedom for men and women to frolic together on the beaches, the freedom to frequent those centres of corruption. It was in these things people were free; but they were not free to write a word against them (the Shah and his regime) or in the interests of the country.

They were not free to utter a word against him (the Shah). He was right when he talked about 'free men and free women', but what was this freedom they enjoyed? It was the kind they wanted, the kind I call an 'imported freedom', an 'imperialist freedom'. It was all part of the plan. (484)

18 September 1979 (27 Shahrivar 1358 AHS)

At the time of that regime which ranted on about 'free men and free women', what activities did the women actually perform? All we saw them do was a few of them get together and go, in that shameful state, to the tomb of Riza Khan to thank him for having freed them. What freedom did he give them? What did he do? They don't think about the kind of freedom they were granted, or to what extent these people really wanted the women or the men to be free.

Yes, they wanted freedom; they wanted the kind that these people today with pens in their hands who write against Islam and against the clergy also want, and that is a freedom dictated by the West and aimed at luring our youth into corruption.

They (these writers) want the men and women to be free, the women to be free to attend gatherings as they used to, dressed the way they used to and acting the way they used to before the lecherous eyes of men. They want this kind of corruption that drags both our sisters into corruption and our men and youth.

They want all kinds of obscenities to be free. During this 'free women' period, which woman could speak out on current issues of concern? Which man could write a word about the sufferings endured by our nation at the hands of foreign and domestic elements? Which section of our press was free? In what way were the radio and television free?

In what way were the people, the youth, those at the universities and the seminaries free? Over these past 50 years that I can vouch for, having witnessed what went on, society has been deprived of a true, beneficial freedom. We had nothing. The women weren't free to get involved in the affairs of society or to speak about the nation's problems. They weren't free to say a word about the problems besetting the nation because of the East and West, or the difficulties the nation had to suffer because of the puppet governments. (485)

30 September 1979 (8 Mehr 1358 AHS)

. . . So we have two types of freedom, one is the beneficial kind, which did not exist during the period of these two criminals,²⁷ indeed which was forbidden during their time. The kind of freedom they wanted to see prevalent was that which allowed women to go out into the streets dressed up to kill and, God forbid, behave however they liked with young men. This was the type of freedom they implemented, and it is this type that is desired by those today who don't want Islam. (486)

30 September 1979 (8 Mehr 1358 AHS)

They limited freedom to one area and ranted on about 'free men' and 'free women', meaning that they were free to frequent any kind of centre of corruption they pleased. On another front though there was suppression. Those who wished to write anything concerning the interests of the country or the interests of Islam were not free to do so, they were suppressed. (487)

26 October 1979 (4 Aban 1358 AHS)

The women who demonstrated are the remnants of former problems, women whom the Shah brought into the arena as "free women" and whom he led to corruption. They prefer the former situation, which that corruption had brought about, those freedoms that the former regime wanted: freedom for the youth to do anything they wanted, to embrace vice and to act indecently.

But they saw that Islam does not consent to indecency and to actions, which drag the country into

corruption and drive the nation into a state of backwardness. It was these women who came out onto the streets, with faces made up as everyone observed, and demonstrated. (488)

31 October 1979 (9 Aban 1358 AHS)

What a ballyhoo they made about this 'free men' and 'free women' idea. What hype they and those parasites in the Imperial – I can't call it the National – Consultative Assembly and in the Senate made about it. What a fuss the SAVAK²⁸ agents and the Shah's own agents made about the idea that now our country is free, we are 'free men and free women'.

And yet throughout the reigns of this father and son²⁹ – and especially this son who was a true heir to his father and who went even further than he in his policies – throughout the incumbency of these two criminals, you can see that freedom existed for no one. No one was free to utter a word of truth.

Freedom existed in the sense that they (the Pahlavis) were free to create whatever kind of corruption they liked in order to rein in the power of our youth. They did not harm the country's natural resources to the same extent they did its human resources. They incapacitated people, they destroyed (the power of) our youth. Our youth who were meant to serve this country were lured into places which did nothing for them only stupefy their minds so that they could be of no service.

All the centres of corruption were opened by them. They promoted them with great fanfare over their propaganda loudspeakers, aiding and encouraging our young people to frequent them and thus have no function. Their youth had to be interred there, the youth of our young people, it was taken off them, they were paralysed. These respected sisters who fell into their propaganda trap, who were prevented from performing their human duty, became playthings in the hands of criminals.

This was deplored by self-respecting individuals, by those who had not lost their human disposition. What they did to these respected ladies in the name of freedom is a source of great sorrow that will remain with us for all times. (489)

16 December 1979 (25 Azar 1358 AHS)

Complete texts of some speeches about the crimes perpetrated against women and the plots devised against them by imperialism and the Pahlavi regime

Complete texts of some speeches about the crimes perpetrated against women and the plots devised against them by imperialism and the Pahlavi regime

16 May 1979

Imam Khomeini's address to a group of ladies from Mashhad

In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful

First of all I must thank you respected ladies and apologise that you have to sit under this blazing sun. Both when I was abroad and here at home, I heard about the valuable activities carried out by the ladies of Mashhad. I am proud of such ladies. As I see you are uncomfortable in this heat, I will keep my address short.

I would like to turn to some of the actions carried out by governments or holders of power and shed light on some points, which may be obscure. Riza Shah came, carried out a coup d'état, overthrew the government of Iran and put himself in power.^{[30](#)} After him Muhammad Riza took over.

They carried out policies some of which at first may have appeared positive and beneficial to some naive people, and others in the name of reform or civilisation the pernicious nature of which was only too clear from the start. Such was the case with the programme for land reform. Initially they created such ballyhoo for this land reform programme^{[31](#)} saying things like 'we want this and that for the farmers and the peasant-landowner relationship no longer exists, all are farmers now.'

The newspapers wrote about it, the radios spoke about it, and it was talked about in speeches, all with a view to deceiving the people. But we knew what was really going on, and now the nation too has realised that it had nothing to do with reforms, they didn't want to free the peasants, they didn't want them and the indigent to prosper, rather the aim was to make Iran a market for America and ruin her agrarian economy so that she would depend on America for everything; a dependence which still persists today. They talked about land reforms but we knew it was really all about weakening the country and dragging it into decay.

Another example is this 'freedom for the classes, for women and men', this 'free men and free women' business. We all know that during the time of this father and son a repression existed that was perhaps unprecedented throughout the whole of the history of Iran. Neither men nor women were free. Everyone was subjected to suppression; everyone suffered.

One day celebrations were held marking the abrogation of capitulation (at the time of Riza Khan), and in the newspapers and in speeches given it was said we could do this because we were an advanced country, then another it was reinstated and immunity given to the Americans. This was in obedience to what the power wielders decided should be done. Whatever the powerful class said should be done, others created a real fuss over. In the puppet parliaments noisy approval was made and the policies praised to the skies.

Two policies that were implemented at the time of Riza Khan in imitation of Ataturk^{[32](#)} were uniformity of

dress and the unveiling of women. Both were trumpeted over their (the regime's) propaganda loudspeakers and praised highly.

What accusations they levelled against those *akhunds* who opposed these policies, calling them liars and composing defamatory poems, which some of you may have heard but which cannot be repeated. Then we all realised that this unveiling policy was not one meant to do the women a service, rather by putting them under pressure and exerting force, they tried to destroy this segment of the population too.

They strove to stop them from performing that glorious deed which is theirs to perform, from executing those services that this segment wishes to render the nation, those valuable services which our ladies are entrusted to undertake, and prevent them from performing that most fundamental of services which it is their duty to render, that is training their children in whose hands the destiny of the country lies.

They feared lest in their laps children were brought up to be pious, Islamic and with a love for their homeland, and that even when these children entered the school system, they still would not be able to change them, not even with all the propaganda they disseminated at the schools through the teachers and propagators they had installed there. Thus, their plan was to turn these ladies away from that great, fundamental role they have and pretend that in so doing they had freed half the population of Iran.

You saw what kind of freedom they gave the women (during the reign of Riza Khan), or perhaps most of you cannot recall that period, but I witnessed for myself what they did with the respected ladies of Iran, what pressures they subjected them to. I saw the bayonets they used to carry out this improper act (the unveiling).

Then later, they decided to get results by taking from women their fundamental occupation, that of rearing their children, the only one in which they act according to their instincts. Of course, there is no objection to women taking up employment, sound employment, but we do not want a repeat of the way it was during the Pahlavi era. At that time, they did not have employment in mind for women, rather their aim was to degrade both men and women, pulling them down from that position they occupy.

They did not want a natural growth for either sex. They did not want our children to receive a sound upbringing, so they took steps to prevent this from the very beginning by depriving many of the chance to be raised in their mothers' laps, which are centres for a child's training.

Then later, at the primary schools, there too they misguided the children and led them astray with their malicious propaganda and misleading books. Even later still, at the universities, their agents there did not let them develop properly, they did not allow training to be given that would produce genuine scholars or individuals committed to the welfare of the country and to Islam.

So from their policies, which we have seen were actually against our nation and in conflict with the interests of our country, like this capitulation affair, these land reforms and others, we realise that the goal was to pervert, not to reform. The goal was to stop the country from developing. Thus, from this we

can deduce that the unveiling which Riza Khan pursued in imitation of Turkey and the West and in accordance with the mission with which he had been assigned was against our country's interests.

We saw that it was you who were active members of our society, who did this movement a great service. It was you who dressed the way you are here now, poured into the streets and helped our movement. If any of those who were brought up with their (the Pahlavis') form of training took part, it was a group of them who were closer to you in their way of thinking. Otherwise, those who were brought up with a Pahlavi mentality had nothing to do with this affair at all.

Some of the men too played no role in this movement, but now they come forward and want to reap the benefits. Now that this oppressed class, this class that others deemed weak but who were, praise God, strong, this class that they referred to as the third class whereas in fact they are the first class and it is they themselves who are in the third or rather the seventh class in hell, have worked for the country, have smashed this great barrier, have opened the way, the gentlemen pour in from America and Europe wanting to partake of the fruits of their success. Some of the women too, who played no role in this affair, now think they can join in the victory feast.

But you class of people, may God preserve you, may God grant you happiness, you have no expectations. You continue to serve Islam as you did then, expecting nothing in return. It is those who had nothing to do with this affair, who did not make any sacrifices for the cause and lost no one, who are now coming forward with their ridiculous expectations, one wanting to become a minister, another a member of Parliament and another something else.

They are just building castles in the air, they had better come down to earth. What idle fancy it is they entertain thinking that now they can come and reap the benefits for themselves after they sat comfortable at home or abroad while others struggled.

This nation is indebted first and foremost to this group of women sat here today, and the community they represent: the respected ladies of Mashhad and the other ladies of Iran. Among the men, it is to these workers, farmers, tradesmen, people from the universities and from our deprived classes that the nation owes a debt, for they were the ones who took our movement forward. Today, they do not aspire after the things those who contributed nothing to this movement do.

The latter have come forward now wanting to become the president for example or the prime minister. Those who were the mouthpieces of the former regime now want to return and participate. Today, everyone has become a revolutionary. Whoever comes to see me nowadays tells me: 'I was a combatant, I spent time in jail' etc. I know they are lying to me, but what can I say to them. You think I am unaware, but I know, I know only too well that most of you were servants of the regime and it's only now that you've become 'revolutionaries'.

No, you are not revolutionaries and will never be. At the first sign of trouble or, God forbid, defeat, you are the ones who will rush out there shouting long live so and so. Yes, we know what kind of people you

are, you should correct yourselves and be a little bit careful.

The government must do something for these workers who are of the weak and oppressed class, this class that you consider to be lower than you but who are in fact of a much higher station than you. You who have money in banks at home and abroad, who own companies and have businesses, what say do you have in the matter?

It was these people who have nothing who got involved in this affair. One day the television showed these slum-dwellers of Tehran (at a demonstration), when one of them was asked what he was doing there he replied 'every morning we go to the demonstrations with our children.' It was these poor slum-dwellers who demonstrated and brought about this victory, the governments should do something for them. You opportunists who sat by and watched and who now come and try to take advantage of the situation, you had better mind your own business.

May God preserve this class of people (the deprived).

May God keep you dear, respected ladies and grant you happiness. Please give my greetings to all the ladies of Mashhad whom you represent.

I am the servant of you all.

Peace and blessings be upon you and also the mercy of God. (490)

16 May 1979 (26 Urdibihisht 1358 AHS)

30 September 1979

Imam's address to a group of female teachers and students from Mashhad, Amul and Abadan In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful

I would like, first of all, to thank these young girls for their recitation, and all the sisters who have come from different areas, from Khorrasan, Amul and Abadan to be here today. I am, God willing, your humble supplicant.

We should analyse this matter to see what kind of freedom it was the former Shah had in mind – and what it is these people today who follow the same path want – and what role women played during his time and throughout other periods in our history. Those acquainted with the past hundred years of Iran's history know that in the most important movements, which took place before the Pahlavi era, such as the Tobacco Movement^{[33](#)} and the Constitutional Movement,^{[34](#)} women participated shoulder-to-shoulder with the men.

Women played an active role in the society and involved themselves, along with the men, in the political and social affairs of their country and in the problems that beset it. Just as the men rose up against the tobacco concession, which threatened to throw everything we had to the wind, so too did the women. In the Constitutional Movement also, just as the men were active, so too were the women. This was how it

was before the Pahlavi regime.

During the period of its decline, in the movement started by the Muslims, by our nation, you all saw for yourselves that the women were in the vanguard. Their activities in this regard were even more valuable than those of the men, because when these sisters poured into the streets and demonstrated before the tanks and cannons with clenched fists, they doubled the resolve of the men.

When men see ladies coming and standing before tanks and cannons, it spurs them to make more of an effort. As we ourselves saw, these sisters played a very great role throughout this movement, and now that the regime has gone, we see that they participate in all affairs, in the campaign to reform and purge our establishments, in the crusade for reconstruction (*Jihad-i Sazandeghi*), in all these affairs they actively and freely participate.

Such was the situation before the Pahlavi era and such is the situation now, the details of which you know and therefore no explanation is needed. Now let's take a look at the time of that regime which ranted on about 'free men and free women', what activities did the women actually perform? All we saw them do was a few of them get together and go, in that shameful state, to the tomb of Riza Khan to thank him for having freed them.

What freedom did he give them? What did he do? They don't think about the kind of freedom they were granted, or to what extent these people really wanted the women or the men to be free. Yes, they wanted freedom; they wanted the kind that these people today with pens in their hands who write against Islam and against the clergy also want, and that is a freedom dictated by the West and aimed at luring our youth into corruption.

They (these writers) want the men and women to be free, the women to be free to attend gatherings as they used to, dressed the way they used to and acting the way they used to before the lecherous eyes of men. They want this kind of corruption that drags both our sisters into corruption and our men and youth. They want all kinds of obscenities to be free.

During this 'free women' period, which woman could speak out on current issues of concern? Which man could write a word about the sufferings endured by our nation at the hands of foreign and domestic elements? Which section of our press was free? In what way were the radio and television free? In what way were the people, the youth, those at the universities and the seminaries free?

Over these past 50 years that I can vouch for, having witnessed what went on, society has been deprived of a true, beneficial freedom. We had nothing. The women weren't free to get involved in the affairs of society or to speak about the nation's problems. They weren't free to say a word about the problems besetting the nation because of the East and West, or the difficulties the nation had to suffer because of the puppet governments.

The last one hundred years then can be divided into three periods. Some events that occurred during

these periods you witnessed for yourselves, but all of them have been recorded in history. Let us take the period from the beginning of these one hundred years covering the constitutional period and up to the reign of Riza Khan as the first, and, regardless of the fact that the government at that time was also corrupt, let us look at the circumstances then and what freedom women and men enjoyed.

Let us take another period as covering the era of the Pahlavi regime, from the time Riza Khan enacted his coup d'état to the time of its dwindling power, and the third period as being from the fall of this regime, or rather the time when it was facing defeat and had become ineffective, to the present.

Let us examine these three periods and present our findings to those who are still shedding tears over the loss of the Pahlavi regime, those who would like to see its return or the installation of one similar and who remonstrate against Islam and the Muslims in the name of freedom and democracy. We will examine these three periods and see whether the freedom the women and men enjoyed in the first and third periods was true freedom, or whether they enjoyed it in this second period from the time of Riza Khan's coup d'état to the decline in his son's power.

It must be noted that the first period fell during the time of Qajar rule, which was also not pleasing to Islam, however the Muslims were much stronger then and the government did not have the same power and hold over the clergy of Islam (it acquired in the Pahlavi era). It was weak in the face of the clergy and the nation. It was only when Riza Khan came along and was given the reins of power that the clergy were suppressed along with the rest of the nation.

So if we assess the freedom the men and women have enjoyed in these first and third periods, we see it was a freedom that was useful for their country, for Islam, for the Muslims, for their nation. In both periods they were free to play a role in social affairs, to serve the country, to have a say in matters concerning the good of the country and to criticise the government and public figures of the day, and they availed themselves of this freedom and do so today, as you yourselves can vouch.

Today, you are free to participate in social matters, in these fundamental matters that are related to the interests of your own country and your own nation. There are no restrictions, as you can see. Give us one example when you have wanted to talk about a matter that is in the interests of the country – and is not some kind of plot as has sometimes been the case in the past – when you have wanted to take action over something that is in your interests and the interests of the country, and you have been stopped and the bayonets unsheathed against you.

You can't. In the first period too, the women played an active role in dealing with any problem that arose, including the two I mentioned above; that is the issue of the tobacco concession and in the Constitutional Movement, which were the most important issues of that time. They involved themselves in all the affairs of the day, they played a leading role alongside the men, they spoke up on matters, which concerned their country; they vociferated their views.[35](#)

During this third period you yourselves were there on the scene playing an active and effective role, so

you yourselves can vouch for the fact that nothing stopped you from gathering, from coming out amongst the people and shouting out against the tyrannies perpetrated. It was because of these activities of yours and this freedom, which you enjoyed that this victory came about for our nation.

However, the freedom Riza Khan and, in particular, his son sought to bring about, was not really freedom, it was more the corruption and ruination of the nation. In this second period too you can divide freedom into two kinds, one freedom of the press, including the radio and television, and in general freedom to write or say anything in the interests of the nation and the country.

All this at that time was subject to censorship, no one was free to do such a thing because our problems came from the government itself and its masters, and anything you wanted to say would have been first and foremost about the actions of Riza Khan, about the treachery he perpetrated and the crimes he committed, or about the perfidy of his son. But you weren't free at that time to utter one word about such things.

You couldn't criticise the police, the government or the army, our press were not free to criticise such things. Our country was completely denied a freedom that was beneficial to its interests. Pens were broken, tongues silenced, no one had the right to say a word. Whatever appeared in the press, whatever was broadcast over the radio and television, whatever was written, had to be in praise of someone who had thrown everything we had to the winds.

There was no true, sound freedom during this second period. Some freedoms, however, did exist. They opened the doors of cinemas, and these being in the state they were in those days corrupted those of our youth who frequented them and stopped them completely from pondering ways to help their country. The doors of casinos were opened too, to all our young people, the doors of brothels likewise. It is said numerous centres of corruption were operating from Tehran to Shemiran, too many to be counted. These were what they made free, what they promoted even. They gave us the kind of freedom, which is detrimental to the country and the people.

Following this second period, we returned to a period similar to the first only much better. The first period occurred at the time of the Qajar dynasty whose kings too were wicked and depraved, but not as bad as the Pahlavis, this father and son broke the record for corruption and evil. This freedom that our nation now enjoys, which the women, men, writers and so on, now enjoy, this freedom is in all affairs, which are beneficial to you.

You are free to go out and say what you have to say, to criticise the government, criticise anyone who puts a foot wrong, no one is going to ask you why you are doing so. You are free to join the Construction Crusade (*Jihad-i Sazandeghi*) and help your countrymen.

Anything that is involved with the growth of man, the growth of the sisters, brothers and these dear children, is free for you. That which is not free, indeed which Islam prevents, is gambling which corrupts the nation, drinking which corrupts the nation, and all types of obscenities which were made available

during the time of that criminal. Islam forbids such things.

So we have two types of freedom, one is the beneficial kind, which did not exist during the period of these two criminals,³⁶ indeed which was forbidden during their time. The kind of freedom they wanted to see prevalent was that which allowed women to go out into the streets dressed up to kill and, God forbid, behave however they liked with young men. This was the type of freedom they implemented, and it is this type that is desired by those today who don't want Islam. The kind we propose is not even open to consideration for them.

You won't find one of these people who go on about 'our country' and 'our nation' helping the brothers and sisters in the Construction Crusade as you have done. Those who shout about 'the people, the people' are those who go and burn the harvest, not gather it. You go through the trouble to help your brothers and sisters with the harvest, weeding and reaping the crops, then those who shout about the people, about how they are for the masses, come along and, if they can, burn all you have reaped.

It is these individuals who claim to be doing mighty things for the people who blow up our oil pipelines with their guns, these democrats and their followers in Kurdistan. It was these people who, fearing an Islamic republic would be established and would grab them by the tails and throw them out, tried to destroy our oil installations, to ruin our farmers and destroy our industry and our agriculture. Indeed, this was the fear of all those opposed to the course pursued by the nation, thus their cries for freedom were not about freedom, they were about perverting the nation (from that course).

Freedom exists now, and if the remnants of the former regime, their servants and the servants of the foreigners let you, you will see what freedom is.

May God keep all you sisters, brothers, children and young men.

May you be successful and serve this country well.

May you teachers train these children well, and give them an Islamic and a human education, which is beneficial both to the country and to their spiritual well being, and in which can be found happiness in this world and the next.

Peace be upon all you ladies and brothers. (491)

30 September 1979 (8 Mehr 1358 AHS)

10 September 1980

Address to a gathering of Iranians recently returned from a five-yearly conference on women held in Copenhagen

In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful

Basically, any organisation in which the superpowers have a hand has to be one, which works to their benefit. Take the United Nations, these meetings it has abroad, the Security Council meetings, all serve

the purposes of the superpowers and are held to deceive the other countries. Thus, they create the right of veto for themselves and use it to reject anything they deem not to be in their interests. Indeed, the United Nations is itself in the service of the superpowers.

The agencies they (the superpowers) set up under whatever name, all attempt to bring others into line with their interests. We are so suspicious of the superpowers that even if they are honest about something, still we will think they are saying it to deceive the people.

The task you have performed is very valuable, and God willing you will be even more successful. As you all know, our revolution is portrayed abroad contrary to that which it truly is. We must begin to gradually remedy this and start giving the world a true picture of our revolution. It is not only concerning the women (in the country), who are truly free in Iran now, who are committed, dedicated individuals, perhaps even more so than the men, that a false picture has been painted.

Indeed abroad the idea was promulgated that it was Riza Khan who brought up the issue of women's freedom and through the unveiling sought to free them. But the goal behind the unveiling affair was not, as they purported, to bring the women, say ten million women, into society and get them involved in social affairs. Rather it was an order that they had received from abroad and which they carried out with the intention of leading us into captivity.

Perhaps none of you can remember the affair, you may have been too small at that time, but the bitter taste of the unveiling, which later Riza Khan's son called creating 'free men and free women' remains in my mouth. You don't know what they did to the esteemed ladies, indeed to all segments of the society. Merchants, tradesmen and clergymen all were forced to attend parties (celebrating the unveiling) along with their wives, and if they refused, they were beaten and subjected to verbal abuse.

Their aim was to use the women as a preoccupation for the youth so that they would not get involved in fundamental issues. They employed different methods to stop our youth and our academics from pondering their own situation and that of their country, the unveiling, with the disgraceful acts they perpetrated, being one of them. Respectable women were mistreated, clergymen likewise, agents even approached the late Mr. Kashani and told him he had to attend the parties too, but he sent them away, protesting that they were only obeying orders, with a flea in their ear.

In towns and villages everywhere throughout the country the story was the same. The deeds they perpetrated in Qum were so opprobrious they defy description. And this was all in order to bring the young people, the gullible young people, men and women, together socially and preoccupy them with one another, so that they became indifferent towards the fundamental problems facing the country.

They created centres of fornication and other forms of corruption for the same reason; from Tehran to Tajrish hundreds of these centres were opened. So as you see they used the women, and consequently our youth, our people, did not attend to the basic problems, as they should have, neither the men nor the women. Neither were free, they were just called free men and free women.

This was the foundation that Riza Khan first laid. He was brought to power by the British, may God's curse rest upon them, and it was the British who pushed him into such action. Then their (the regime's) poets, writers and media took up the cause and worked to make this nation turn away from itself and preoccupy itself with the pursuit of pleasure and animal gratification. Centres of debauchery were freely opened to the public, yet perhaps in the whole of Tehran there was not one centre of religious learning for these men or these women who were supposed to be free to study whatever they liked.

Be that as it may, these are problems that the superpowers brought about through their very carefully prepared plans devised by their experts, and these conferences and gatherings may be part of the same plans. We must all be very vigilant, the entire nation of Iran must be careful not to fall into their trap. When they attend these gatherings, the Iranians must preserve their dignity, just as you say you did at this recent gathering, and not allow themselves to be influenced by the people there. If Iranians are going to attend such conferences, let it not be that their participation will end up being in their (the superpowers') favour. Most of the time people are neglectful.

The things you ladies say you have done are very valuable actions, and if there are to be other gatherings, the men too, the committed men that is, not those who would go there and act against the interests of our country, should attend. I wish you all success, God willing.

Today is not like the olden days; today is different from the former period. Today the ladies must act on their social and religious duties and protect public morality, and in so doing carry out their social and political activities. Today is not like the former period when women of uncertain repute and uncertain objectives were brought into the Parliament. Women enter the Parliament today, but the circumstances are totally different.

In those days they had their gatherings, they had their Women's Day, but it was a day when the unveiling was celebrated. In the final years of my period in Qum, perhaps it was in my last year there just before the uprising of the 15th Khurdad, I heard that the government was planning for some women to gather at the tomb of Riza Shah and commemorate the unveiling of women.

Some government officials in Qum came to see me and I told them each to inform their ministries that were this plan to be carried out, I would call on the nation to hold a day of national mourning for those killed in the massacre perpetrated by the regime at the Gauhar Shad mosque. They reported what I'd said to them and subsequently the government changed its plans. Be that as it may, the circumstances that the regime had created were in direct contradiction to what the nation had to do.

Praise God those days are over and all the women and all the men must involve themselves in the social and political affairs. They must be supervisors, supervising the work of the Majlis (Parliament) and the government; they must express their opinions. The entire nation must today watch over affairs, they must express their opinions, comment on political and social problems and all that the government does. If they see something wrong they must take the proper action.

I hope that this movement will end in victory and you will all be successful, God willing. May you expand your gatherings everywhere in an even more splendid manner so that women will awaken and reject those things of the past, reject that former role of being a plaything, of having to dress up and make up. You yourselves know how much damage that attitude did to our economy and how much harm it did to public morality. Today's women, like the men, must be properly educated and concern themselves with the issues (of the day), they too must exercise sound judgement in their involvement in the (country's) affairs, and God willing, they will be successful. (492)

10 September 1980 (19 Shahrivar 1359 AHS)

- [1.](#) – Soldiers were ordered to tear apart women's veils on the street with their bayonets.
- [2.](#) – In December 1928, Riza Shah imposed on the Iranian nation a Uniform Dress law, which made it obligatory for men to wear a round peaked cap---similar to a kepi---which became known as the Pahlavi cap. This measure – like much else in his programme of 'reform' – was doubtless inspired by the example of Ataturk, who had, in November 1925, enacted the notorious Hat Law, which provided the death penalty for all who refused to don European headgear.
- [3.](#) – Refer to footnote 1.
- [4.](#) – Referring to Riza Shah and his son Muhammad Riza Shah.
- [5.](#) – Refer to footnote 77.
- [6.](#) – Parades and celebrations were planned to commemorate 7 January 1935 (17 Dey 1314 AHS), the day the law calling for the unveiling of women was implemented in Iran.
- [7.](#) – In late 1935, Riza Khan gave orders for strict enforcement of his decree requiring men to wear Western headgear and the Islamic veils of women to be removed. This move angered the people and prompted opposition from the clergy. Ayatullah Hajj Aqa Husayn Qummi, a religious leader of Mashhad, travelled to Tehran in protest. He set up residence in the vicinity of the shrine of `Abd al-`Azim and when the people heard of his arrival, they rushed from all areas of Tehran to the shrine to see him. The gathering of people there worried Riza Khan, and he gave orders that the residence of Ayatullah Qummi and the shrine be surrounded and no one be allowed to enter. When news of this occurrence reached Mashhad, the people held a large gathering in the new courtyard of the shrine of Imam Riza (pbuh) and immediately orders were given to shoot those gathered there. After this event, Bahlul, a famous preacher of Khurasan province, called the mourners of those murdered in the incident to come together at the mosque of Gauhar Shad, part of the shrine complex in that city. Upon hearing of this second large gathering, Riza Khan ordered that machine-gun fire be used to disperse the crowd and that mercy be shown to no one. Police in Mashhad, along with the infantry, entered the mosque and massacred several hundred people. The bodies of the martyrs and even the wounded were then mercilessly loaded onto trucks and taken out of the city where they were buried in a mass grave. The site of this grave is known as the "seat of carnage."
- [8.](#) – Referring to comments made by a group of simple-minded people who, using the excuse of some inadequacies, cast aspersions on the fundamentals of the Islamic republic system.
- [9.](#) – The late Ayatullah al-`Uzma Hajj Shaykh `Abdulkarim Ha'iri Yazdi (1856–1935) is considered to be one of the most outstanding maraji' of the Shi'a. Initially he began his studies in Yazd and then in the holy cities of Baghdad, Karbala and Najaf (`Atabat `Aliyat). Studying alongside such eminent scholars as Sayyid Muhammad Faysharaki, Mirza Muhammad Taqi Shirazi, Mirzayi Bozurg Shirazi and Akhund Khurasani, he achieved the noble rank of ijthad and successfully initiated religious classes in Karbala. In 1912 he travelled to Arak and brought high repute to the theological centre there. In 1920 he visited the holy city of Qum with the intention of making a pilgrimage. Whilst there, local `ulama insisted on his remaining in order to establish a religious learning centre. Many distinguished jurisprudents have received training and education from his classes, they include Ayatullah al-`Uzma Sayyid Muhammad Taqi Khansari, Ayatullah al-`Uzma Sayyid Ahmad Khansari, Ayatullah al-`Uzma Sayyid Sadruddin Sadr, Ayatullah al-`Uzma Shaykh Muhammad `Ali Araki and Ayatullah al-`Uzma Sayyid Muhammad Riza Gulpaygani. Among his students was the founder of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Ayatullah al-`Uzma Imam Khomeini. His eminence Ayatullah Ha'iri was able to retain his extremely modest way of life even when he was recognised as the marja'-i taqlid and much has been related with regard to his moral and ethical virtues. The grave of

this magnanimous and honourable scholar is situated by the holy shrine of Hazrat Ma'suma (pbuh) in Qum.

[10.](#) – The government and cabinet of Amir Assadollah `Alam.

[11.](#) – Laws governing Provincial and County Council elections were announced by the national press on 8 October 1962 (16 Mehr 1341 AHS) and the headlines read: 'Women Given the Right to Vote'. On the face of it the laws were not in contradiction with Islam, but the regime planned to cover up its true intentions which were to eliminate the qualification which stipulated that candidates and voters were to be Muslim, and to replace the policy of taking oaths on the Holy Qur'an with another which stipulated swearing in on a 'Holy Book'. In addition to this assault on Islam, the regime also planned to officially approve pseudo-religious activities instigated by the imperialists. Any objections to their scheme were labelled as opposition to the legal rights and freedom of women. The new laws, promulgated by the Shah's regime on 6 October 1962, were seen as a prelude to increased participation in public life by the Baha'is and eventual abolition of the Constitution of 1906. After a prolonged campaign against the laws in which Imam Khomeini took a prominent part, they were annulled by the government on 28 November 1962.

[12.](#) – When the newspapers carrying this report reached Qum, the maraji' and high-ranking religious leaders such as Imam Khomeini held a meeting that same evening in the home of the late Ayatullah Murtaza Ha'iri (eldest son of the late Shaykh `Abdulkarim Ha'iri) to hold discussions and exchange views. As a result of this meeting, the religious leaders sent telegrams to the Shah who passed on the responsibility of replying to the Prime Minister.

[13.](#) – It is clear that Imam's view expressed here concerns the entry of women into Parliament during the period of the Shah with all its concomitant corruption, and takes this into account along with the political and economic circumstances of the time. Otherwise, as this book demonstrates only too well, not only did he not consider women's participation in social and political affairs to be a violation of religious law, he actually encouraged it.

[14.](#) – The Cabinet had assumed charge of the legislative process following the dissolution of Parliament by royal decree the preceding year.

[15.](#) – Article 2 of the Supplementary Constitutional Law stipulates that no law is valid unless the mujtahids (Islamic jurists) exercise a supervisory role in the Parliament, which they did not.

[16.](#) – From the Mafatih al-Jinan (Keys to the Gardens of Paradise) a standard collection of Shi'ite prayers compiled from Bihar al-Anwar (Oceans of Light) and other sources by `Abbas Qummi (d. 1940–1).

[17.](#) – According to the precept "Reforming the Electoral Law" – one of the underlying principles of the Shah's "White Revolution" – both the right to vote and the right to be elected to the Majlis had been given to women. In the first election to follow the "White Revolution" a number of women from the Royal Court and upper classes entered the Majlis as parliamentary representatives. These included: Showkat Jahanbani, Farukhrow Parsa (the wife of General Shirinsokhan), Hajar Tarbiyat, Mehrangiz Dowlatshahi and several others.

[18.](#) – Imam Khomeini, in his New Year declaration of 1963 (1342 AHS) entitled "The Clergy of Islam Does Not Hold New Year Celebrations This Year", objected very strongly to the legislation calling for the compulsory conscription of eighteen-year-old girls for military service. As a result of this objection, despite the fact that this news had already been published and that speeches and interviews had already been given on the radio, the Shah and his government were forced to deny what they had formerly said. In fact the Shah denied the validity of the news reports on two different occasions before the end of that month. Jahangir Tafazzuli, Minister of State in charge of publications and broadcasting, in an interview he gave, described the news concerning women's conscription as totally unfounded. Refer to the speeches delivered by the Shah on 1 April 1963 (12 Farvardin 1342 AHS) in Mashhad and 2 April 1963 in Birjand; also refer to the 11,056th issue of the Ittifaq newspaper dated 31 March 1963 (11 Farvardin 1342 AHS).

[19.](#) – Tehran evening press, 1 April 1963 (12 Farvardin 1342 AHS), the Shah: ". . . A publication has recently reported that they are trying to conscript eighteen-year-old girls for military service, how ridiculous! We are in no way short of military personnel. Such falsities are a sign of the weakness of those who are responsible for fabricating this news. Our girls must continue their education and pursue their female responsibilities. We have enough people to safeguard the security of this land."

[20.](#) – The publication of Imam Khomeini's declaration, and the determined stance taken by him in opposition to the conscription of young girls, left the Shah with no alternative but to request that the judiciary make the necessary enquiries and prosecute those responsible for circulating such news. In turn, the judicial system filed a lawsuit against the

movement's leadership and proceeded to arrange for its arrest, although this never actually amounted to anything. It is worth mentioning that the official who actually delivered the summons to Imam's house, entered the building with tearful eyes saying: "They have ordered me to obtain Imam's signature for this letter and I feel that as a follower of Imam I must apologise for this." He left the house however, without having obtained a signature. (Quoted from the memoirs of Hujjat al-Islam wal Muslimin Hajj Sayyid Ahmad Khomeini).

[21.](#) – By adopting the blanket phrase "full and equal rights" the ground was laid for the elimination of Islam and the propagation of Western culture. The granting of women's divorce rights was initially denied by the Shah, his Prime Minister and other officials. However, several years later during Hoveyda's premiership a law was ratified in Parliament entitled "The Family Protection Law" according to which women were permitted to divorce their husbands on the approval of the law courts. The rulings of the judges of these courts were not recognised by Islamic law according to which a husband is able to endorse a women's right to divorce on condition that this stipulation has been included in the marriage vows.

[22.](#) – In the year 1960 (1339 AHS), a time of international political upheaval, the Shah was compelled to reconsider his style of government and his domestic policies. He therefore called on his Prime Minister, Dr. Iqbal and his Royal Court adviser `Alam to form two political parties called "The National Party" (Hizb-i Melliyyun) and "The People's Party" (Hizb-i Mardom) both of which were to give the appearance of being mutual rivals. In 1974 however, when the "National Resurgence Party" (Hizb-i Rastakhiz) was founded by the Shah himself, the two aforementioned parties were abolished.

[23.](#) – `Abbas Effendi, the celebrated `Abdul Baha (1844–1921), son of Mirza Husayn `Ali (Baha'ullah) became the leader of the Baha'is after his father. He was amongst the British government's active spies who actually worked for the British in Palestine. The services rendered by `Abbas Effendi to the British government made him worthy of a knighthood and the title of 'Sir'. `Abdul Baha published Ta'alim-i Baha'iyyat (The Teachings of Baha'ism) in which he addressed the issue of full and equal rights of the sexes.

[24.](#) – Addressing the `ulama of Islam.

[25.](#) – Usul al-Kafi, Vol. 1, p. 54, the book Fazl al-ilm.

[26.](#) – Refer to footnote 104.

[27.](#) – Riza Shah and Muhammad Riza Pahlavi.

[28.](#) – The bill for the formation of SAVAK, The State Security and Intelligence Organisation, was passed by Parliament in 1956 (1335 AHS) and the organisation was subsequently officially established in 1957 (1336 AHS). SAVAK's mission was to quash and confront any Islamic struggle or opposition to the regime. SAVAK was closely linked to the intelligence agencies of both America and Israel (CIA and MOSSAD) and gradually it turned into a terrorist organisation. This institution, which in fact served as the CIA's headquarters, possessed several investigative and detective teams. In order to obtain information from those they had arrested, SAVAK would firstly send the latter to torture chambers, after which it would hand its captives over to rubber-stamp courts where, after the passing of a predetermined court verdict, the accused would be convicted and taken to horrendous prisons. The cruelty and callousness of SAVAK was so great that the Secretary General of Amnesty International, in a report made in 1975 stated: "No country in the world has a worse record in human rights than Iran . . . In order to obtain confessions, the torturers of SAVAK subject its captives to beatings and electric shocks. It employs all kinds of horrendous and inhumane methods to achieve its ends; the inflicting of agonising pain on the sexual organs and the sexual assault of the wives and daughters of the captives before the latter's very eyes, are but two of such atrocities perpetrated." The Shah was fully aware of SAVAK's practices. This organisation was abolished by Iranian Muslims in 1978 (1357 AHS) and its torturers were prosecuted in revolutionary courts.

[29.](#) – Riza Shah and Muhammad Riza Pahlavi.

[30.](#) – During the reign of Ahmad Shah Qajar, a contract known as "The Contract of Vusuq al-Dula" (the Prime Minister of the day) was concluded between Iran and Britain (1919), according to which Britain was obliged to pay a loan of two million pounds sterling to Iran and was to be responsible for organising and administering the Iranian army. In effect, this contract rendered Iran a subject of British sovereignty whilst also serving to protect the country from Russia. Ahmad Shah Qajar, for reasons too lengthy to mention here, opposed this contract and thus the British government decided to remove him from their path – a task not too difficult for he was not very popular with the people anyway. Therefore, in 1920 (1299 AHS), a coup d'etat was staged by Riza Khan Mirpanj, military commander of a cossack unit in Qazvin, which not only resulted in Ahmad Shah's dethronement, but also paved the way for the overthrow of the Qajar dynasty and the establishment of the

Pahlavi dynasty; and indeed, shortly afterwards, it led to Riza Khan being placed on the imperial throne.

[31.](#) – Land Reform was one of the main principles of neo-colonialism, which was urged on all the countries under the dominance of colonialism, from Latin America to Asia and Africa, and was implemented by the governments of these countries in a very similar manner. In 1962 (1342 AHS), the Shah launched the land reform programme as the first tenet of his six-point 'White Revolution,' later renamed the 'Shah–People Revolution.' This 'Revolution' was not a revolution at all, rather it was put into effect on the one hand to win the confidence of American capitalism; to show his approval of and co-operation with the new strategy; and to open a new market for the Western economy, and on the other to curb internal discontent and actually prevent a revolution! The reform programme, which was dependent on foreign, especially American investment, dragged the Iranian agrarian economy into bankruptcy, such that a few years after its implementation the country had been changed from a wheat exporter to a major wheat importer. In addition, as a result of the migration of villagers into the towns and cities and their attraction as a cheap work force to the industries and the service sector, over a period of eleven years from 1966–1977 (1345–56 AHS), 20,000 Iranian villages became uninhabited!

[32.](#) – Ataturk, Kemal (1881–1938), Turkish general and statesman. He was first president of the Turkish republic when it was officially established in 1923, and remained in power until his death, wielding almost dictatorial powers in his struggle to make Turkey a modern secular state. Known first as Mustapha Kemal, and then as Kemal Pasha, he took the name of Ataturk (= father–Turk) in 1934.

[33.](#) – Refer to footnote 54.

[34.](#) – The Iranian Constitutional Movement (1905–1911) greatly benefited from the support and co-operation it received from such personalities as Akhund Mullah Muhammad Kazim Khurasani and Aqa Shaykh `Abdullah Mazandarani both maraji' of Najaf, and from Sayyid `Abdullah Bihbihani and Sayyid Muhammad Tabataba'i, two of Tehran's prominent `ulama. Akhund Khurasani issued a fatwa (decree) about the importance of the Constitution and in this way made the Constitutional Movement in Iran indebted to him. Shaykh `Abdullah Mazandarani was one of Akhund Khurasani's close associates throughout the movement. A proclamation issued by these two religious scholars read: "The Constitution of each country limits and conditions the will of the ruler and the offices of government so that the divine ordinances and common laws based on the official religion of the country are not transgressed."

[35.](#) – Take for example the time in 1911 when three hundred women marched into the public galleries of the Parliament building with pistols hidden under their long veils and threatened to shoot any deputy willing to submit to a recently issued Russian ultimatum.

[36.](#) – Riza Shah and Muhammad Riza Pahlavi.

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