

Janet Afary

PEASANT REBELLIONS OF THE CASPIAN REGION DURING THE IRANIAN CONSTITUTIONAL REVOLUTION, 1906–1909

Despite a growing literature on peasant movements in the early 20th century, the story of the peasant rebellions of the Caspian region at the time of the Iranian Constitutional Revolution of 1906–11 has been little studied.¹ A close look at three sets of materials—the newspapers of the Constitutional Revolution, among them *Majlis* (1906–8), *Anjuman* (1906–9), *Ḥabl al-Matīn* (1907–9), and *Šūr-i Isrāfīl* (1907–8); British diplomatic reports; and several regional studies and memoirs of the period—reveal that, during the First Constitutional Period of 1906–8, a number of strikes and sit-ins were carried out by the peasants, often with the support of craftsmen and workers, who had initiated trade union activity. Such revolts were considerably more sustained and prominent in the northern areas of Gilan and Azerbaijan, which were directly influenced by the flow of radical ideas from the Russian Caucasus; they also benefited from a long history of social struggle among the craftsmen and small shopkeepers (*pīshahvarāns*), who maintained their guilds, and a tradition of alliances among the craftsmen, the urban poor, and the poor peasants.²

Several prominent participants and observers of the Constitutional Revolution, as well as foreign diplomats, have noted the existence of peasants', or peasants' and craftsmen's, councils (*anjumans*)³ in Azerbaijan and the Caspian region. The celebrated leader of the Constitutional Revolution, Seyyed Hasan Taqizada, delegate to both the First and the Second Majlis (parliament), and leader of the influential social democratic Democrat Party in the years 1909–10, pointed to the difficulties these societies created for the Majlis, and noted that the parliament had to pass a law in order to stem the growth of the district and village councils:

[G]radually in the districts, and eventually in some of the provinces such as Azerbaijan and Gilan, *anjumans* were formed within the large villages and almost led to anarchy. The parliament was faced with a reality which was impossible to dismantle. Therefore, to increase its powers, and to please the provinces, as well as to end the anarchy and lawlessness of the *anjumans*, and in order to eliminate the district and village *anjumans*, a law was written for the provincial and departmental *anjumans*.⁴

The Russian Social Democrat Mikhail Pavlovitch (1871–1929), a close supporter of the Gilani and Azerbaijani revolutionaries during the Minor Autocracy

of 1908–9, whose articles and commentaries frequently appeared in the sympathetic *Revue du Monde Musulman*, also referred to the peasant rebellions of this period. In his 1910 essay, “La situation agraire en Perse à la veille de la révolution,” Pavlovitch argued that in the course of the revolution:

the peasants of several villages expelled the overseers, refused to pay taxes, and proceeded to form local anjumans—local councils—in their villages. No government officer, landlord, or overseer dared enter such villages in order to collect taxes. These local anjumans, to cover the expenses of the state, collected one-tenth of the crop and sent it to the town anjumans.⁵

A decade later, the Iranian–Armenian Marxist Avetis Sultanzada would likewise single out the grass-roots anjumans as a significant development of the Constitutional Revolution. Sultanzada contended that the peasant anjumans were far more radical than the anjumans which were formed in the cities:

[I]f in the cities, the Anjomans tended to become only an organ of control, in the villages there was a veritable seizure of power. Almost everywhere in Iran, as soon as an Anjoman established itself in a village, its first act was to chase and arrest the Shah’s functionaries, to refuse to pay taxes, and to try to seize the land of the big landowners, etc.⁶

References to the peasant rebellions do not all come from social democratic and Marxist sources, however. An important surviving document from this period is the Persian diary of Hyacinth Rabino (1877–1950), written during the years 1906–10, when Rabino was the British consul in Rasht, Gilan.⁷ When seen in the context of other documents of the period—especially the journals *Ḥabl al-Matīn*, and *Anjuman-i Millī-i Vilāyatī-i Gīlān*, as well as Ibrahim Fakhra’i’s *Gīlān dar Junbish-i Mashrūṭīyyat* (Gilan in the Constitutional Movement), it takes on a new and important meaning.

More recently, Firiyyun Adamiyat, in his *Fikr-i Dimūkrāsī-i Ijtimā’ī dar Nahzat-i Mashrūṭīyyat-i Īrān* (The Idea of Social Democracy in the Constitutional Movement in Iran), has expanded the discussion of the peasant protests and rebellions of the Caspian region and Hamadan. Adamiyat’s poignant analysis includes a critique of both the First and the Second Majlis (1906–8 and 1909–11) for their minimal programs of land reform.⁸

A particularly important source for the study of the peasant dimension of the Constitutional Revolution and the role of the parliament in this affair is the official organ of the parliament *Rūznāmah-i Majlis*, or *Majlis* (Newspaper of the Parliament). While most studies of this period have relied on the more widely available *Muzākīrāt-i Majlis* (the official summary of the deliberations of the parliament), the over 325 issues of *Majlis* between 1906–8 present important evidence that the land question did assume tremendous significance in the parliament in the first years of its existence. The letters of the paper’s readers further demonstrate that there was a lively discussion among intellectuals and peasant sympathizers when the parliament addressed the question of land reforms in the early spring of 1907.

We begin our account with a brief review of the literature on 19th-century Iran, which generally points to the greater deterioration of the lives of peasants and craftsmen in the last part of that century, partly as a result of the greater economic contact with the West. With the advent of the Constitutional Revolution, we turn to the debates within the First Majlis on the land question and the discussions

surrounding the abolition of *tuyūl* land allotment in the year 1907. Finally we look at the region of Gilan, where the rural movement found its highest expression among cocoon growers. With the help of several radical artisan members of the Rasht provincial council, who broke with that organization, a network of craftsmen and peasants associations would be formed that would address some of the rural communities' grievances and challenge the delegates to the Majlis on its minor land reforms. This resistance would be most prominent in the mountainous region of Tavalash, where the rural community set up autonomous control of the region and managed successfully to resist the military expedition financed by the local authorities and the government of Muhammad ʿAli Shah, after the 1908 coup which temporarily reestablished the autocratic government in Tehran.

THE UNDERMINING OF THE VILLAGE ECONOMY IN THE LATE
NINETEENTH CENTURY

As Lambton has argued persuasively, since the early Islamic period in the 7th century A.D., the original landholding pattern in Iran was that of communal village settlements. The large landlord holdings, which had become the dominant form of land tenure by the late 19th and early 20th century, were superimposed on this old communal form of the village, in which community members often held equal property rights.⁹ Studies of 19th-century Iran by Lambton, Keddie, Issawi, and Bakhash, as well as earlier studies done by Pavlovitch and Sultanzada, tend to agree that there was both an increase in landlord holdings and a parallel general worsening of the living standards of the peasants in the last part of the 19th century.¹⁰

According to Fraser, who traveled through much of the country, the Iranian peasants enjoyed a relatively high standard of living at the beginning of the 19th century. Members of the family had a comfortable residence, sufficient clothing, and a good supply of food, including fruit and sometimes meat.¹¹ Fraser enumerated many traditional rights still held by the villagers, rights which he correctly predicted were fast eroding by the 1830s. A peasant's right to his land was guarded stringently by the village community. This right could not be easily questioned, nor could a peasant's land be confiscated by the owner if the peasant regularly paid his rent. At least in Azerbaijan, peasants still maintained the right to leave the village, at which point their share was turned over to the rest of the villagers and not to the landowner. Forceful pressure from the government and its officers was, however, quickly ending many traditional rights. In particular, the authority of the village elder, the *rīsh sifīd*, and the council of elders who regulated the conflicts among the peasants, was now taken over by the landowners and owners of *tuyūl* land assignments. The owners thereby deprived the peasants of a more equitable arbitration through appeal to an outside and perhaps more impartial authority.¹² During the reign of Fath ʿAli Shah (1797–1834) steps were taken greatly to increase the traditional revenues of the crown lands. Taxes, which had been mostly limited to 10 percent of the crop, were now substantially increased to between 25 to 30 percent of the yearly production.¹³

By the late 19th century, a series of political and economic trends resulting from the increased economic ties with the West would also bring about a greater

destitution of the peasants. From the 1880s onwards, in response to the improved transportation system, new telegraph lines to Europe, the introduction of steam boats in the Caspian Sea and the Persian Gulf, and especially the opening of the Suez Canal, trade with Europe increased several fold.¹⁴ The European demand for cotton, rice, fruits, and silk would have a significant impact on the domestic agriculture, stressing cash crops at the expense of subsistence farming. The opening of financial institutions by the British and Russian banks also accelerated trade. Trade with Russia reached between 25 to 30 million francs annually.¹⁵ Cotton was grown for trade with Russia in the north, and opium was cultivated for the British, who then exported it to the Far East. The newly imported European manufactured goods, including increasing amounts of European textiles, would have a devastating impact on the cottage industry of the peasants, nomads, and city artisans, whose handicrafts were no match for the less expensive, mass-produced merchandise from abroad.¹⁶ Furthermore, a variety of treaties with European countries, beginning with the 1813 and 1828 Gulistan and Turkamanchay treaties and the 1841 Anglo-Russian commercial treaties,¹⁷ had prohibited the establishment of measures that could have sustained the internal products.

The need for funds to build an army, to purchase merchandise from Europe, and to administer the country, coupled with the extravagances of the Qajar regime, accelerated the sale of crown lands to the public. Atabak, the prime minister under Nasir al-Din Shah (1848–96), encouraged the tendency to transfer the property itself, rather than merely its revenues, to the assignees. Land thus sold became subject to a high tax, payable in cash and known as *tas^cīr*. Much land was sold over a period of ten years. Near the end of Nasir al-Din Shah's rule, orders were given to sell all crown lands except those surrounding the capital.¹⁸ The systematic sale of high offices by the central government in need of money meant that governorships of provinces were sold to the highest bidder. The new governor would, in turn, choose lower officers who could provide him with the highest revenue through any means, which often meant greater hardship on the peasants. As Keddie has argued, "the period of Western impact had seen a worsening of peasant conditions and not simply a maintenance of traditional standards . . . [and] peasants were forced to support an increasingly oppressive official hierarchy whose main duty was to fleece them."¹⁹

Villagers had to work harder under the supervision of the overseer, who in large land holdings had unlimited powers. The overseer could determine or change the amount of taxes, fine and punish the peasants, and incarcerate or even execute a rebellious peasant. In turn, the villager was obligated to provide food and shelter for these men who were, according to Pavlovitch, "his guards, sheriff, political spy, warden, and executioner."²⁰ And "although individual peasants could not be sold as serfs, whole villages were freely sold, with implied rights to the labor of the inhabitants."²¹ A variety of charges, obligations, and corvée labor were required from the peasants in addition to their regular responsibilities. Village women were not immune from the sexual demands of the landowners, since in some areas peasants were forced to give their daughters to the harem of the owner as a *šighah* (temporary wife) for three months.²² To all this one must add the variety of charges which were imposed both by the clerics and the government over and

above the regular taxes, such as charges for marriage permits levied by local clerics (in addition to that expected by the landlord). There were also a number of government assessments for repair and construction of new buildings. Even to come to town and conduct his business at a government bureau, the peasant often paid a transit tax.²³

Thus, the very foundation of the self-sufficient village economy was being rapidly undermined. This process was taking place as a result of a number of factors: (1) Pressure by the new landowners for the cultivation of cash crops for which mainly a foreign market existed. (2) Competition of European manufactured imports with the domestic cottage industry, which until now was a major supplement to the income of the villagers, including village women. (3) Lack of investment in industries by the growing merchant class, who had prospered as a result of foreign trade yet chose to reinvest in land. This new class of landlords made further inroads into the property of the peasants, appropriating land as private property for themselves, and in the process extracted from the peasantry a variety of excessive taxes as well as *corvée* labor. (4) As the landlords began to appoint the village head and appropriate to themselves the right to settle land conflicts, what was left of the centuries-old rights of the peasants in the village was further eroded. Landowners now took over the common pastures of the villages and registered them as their private property. The sharp increase in the landowners' share of the crop, as well as government taxes, obliged the peasants to borrow money, using their land as collateral, and ultimately forfeiting it. They thereby joined the ranks of the landless sharecroppers, or in some cases migrated to the Russian Caucasus, Central Asia, or India, among other regions.

But the vast movement of labor across the borders of Iran and Russia was not caused solely by internal oppression and poverty; it was also encouraged by the increased economic opportunities created by the new industrial centers in southern Russia, particularly the Caucasus.²⁴ As Hasan Hamikian has pointed out, in the year 1900, the number of Iranian residents in Russia was estimated to be around 100,000. By 1913, this number had drastically increased to half a million, an overwhelming majority of whom were peasants and simple laborers.²⁵ Working for minimal wages and under difficult working conditions, many became agricultural workers or found jobs as masons, dock workers, and construction workers. In 1903, Iranian workers composed 22.2 percent of the oil workers of Baku.²⁶ A major industrial center of international repute, Baku was the scene of extensive worker strikes at the time of the 1905 Russian Revolution, and the movement influenced the Iranian workers as well. During the 1906 strikes in the copper mines and plants of Alaverdi in Armenia, 2,500 Iranian Azerbaijanis were singled out by Abdullaev as the "basic core of strikers."²⁷ In late 1905, the Russian government began to forcibly extradite thousands of Iranians from Baku.²⁸ But the need for migrant workers in Russia was so extensive that each time the government tried to control the border movements, it faced protests from local employees.

Most of the workers who traveled to the Caucasus or Central Asia were seasonal workers who maintained continuous contact with their towns and villages, and not permanent immigrants. This became a significant factor in the spread of revolutionary ideas from Russia to Iran where, as in many other urban

revolutions, the peasant-turned-worker became, in Eric Wolf's apt characterization, "a transmitter of urban unrest and political ideas,"²⁹ spreading the movement to the villages. In the case of Iran, many of these workers became members of the revolutionary organizations of the Mujahidin which were organized from Baku. The organization of the Mujahidin, which had a social democratic agenda alongside its Muslim religious beliefs, had branches in both the north and south of Iran, and would play a key role in the revolutionary movement.

THE CONSTITUTIONAL REVOLUTION: THE MAJLIS AND
THE ABOLITION OF *TUYŪL*

On August 5, 1906, a coalition of intellectuals, merchants, craftsmen, and members of the ulama forced Muzaffar al-Din Shah (1896–1907) to issue his royal proclamation after months of strikes and sit-ins. The proclamation called for the formation of an assembly of delegates, the Majlis, whose membership was drawn from among the ranks of the princes, the ulama, the nobility, the landowners, the merchants, and the middle-class guilds. The constitution which gave them the franchise was ratified on December 30, 1906. Meanwhile, the most significant and direct expression of democracy was found in the grass-roots anjumans which were formed throughout the country after the August 1906 strikes.

In the immediate pre-revolutionary period of 1905, a few secret anjumans had been formed. These, however, had been primarily small study groups of intellectuals devoted to criticizing the absolutist regime.³⁰ The new revolutionary anjumans were, in contrast, open, mass, and active organizations which became organs of direct democracy. The electoral laws of September 1906 called for the formation of anjumans in local towns that would supervise the elections. But the Tabriz anjuman far exceeded that limited role, and by popular vote remained in permanent session once the elections were completed,³¹ an example which was soon followed throughout the country. In addition to provincial and departmental anjumans, which supervised tax collection and maintained control over the local governors, hundreds of popular anjumans were soon formed. The provincial and departmental anjumans maintained dual power with the Majlis and the government, with the Tabriz anjuman remaining the strongest and most vocal of such councils. The popular anjumans represented various social, political, and class interests. Some had trade and ethnic affiliations; others had a strong political orientation, though they received no official support. Members of these anjumans, in which intellectuals, merchants, craftsmen, and low-level clerics played a prominent role, began to challenge the Majlis and the court on several fronts. A number of women's anjumans which, while supporting the constitutional aims, began also to address specifically women's issues, were formed during this period as well.³²

In its first year of existence, the Tabriz anjuman confronted the major political institutions in the country and established itself as an alternative government. It soon created a free press, reduced bread prices, fixed prices of other basic commodities, and began a secular system of education.³³

The Tabriz anjuman and other anjumans in the provinces of Gilan, Mazandaran, and Khurasan were supported by the revolutionary societies of the Muja-

hidin. The Mujahidin, whose headquarters, Firqah-i Ijtimā'īyyūn-i 'Āmīyyūn (Committee of Social Democrats), was in Baku, was primarily composed of Iranian migrant workers, merchants, and craftsmen. Many had become radicalized by the experience of the 1905 Russian Revolution. Firqah-i Ijtimā'īyyūn-i 'Āmīyyūn, founded in 1905, kept close ties with both the Muslim social democratic Himmat Party and the Baku and Tiflis committees of the Russian Social Democratic Workers Party (RSDWP).³⁴ It also directed the revolutionary cells of the Mujahidin inside Iran, whose impact would become significant not only in Azerbaijan, but also in Tehran, Mashhad, and the Caspian region in the years of the constitutional period.³⁵

The first party congress of the Mujahidin, which was held in early September 1907 in the city of Mashhad in the province of Khurasan, called for active support of liberalism and constitutionalism in Iran. But the program also enumerated a number of social democratic principles which addressed worker and peasant grievances. A six-point bill of rights called for the right to strike by all workers regardless of the aims involved, "be they private, general, or political," and a shorter working day, declaring that "the length of the [working] day cannot exceed eight hours." Provisions for land reform were also part of the program. Crown lands were to be expropriated without pay, while lands belonging to landowners (exceeding the amount needed for maintenance of the owner) were to be bought through a national bank and distributed among the peasants and agricultural workers.³⁶

In many ways the program of the Mujahidin was a response to the parliament, which had refrained from carrying out a more extensive land reform. In March 1907, the Majlis had begun a series of deliberations over land reforms and taxation. The primary objective of these reforms was to increase the government revenue and balance the budget, which had a deficit of nearly three million *tūmāns*. At the same time, the Majlis was under increasing pressure from radical intellectuals and members of the Mujahidin, and received many petitions from the peasants to carry out a substantial land reform that would improve their situation. The solution to both the problem of peasant poverty and the budget deficit seemed to be land reform. As a writer from Anzali pointed out, "Why should the income of a village which makes ten thousand *tūmāns* be devoured by one person?" and he asked the Constitutionlists to "abolish the practice of *tuyūl*" and instead turn that income into the treasury, where it could be spent for the benefit of the whole nation.³⁷

There was, however, considerable disagreement over the extent of the reforms in the Majlis. Vusuq al-Dawla, a merchant's delegate from Tehran, suggested that the excessive tax known as *tafāvut-i 'amal*, an amount collected by local governors over and above taxes due the central government, should also revert to the treasury in Tehran. Most delegates agreed, arguing that the villagers, who had paid such taxes before, would continue to pay if asked.

But there were others who spoke against the measure. Sheikh Husayn Mashhadi, a representative of the sugar and tea sellers from Tehran, argued that *tafāvut-i 'amal* was not part of the regular taxes, but rather "an increased amount that the governors extracted from the peasants by force." He wondered, "How

could this Majlis, which calls itself a bastion of justice, issue such a ruling?" and warned that "if the assembly were to ratify such a proposal, it will be despised by the people."³⁸ Hajj Mirza Ibrahim, the tailor's representative from Tehran, insisted that the Majlis compose a budget and declare its expenses before levying taxes. Otherwise, he worried, "soon the whole nation will turn against the Majlis, whereas the very strength of the Majlis is with the nation."³⁹

Other delegates tried to work out a compromise solution. The peasants were charged with five types of taxes. The village head, the overseer, the minor authorities, and the governor each pocketed some of the collected taxes before turning over the share of the central government. Mir ʿImād, a cleric from Tunakabun in the Caspian region, proposed that the Majlis prohibit the excess taxes collected by the first three groups. Then the citizens would not abhor the measures adopted by the Majlis, and would say, "The Majlis agreed on some reductions for the peasants."⁴⁰ Most delegates, however, were well aware of the futility of such abstract statements, recognizing that without major structural reforms, the peasants could become subject to even higher taxes and extortions.⁴¹

The most important reform measure taken up by the Majlis was the question of *tuyūl* land assignments. Nearly all the delegates agreed that the government, and not the holders of *tuyūl*, should collect such land revenues, and that holders of *tuyūl*, including members of the clergy, should instead receive their yearly allotment from the government. When the holders of *tuyūl* demanded a continuation of the status quo, Ahsan al-Dawla, the agricultural workers' representatives from Tabriz, argued that with a Constitutional government in power and greater political freedom, "It would be impossible for the peasants to remain enslaved by the owners of *tuyūl*," and suggested that the *tuyūl* land assignments be abolished.⁴²

At the very time that the Majlis was involved in these discussions, and almost as if to send a message to the delegates, reports of peasant protests and strikes increased several fold throughout the pages of *Majlis* and other newspapers. The landowners of Rasht, in the province of Gilan, sent a telegram to the assembly in April 1907 complaining: "The peasants of Gilan assume that the meaning of Constitutionalism is freedom and not giving taxes! For this very reason, the peasants of this area have rebelled and refuse to pay their taxes. Some others have fled. All villages are in turmoil."⁴³ The Minister of Justice, Abdul Husayn Mirza Farmanfarma, one of the wealthiest landowners in Iran, had become so desperate with his peasants that he brought his complaints to the Majlis that summer:⁴⁴ "Our peasants have no knowledge and do not know what the meaning of constitutionalism is. They think it means hoarding other people's property and not paying the interest due the landlord according to the laws of the Shariʿa."⁴⁵ His overseer had written to him from his village in Maraqah (Azerbaijan) that "the peasants pay nothing whatsoever and they call themselves *fadāʿī*."⁴⁶ Hajj Muhammad Ismaʿil Aqa Tabrizi, a merchant's delegate from Tehran, likewise complained that "whoever has property in Tabriz, his overseer is refused entry; if one resorts to action, the anjumans prevent it, and the [peasants] call themselves *fadāʿī*."⁴⁷

In the midst of these debates, Taqizada, the eloquent representative of Azerbaijan, seemed to sympathize with the plight of the peasants, stating, "In [referring to] peasant rebellion it seems to me that the owners and landlords want to cut

off the heads of the peasants, whereupon the peasants 'raise' their heads 'up,' and this is interpreted as an 'uprising.'"⁴⁸ Now that the citizens in the cities had freed themselves, he asked, "Is it fair for the peasants to remain under the same autocracy? Their government should also be declared constitutional." Taqizada hoped that new measures adopted by the Majlis would reduce the misery of the peasants and stop the mass migration of "three hundred thousand people who flee abroad each year," an event which, in his opinion, was principally caused by the abuses of the owners and overseers. But even Taqizada did not have in mind a radical program of land reform. Instead, as had others before him, he suggested that the *tafāvut-i ʿamal* (excess taxes) revert to the central government. Landowners were to receive their annual allotment from the central government, which would become responsible for collection from villages.⁴⁹

Ultimately, a series of reforms were ratified by the Majlis. (1) *Tuyūl* land assignment, whereby members of the military, court, and clerics had been assigned the revenues of a village, was abolished. A better terminology than "abolish" would be the expression used by the Majlis itself, that "*tuyūls* were returned." This meant that the revenues from the villages were collected by the government and would revert to the treasury in Tehran. The previous holders of *tuyūl* still maintained their right to receive a stipend which was far less than what they had been collecting for years from the villages. At least in theory, this reform benefited the peasants, as the holders of *tuyūl* legally lost control of the villages. But it did not mean that the peasants fully owned their harvest; rather, the central government collected the revenue, one part of which reverted to the previous owners of *tuyūl*, while the other part was added to the central government's budget. (2) *Tafāvut-i ʿamal*, or excess taxes previously collected by local governors, were now to be collected by the central government and added to the nation's revenue. The question of prohibiting excessive taxation by the village head, the overseers, and the minor authorities, though orally agreed upon, was never enforced. (3) The tradition of *tasʿīr*—payment of taxes in cash by the landowners to the central government—was declared void. Landowners, who until then had paid a much reduced sum to the tax collectors, were now obliged to turn in the grain itself as part of their taxes.⁵⁰ The Majlis also prohibited certain customary obligations, including corvée labor, and discussed the possibility of building homes and schools in the villages, though none of these provisions were carried out.⁵¹

In the months that followed, resentment against the Majlis for the limited nature of its reforms was often aired in the newspapers. There was a measure of appreciation for the abolition of *tuyūl*, but there was also great disappointment over the fact that ending the practice had not benefited the peasants, as had been hoped. The residents of Yazd wrote that they were disheartened to learn that the "return of the *tuyūl*" did not lessen the peasants' burden, and they complained, "So what is to be the benefit of the return of the *tuyūl* revenue for the poor peasant?"⁵²

The most consistent supporter of peasant rights in the Majlis was Ahsan al-Dawla, who represented the Azerbaijani peasants and agricultural workers. During the reign of Nasir al-Din Shah, he had been sent to Europe where he studied botany. On the first anniversary of the revolution in August 1907, Ahsan al-Dawla

wrote an open letter on behalf of his constituency, threatening the delegates with a peasant strike:

You prominent men who represent fifteen million people of Iran and are sitting in this castle of Sulayman! . . . [You men] who mostly find excuses not to appear in the sessions of the sacred Majlis and will not walk four steps without carts and carriages! Do you know that all your wealth and riches, your strength of life, depends on the very existence of we wretched creatures? Do you realize that if in this critical moment and period of insecurity in the nation we go on a general strike—at a time when we have suffered much because of rioting, insecurity of the nation, murder, and ransacking—you will be destroyed by famine and hunger and your riches and your elaborate parks will in no way help you out?⁵³

Despite “all the telegrams and letters by the miserable peasants” to the Ministry of the Interior, Ahsan al-Dawla continued, no steps had been taken to improve the life of the nation. Peasants were charged with the same excessive taxes, and landlords continued to exploit peasants in the same way. In many instances the previous owners of *tuyūl* had been assigned governorship of the region they had originally held as *tuyūl*, so indeed their powers had increased “tenfold.” The crown lands were still given to the anti-constitutionalists, and the revenues of the Belgian customs officials had remained unchanged. With great bitterness, he asked for the delegates’ resignation: “Let us not create a situation where the peasants strike, and the sacred nation starves. It is better that the delegates resign, and leave the reform of the affairs to the farmers themselves. We [delegates] should officially announce our incompetence so that people know where they stand and do not remain hopeful with our wishful promises.”⁵⁴

In the spring of 1908, the Majlis delegate Hajj Seyyed Abdul Husayn Shahshahani, who represented the province of Khurasan, revealed the fact that whereas the reforms in *tas‘īr* (payment in cash) and *tafāvut-i ‘amal* (excess taxes) had increased the government revenue by two million *tūmāns*, none of this added income had benefited the peasants.

Last year, people cried out so much against *tafāvut-i ‘amal* saying the same maladies and cruelties were being carried out against them. We said [the excess taxes] were perhaps for the rebuilding of the country. If this year they are charged with the same *tafāvut-i ‘amal*, if we vote that money be taken away from people and given to those with satisfied stomachs . . . people will no longer tolerate it.⁵⁵

The threefold measures adopted by the Majlis substantially increased its control and that of the central government over the provinces. The impact on the peasants’ lives was mixed. As Lambton has pointed out, in some areas the reforms adopted by the Majlis “reduced the dependence of the peasants on landowner or *tuyūldār*,” while in other regions it made them subject to greater harassment by government officials, who were in fact working for landowners, and tribal khans.⁵⁶ No provisions for distribution or sale of land to the peasants were made by the First Majlis. The question of land reform was taken up once again during the Second Constitutional Period of 1909–11 by members of the Democrat Party in the Majlis in spring 1911. The program of the Democrats included five articles dealing with

relations between landlords and peasants, including a land distribution program. In actuality, however, no concrete steps were adopted by the Democrats, who shared power in the cabinet with the Bakhtiaris in the summer and fall of 1910.⁵⁷

As Firiyyun Adamiyat also pointed out, the debates in the First Majlis had demonstrated that even some of the most liberal representatives, such as Vakil al-Ru^ʿaya, the delegate from Hamadan, whose newspaper had spoken on behalf of the peasants; Taqizada, the well-known left-wing delegate from Azerbaijan; and Hisam al-Islam, the delegate from Gilan, who would later confront the peasant anjumans of Rasht, had settled for minor reforms in land relations. Instead, it was Firqah-i Ijtimā^ʿiyūn-i ʿĀmmiyyūn which first included a program of land distribution in the party program of the Mujahidin in Mashhad in 1907. The first newspaper to discuss the question of “land to the peasant” was *Ṣūr-i Isrāfīl*, which was influenced by the Firqah-i Ijtimā^ʿiyūn-i ʿĀmmiyyūn, and the Baku socialist paper *Irshād*; and the first to embark on a campaign of sustained mass rebellion as a way of realizing this goal were the peasants and the Mujahidin of the Caspian region.⁵⁸

REVOLTS IN THE CASPIAN REGION

There has been a history of peasant resistance in the Caspian region, encouraged by its geography.⁵⁹ The colorful Caspian strip, with its vast water supply and dense forests stretching close to 400 miles from Rasht in the west to Astarabad in the east, was described by the 19th-century traveler Lord Curzon as almost “another Persia” when compared to much of the remainder of the country, which was arid and brown.

[S]evered by a single but mighty mountain range, lies another Persia, so rich in water that malarial vapours are bred from the stagnant swamps, so abundantly clothed with trees of the forest, that often a pathway can scarcely be forced through the intricate jungle, so riotous in colour that the traveller can almost awake with the belief that he has been transported in sleep to some tropical clime. These extraordinary characteristics, and this amazing change, are exhibited by the northern maritime provinces of Mazanderan and Gilan.⁶⁰

Separated from the rest of the country by the Alburz heights, the Caspian region was home of the “heroes of Persian myth.” In the land where Rustam, the hero of Firdawsī’s *Shāhnāmah*, had overpowered the *Div-i Sifid* (White Demon), the residents had often struggled fiercely to maintain their independence in the face of both internal and external threats. The unsuccessful attempt at the occupation of Gilan between 1723–32 by Peter the Great had been thwarted in part because of the inhospitable climate. A century later, during the first stages of the Russo-Persian War in 1804, as Russian forces proceeded from the port of Anzali to Rasht, they were attacked by the residents, who had taken cover in the swamps and forests of the area. Curzon wrote that “the natives harassed the Russian column with musketry fire, and threw it into such confusion that the order was given to retreat, and the attempt was ignominiously abandoned.”⁶¹ By the late

19th century, he would write in his *Persia and the Persian Question* that the British government need not fear a possible takeover of the southern Caspian region by the northern Russian forces. Not only was the initial conquest difficult, but the continued residence of the occupying forces was nearly impossible since they would be subjected to “a daily and nightly persecution by a peasantry, or still more a native militia, familiar with the country and inured to guerilla warfare.”⁶²

The abundance of water and fertile ground, which meant a higher yield and greater density of population, helped give the tenant peasants a greater degree of independence from landowners, particularly when we compare the situation of the peasantry in this region to that of the more arid regions of the nation. Land in the Caspian region, as in Europe and America, could be reclaimed through clearing the forests, and there was no need for digging the *qanāts* (a series of wells connected by subterranean canals), which were expensive to construct and to maintain. Moreover, the growth of tree crops, which required several years of care, was encouraged by both the climate and the merchants. This, in turn, meant a more favorable land tenure arrangement for the peasants than was generally practiced in the case of annual field crops such as grain.⁶³ In 1878, the British consul in Rasht was to describe the circumstances which enhanced the position of these peasants, the great majority of whom were landless:

In Ghilan [Gilan], one of the richest and most productive districts of Persia, where, on account of its rich vegetation, almost every plant or tree will grow, the lower classes have no reason to be unhappy. Few of them it is true, possess land, but the arrangements they make with the landowners are all to their advantage. If they engage to clear a piece of jungle, they divide the produce of the land with the owner of the ground. If mulberry trees are planted, the seedlings are purchased by the landowner, and when after a few years silk is produced, the peasant rears the worms and gets a third of the produce for his trouble, one half of the remainder going to the landowner and the other half to the speculator who furnishes the silk-worm eggs. As little supervision can be at all times exercised over the villager, he naturally contrives to secure for himself a good portion of the crop. The advantages the peasant derives from his agricultural vocation are not inconsiderable. He can cut down wood in the jungle—that is, the neglected part of his landowner’s estates—and sell it on his own account. His cows and sheep can browse freely in those parts that are not under cultivation; he can make charcoal without let or hindrance; he can produce vegetables around his hut, and reap all the benefits arising therefrom; he can rear poultry and sell it on his own account; and last but not least of all, he can dispose of the fruit which grows in abundance on the estate without consulting the owner of the land.⁶⁴

Gilan, however, was not excluded from the drastic changes in land relations that took place in the country during the second part of the 19th century. The Caspian region had experienced a greater degree of commercialization of agriculture than perhaps any other region in the country. In Gilan the growth of commercial agriculture was particularly encouraged by foreign investors who opened plantations. Olive trees, which had been grown in Gilan for several hundred years, were in 1890 controlled by a Greek firm, Koussis and Theophilaktos, which received Russian protection. The company, which was given a 25-year monopoly over the entire olive crop of northern Persia, opened a modern factory in 1895. Tea

plantations also began to grow in 1895. In 1902, jute and kenaf were grown by the Yuzhno-Russkoe Company in Gilan and exported to Russia.⁶⁵ The very important fishing and silkworm industries were often controlled by foreign interests as well. This plantation industry meant a greater exploitation of the workers, particularly in the case of the fishing industry, but it also resulted in greater social awareness and class solidarity among the newly turned workers and the peasants, forces which would manifest themselves during the revolutionary period.

Workers' rebellions and strikes began in Gilan's fishing industry, which was controlled by a Russian subject named Lianozov. In 1873, Lianozov, an Armenian merchant, had signed a contract with the government of Iran through which he had acquired the rights to the entire fishing industry of the southern Caspian Sea, in order to export both the caviar and the fish. The company's "exploitative methods," which were strongly resented by the workers, had also led to its greater prosperity. By 1906 the value of the exported fish had risen to between 900,000–1,000,000 rubles. The company's net profit was estimated at around a half million rubles in 1913.⁶⁶ In the city of Astara, where 400 workers were employed, an elaborate institution had been set up complete with shipbuilding and repair workshops, and a vast telephone service connected the various stations.⁶⁷

Anzali was the most important Iranian port on the Caspian, looking much like a Russian settlement "with its shipwrights and blacksmiths, its glove and boot makers, its huts for the men to sleep, and its comfortable wooden house constructed in Astrakhan and brought out in pieces for the manager."⁶⁸ And it was in Anzali where the fishermen struck. In November 1906, 3,000 workers occupied the city's telegraph offices. In the weeks that followed they sent telegrams to the Majlis demanding both the termination of the Lianozov contract and an end to the abuses of the local authorities. Striking fishermen complained that they were paid a bare pittance in return for their labor; moreover, the catch that was rightfully theirs and was supposed to supplement their minimum earnings was now being appropriated by a local army commander named Sardar Mansur.⁶⁹ Workers occupied the customs bureau, put their own men in the offices, and began to check the books. Their aim was to determine the exact amount of fish that was being exported and to begin an investigation into charges of possible collusion between the Armenian customs' official and Lianozov's employees.⁷⁰ *Majlis*, the newspaper of the parliament, reported that even when parts of the telegraph building which the strikers had occupied collapsed, the striking fishermen refused to move. Nor did the intervention of the ulama, who were greeted with open hostility, dissuade them.⁷¹

The fishermen were supported in their strike by the community. In the city of Gorgan, Lianozov's properties were destroyed by the residents, while the people of Rasht and Anzali began a boycott of Russian goods.⁷² The anjumans of the Mujahidin had grown strong roots in the state of Gilan, and the fishermen of Anzali received considerable support from the organization of Mujahidin in Anzali (*Firqah-i Mujāhidīn-i Anzalī*) as well.⁷³

Meanwhile, strikes and protests continued to increase in Gilan. In June 1907, several men attempted to break into the grain silos of the infamous and wealthy tribal brigand Rahim Khan, who was in jail in Tehran at the time. In secret

collaboration with the shah, Rahim Khan's son had staged violent attacks against the people of Azerbaijan, who had been on a month-long strike. News of this event had been greeted with outrage. It is possible that the break-in was planned by the community in retaliation for the actions of the brigands in Azerbaijan. Although the break-in was unsuccessful and the attackers were killed in the process, the event led to a general strike in Rasht.⁷⁴ Together with several Azerbaijanis, who had spearheaded the protest, the armed men closed down the stores in the bazaar and took their complaints to the Rasht anjuman.

In March 1907, the cocoon growers of Rasht had also gone on strike. Rasht (population 30,000) was the center of Iran's silk trade, and had acquired a cosmopolitan air because of the many European merchants—French, Greek, and Russian—who had set up bureaus and workshops in that city. The Greek firm of Ralli Brothers, either directly or through intermediary merchants, provided the growers with sufficient funds, in order to increase production. In 1864 the Gilan crop had reached a peak of 2,190,000 pounds, with an estimated value of one million pounds. In that same year, however, Gilan's silk trade had suffered greatly when the Muscardin disease, which had destroyed crops in Europe, reached Iran. Gilan's output fell sharply to one-tenth of its previous level. The devastation was worsened because government tax collectors continued to assess villagers as before.⁷⁵ By the end of 1870, crops began to improve as Ralli and other European firms introduced silkworm eggs from Japan, and later from Turkey. At the beginning of the 20th century the region's output had not only reached its previous heights, but had surpassed it. However, Gilan's edge in the world market was lost to others as fierce competition from Japan and other countries kept prices down, and the value of the exported silk to France and Italy did not go beyond 400,000 pounds sterling.⁷⁶

The problem now facing the silkworm growers of Gilan was the high price of imported eggs. The importers of eggs, following the "putting-out system," were often merchants of cocoons as well. When purchasing the crop, they entered into a deal with the landowner requiring him to purchase the next year's eggs from them.⁷⁷ In 1906, the importers formed a syndicate in order to keep prices artificially high. At the end of the year, when 30,000 boxes of eggs remained, they destroyed them rather than sell them at reduced prices, and still made substantial profits. The issue of egg purchase was thus a volatile one, pitting landlords, merchants, and peasants against each other.

The peasants' strike in Rasht took the form of expelling landlords and overseers. Those who dared to ask for their share of the crop or taxes would be beaten and chased out of the villages. On March 23, 1907, 500 peasants took sanctuary against the landowners at the local mosque in Rasht, and announced that they would "no longer pay rent." Sir Cecil Spring-Rice reported to the British Foreign Minister Sir Edward Grey that "The movement in Resht [Rasht] has somewhat of a revolutionary tendency, and has consequently interfered with the silk and other trades. The peasants show an inclination to refuse to continue paying their landlords' rents. A number of them took refuge in a mosque with the object of evading their obligations."⁷⁸

The Rasht anjuman, growing impatient with the peasant rebellions in the state, issued a statement which was posted throughout the region, ordering the peasants to pay their back rents. The Majlis in Tehran joined in condemning the peasants, and sent a warning that "peasants must hand in their rent and if they owed money to the landlords, they should turn in the cocoon crops to the owners as usual."⁷⁹ Neither the Majlis nor the Rasht anjuman, which had itself come under increasing attacks from the ranking ulama of the state, would support the rebellious peasants in their rent strikes. But in the province of Azerbaijan, some members of the Tabriz anjuman had taken up the issue of peasant grievances. In the spring of 1907, several radical members of the Tabriz anjuman, such as Sheikh Salim and Seyyed Javad Natiq, had sided with the peasants of Qarachaman, who took their complaints to the Tabriz anjuman. Eventually, with the help of the local population and members of the Mujahidin, the more conservative members of the Tabriz anjuman were purged. A similar situation was now being created in Gilan, as the more radical members of the Rasht anjuman, Seyyed Jamal Shahrashub (Seyyed Jamal the Rebel) and Rahim Shishabur (Rahim the Glasscutter), both of whom were craftsmen, began to side with the striking peasants. However, unlike the situation in Tabriz, the two men were not able to transform the composition of the Rasht anjuman, and instead were expelled. This resulted in Shahrashub and Shishabur's going much further than their colleagues in Azerbaijan, since with mass support and the help of the Mujahidin of Gilan, they created a network of peasant and craftsmen anjumans throughout the state of Gilan.

When Shahrashub was sent to the district of Lasht-i Nisha to help form a local anjuman there in June 1907, he took up the cause of the peasants. Shahrashub distributed among the peasants 4,000 boxes of rice that belonged to the landowner, married one of the landlord's *ṣighah* (temporary) wives, gave himself the new title of Seyyed Jalal al-Din Shah, and declared null and void the 7-year back rent and taxes owed by the community. Shahrashub thus gained a mass following in Lasht-i Nisha of 2,000 to 3,000 supporters, who revered him.⁸⁰

Shishabur was an early supporter of the constitutional movement in Rasht, and would in 1909 become a member of the underground Sattar Committee, which developed close ties to the headquarters of the Mujahidin, the Firqiah-i Ijtima'iyun Amiiyun (Iranian social democrats) in the Caucasus.⁸¹ In the same month of June 1907, when peasants petitioned the Rasht anjuman about their grievances, Shishabur, as a member of that anjuman, took independent action. He wrote back to the villagers, telling them they were no longer bound by their obligations to pay their back rents or their dues of cocoon crops.⁸²

Infuriated by the audacity of Shahrashub and Shishabur, landowners complained to the Rasht anjuman, which expelled and later arrested the two radical ex-members. The peasants of Lasht-i Nisha threatened to come to town and free their hero Shahrashub on their own. Eventually there was such mass outrage and indignation toward the authorities in Rasht that Shahrashub and Shishabur were released in early July 1907.⁸³ The two men immediately set about continuing their work. With the support of the revolutionary anjumans of the Mujahidin in Rasht, a new organization called the "Abbasi anjuman" was formed. Little is known

about its activities and composition. We do know, however, that the new anjuman, which had the support of at least several thousand craftsmen and peasants, formed fourteen branches in the province of Gilan and published its own newspaper.⁸⁴

For his role in the peasant rebellions, Shahrashub was called to court in October 1907. When he finally showed up in Rasht he was flanked by 500 militant members of the ʿAbbasi anjuman. The authorities accused him of having caused “the rebellion all over Gilan.” They threatened and promised him injury if he continued his activities. But efforts were also made to appease Shahrashub. He was offered government employment to “help maintain security” of the area if he promised to abandon his radical actions.⁸⁵ The confrontation between the authorities of Rasht and the peasants, who were now much more organized, would continue. To break the peasants’ resistance, the landlords formed their own council, the anjuman of Landowners.⁸⁶

Even though several members of the Majlis, particularly the representatives of various guilds, had spoken on behalf of the peasants during the debates over the abolition of *tuyūl* and other land reforms, many others represented the interests of the merchant and the landowning classes, which opposed the peasants’ call for more radical reform. Faced with the continuing rebellion, the Majlis found it necessary to send Sheikh Hasan Hisam al-Islam, the delegate from Gilan, to his home town to deal with the peasants’ protests, particularly the revolts of the Tavalash region. From the pulpit, Hisam al-Islam accused the new peasant-based ʿAbbasi anjumans of having caused “all the mischief in Gilan.” Someone from the audience stood up and answered, “We will not allow landlords to do injustice to the peasants.” Hisam al-Islam responded that “the National Majlis will not allow the peasants to take over what belongs to the landowners.”⁸⁷ As a result of this confrontation, the Gilan representative lost much of his constituency’s support. Shahrashub would openly denounce him in the streets, and the many threatening letters Hisam al-Islam received from the community forced him to accept protection from the governor and remain secluded in his house.⁸⁸

Many villagers had originally thought of a constitutionalist government as one that challenged the authority of the autocratic government and the landlords. They had thus hoped that the Majlis would support them against landowners in Rasht. But the Majlis now emerged as a strong foe of the class struggle in Gilan. From the Majlis, directives were sent to the authorities in Gilan demanding that the rebellion in Rasht be immediately stopped and that whoever was responsible for the riots “be punished severely.”⁸⁹

In the summer of 1907, the Majlis sent two representatives and a series of directives to Rasht, demanding the dismantling of all town, village, and district anjumans. Gilan had been classified as a “department” and not a “province,” and was thus entitled to only one central anjuman in Rasht. Two hundred members of the Cossack Brigade were sent from Tehran for the express purpose of closing down the village anjumans.⁹⁰ The Rasht anjuman gladly complied, and its newspaper printed the text of a telegram which in part read: “Today the responsibility of the nation is one of obedience to the sacred orders of the National Consultative Majlis and to leaders of the government. According to the telegrams they have

issued, and you have most certainly heard of, in no area of Gilan may anjumans be formed."⁹¹

The new directives from the Majlis called for twelve delegates representing the districts to sit in at the meetings of the Rasht anjuman. All other anjumans, including those in the major towns of Lahijan, Langarud, and Anzali, were to close down immediately. No other requests for the formation of anjumans were to be sent to Rasht. Instead, the Rasht anjuman advised its members: "Your responsibility is to stop the spread of anjumans and to organize your affairs. You should make the peasants do their work and hand in their rent to the landlords, and where they refuse to comply the government will swiftly intervene."⁹² But after a year of confrontation, mere directives could hardly bring about an end to the anjumans or the peasant rebellion. Many residents of Gilan came in protest to Tehran, demanding the anjumans' reopening. The journal *Habl al-Matīn* printed a scathing denunciation from a resident of Gilan who opposed the directives of the Majlis. The writer argued that not only cities and towns but small communities and villages should be given the right to organize. To close the anjumans in Gilan was the first step to the closing of all other anjumans. It was an act which would ultimately result in the complete isolation of the delegates to the parliament. The writer continued: "Why are you doing such? Why are you turning the hearts of the residents of small towns against yourselves? This is only the very beginning of Constitutionalism. No solid foundation has yet developed for you to remain at ease and not need the anjumans." It would not be long after the closing of the anjumans that the whole Constitutional movement would be lost, and he warned: "You weak nation! After the anjumans are closed wait to see such atrocities against you that you have never envisioned before."⁹³

Faced with the continuing rent strike, and in some instances plunder and burning of the estates by the rebellious peasants, the Rasht anjuman decided to put the issue of peasant grievances on its agenda. But a close look at the debates which were printed in the first issue of *Anjuman-i Millī-i Vilāyatī-i Gīlān*, the newspaper of the Rasht anjuman, shows the vast gulf that existed not only between the estate holders and the peasants, but also between the peasants and the members of the Rasht anjuman.

The discussion centered around some of the customary obligations imposed on the peasants by landowners and overseers, and the extent to which these provisions could be revised or relaxed. Some members spoke against the "permission" tradition which required peasants to obtain authorization from the landlord for any type of transaction, including that of marrying off their daughters. Some questioned the expensive cost of obtaining these "permissions." A variety of the finest commodities, such as wool shawls, cloth, tea leaves, sugar, or even cash had to be given as "gifts" to the landowner in order to receive his permission and "blessing" for any transaction. Others opposed the routine "gifts" of food and labor to the landowners which were required from the peasants throughout the year. Some members of the Rasht anjuman spoke of unfair obligations, asking why the landlord rented his property at such exorbitant prices to tenant-peasants. Why were the peasants obligated to pay back their dues to the landlord by giving

him a high quality of rice when the villagers had cultivated only an inferior brand of rice? And why were the tenant-peasants obliged to purchase eggs from the landlord at high prices, rather than being free to purchase them from whomever they wished?⁹⁴

But members of the anjuman could not agree on eradicating such practices. While some spoke against the “permission tradition” for marriage, and demanded greater autonomy for the peasants as human beings, others opted for the maintenance of the status quo by insisting that the peasants should not be involved in any business transaction without the landlord’s permission. That included the marriage of a peasant’s daughter, since otherwise he might “marry off his daughter in two places.”⁹⁵ Eventually, only a few minor changes were made. The “permission tradition” was abolished, and the tradition of “gifts” of products was also declared illegal. But on the more central issues, the Rasht anjuman had not agreed to any decrease in rent or taxes for the peasants, nor were there any debates about the peasants’ right to land, even though a central argument of the striking peasants had been their refusal to continue to pay rent, thus asserting their right to claim the land they cultivated. Clearly not much was to be gained for the peasants through the Rasht anjuman.

Even after the coup of June 1908, which for the period of one year reestablished the absolutist government, peasant opposition did not subside in Gilan or, for that matter, Azerbaijan, the center of the civil war. Isma^cil Amirkhizi, a member of the Tabriz anjuman, writes that residents of four villages in Azerbaijan (Alvar, Sahalan, Mayan, and Khawjadizaj) who were supporters of the Constitutionalist movement, chose to resist royalist forces that were approaching their village on the way to Tabriz in September 1908. Instead of fleeing or surrendering, the villagers sent away their wives and children, and then set up barricades and armed themselves. These “peasant Mujahidin,” as Amirkhizi calls them, were soon defeated by the several thousand armed forces of Iqbal al-Saltana, the ex-governor of Maku, Azerbaijan. Iqbal al-Saltana had earlier been removed from his position, with the help of the Tabriz anjuman, due to mass discontent in the villages. The Royalist forces killed twenty-eight of the peasant Mujahidin, captured seventy-five men, and blew up the *rīsh sifīd* (village elder) of the village of Sahalan by tying him to a cannon.⁹⁶

THE BATTLE OF TAVALASH

In Gilan, peasant rebellions culminated in the intriguing, though little known, battle of Tavalash, and eventually the victory of the Mujahidin volunteers in Gilan, which paved the way for their conquest of Tehran. The district of Tavalash, north of Rasht by the Caspian Sea, was known for its high and dense forests on the Alburz heights, and its rice and cocoon crops. In the summer of 1906, with the advent of the revolution, the people of Tavalash took their grievances to the newly formed Anzali anjuman. There, they presented a horrifying account of the atrocities of a principal landholder in the region, Arfa^c al-Saltana, the son of Sardar Amjad (who was also known as ^cAmid al-Saltana). Arfa^c al-Saltana had jailed many peasants—including women and young girls—for their political sympathies

with the Constitutionalists. He had confiscated much of their property and had declared, "Anyone who speaks of anjumans and the Constitution will have his mouth sewn."⁹⁷

Members of the Anzali anjuman came to Gurganrud in Tavalash to verify these stories for themselves and to lend their support to the community. Not long after their visit, however, Arfa^c al-Saltana attacked the peasants in retaliation. The villagers, heartened by the actions of the Anzali anjuman and the general revolutionary spirit of the country, fought back and set fire to the mansion of the landowner, forcing him to leave the region.⁹⁸ A year later, in the summer of 1907, the peasants had ostensibly set up autonomous control of Tavalash. They also refused to pay government taxes.⁹⁹ Spring-Rice reported in July 1907: "Agrarian troubles continue. The villagers in some districts still refuse to hand over to the landowners and to the foreign grain importers the portion of cocoons to which they are entitled. At Talash [Tavalash] the properties of the Governor were destroyed by the people."¹⁰⁰ Reports of peasants burning and plundering the property and houses of local dignitaries continued to reach the capital. Hasan ^cAli Khan, a government military officer, was sent to the province of Gilan to establish law and order in the region. Excerpts of his report clearly demonstrate the frustrations of the authorities with the crisis in the north. Hasan ^cAli Khan wrote of his efforts to pacify the rebels in Langarud and Anzali, and then recounted his experience at Gurganrud in Tavalash:

On the third occasion I was commissioned with thirty Cossacks to Gurganrud. What a massive rebellion! People were attacking each others' lives and property. . . . And when you ask them "why do you do such" they reply that the government is Constitutional. They think Constitutionalism means that the rabble takes charge . . . and do as they wish. Alas, a hundred times alas, I wish the day we thought of [Constitutionalism] and planned its foundation, a plague had emerged and killed us all so we would not see such results from our actions.¹⁰¹

Hasan ^cAli Khan then proceeded to speak of the rebel Shahrashub and the formation of the ^cAbbasi anjuman, which he clearly held in great contempt. For this anjuman, he argued, had challenged every other anjuman or constitutional body in the region.

In the city of Rasht there is a Seyyed known as Shahrashub [the Rebel]. He has gathered all of the aforementioned rabble around himself and calls [this gathering] the anjuman of the Prophet ^cAbbas [^cAbbasi anjuman]. This anjuman is against the Welfare anjuman [and every other anjuman in the region]. . . . I do not know ^cAmid al-Saltana and Arfa^c al-Saltana [the landowners]. I have only heard that they governed Gurganrud and greatly harmed and harassed the peasants. . . . I entered from Rasht to Gurganrud where the peasants gathered around me complaining. . . . For a month they kept me there. While the government in Rasht constantly sent telegrams to me asking . . . why have you stayed in Gurganrud? . . . The residence of ^cAmid al-Saltana worth two *kurūr* was burned down. Nearly fifty or sixty people were killed. Agriculture was completely destroyed. . . . The bureau of Lianozov, a Russian subject, was ransacked. . . . The people of Gurganrud say that the culprit is Arfa^c al-Saltana.¹⁰²

Hasan ^cAli Khan described the takeover of the bazaar by more than 2,000 residents of Asalam and Gurganrud, who had secretly made plans, and poured

into the commercial center. They began shooting with the aim of killing Arfa^c al-Saltana, who escaped, and then disarmed the Cossack forces. Even one so hostile toward the peasants as Hasan ^cAli Khan felt compelled to conclude his report by calling upon the central authorities to abandon the peasants for a period of a year, at which time, he hoped, the peasant rebellions would subside. He further suggested that a new governor be appointed to the region. "It is better that for a year ^cAmid al-Saltana, for the sake of the nation and the political situation, give up the profit from his land and call upon his son to come to Tehran so that the people may calm down to some extent and return to work and farming."¹⁰³

In September 1908, and in the midst of the civil war in Tabriz, the governor of Gilan, Sardar Afkham, and ^cAmid al-Saltana, governor of Tavalash, set out on a campaign to regain control of the region with the blessings of Muhammad ^cAli Shah. Their forces included a thousand infantry and cavalry as well as two cannons. But the soldiers were reluctant to fight, and were warned by the local residents that they were no match for the mountain fighter Gilanis. As an eyewitness later remarked: "It was obvious from the beginning that this military expedition would be futile. Turks and Persians are inexperienced for fighting battles in the forests of Gilan."¹⁰⁴

While the military expedition took six weeks to reach the Tavalash region, the defeated army only took two days to retreat. They had faced a determined and armed opposition. Soldiers retreated in disarray as they encountered one of the earliest examples of 20th-century guerilla warfare, for which they were totally unprepared. "We saw no one, but a hundred bullets rained on us," they recounted later.¹⁰⁵ The 1908 Battle of Tavalash, with its roots in the peasant movement and its links to both the Anzali anjuman and the anjumans of the Mujahidin, as well as its unique method of defense in the dense forests of the Caspian region, was to become a prelude to what a decade later came to be known as the Jangali (Forest) Movement in the Caspian region.

In February 1909, when the revolutionaries regained control of Rasht, Sardar Afkham, the governor of Gilan, who had led the military expedition, was among the first men to be killed by the Mujahidin in the clashes. Gilan then became the center of radical opposition while preparations were being made for regaining the capital. In July 1909, with the help of Georgian, Armenian, and Azari revolutionaries from the Caucasus, and the support of the Bakhtiari tribesmen from the south, the revolutionaries reached Tehran and revived the Constitutional Revolution. The rent strikes in Tavalash would continue intermittently, however, until Russian forces occupied the region in December 1911. The Russian consul Nekrasov had to appear in person in Tavalash and threaten the residents with greater devastation if they did not end their tax strike. Residents were now required to turn in their taxes to the Russian legation, which continued its domination of northern Iran through World War I.

CONCLUSION

A close study of the newspaper of the Constitutional Revolution, combined with foreign diplomatic reports and memoirs of the time, reveals new aspects of the

revolution in relation to the rural communities in Azerbaijan and Gilan. The growth of the urban anjumans, such as the Tabriz and the Rasht provincial councils, soon began to influence villagers who turned to them for support. In some large villages, peasants' or peasant and craftsmen's organizations were also formed, but the growth of these grass-roots councils was opposed by the parliament as well as the local authorities. The Majlis addressed the issue of land reform in the spring of 1907; in the process, some of the delegates spoke on behalf of the peasants and demanded reforms that would improve their situation. However, the reform measures adopted by the Majlis, whether the abolition of *tuyūl* land allotment or the allocation of *tafāvut-i ʿamal* excess taxes to the treasury, were ostensibly measures that were aimed at increasing the government revenue and balancing the budget, and not at the amelioration of the peasants' living conditions. The most sustained peasant rebellions took place in the Caspian region among the cocoon growers of Rasht, and especially among the peasants of Tavalash. The rent strikes in Rasht, which continued for two years, were strengthened by a history of resistance in the region, including the fishermen's strikes in Anzali and the support of craftsmen both within and outside the Rasht provincial council. They expelled the landlords, overseers, and government tax collectors from their villages, and with the support of radical ex-members of the Rasht anjuman, set up a network of anjumans known as the ʿAbbasi anjumans. In the mountainous region of Tavalash, where strikes had begun in 1906, the villagers continued a campaign of armed resistance and gained autonomous control of the region even after the 1908 coup in Tehran, successfully fighting the military expedition which was dispatched from Tehran. A decade later, the peasant-based Soviet Republic of Gilan would be formed in the Caspian region. While the Russian Revolution of 1917 was perhaps the most important catalyst for the unleashing of this vast revolutionary movement in Gilan, the earlier history of peasant resistance at the time of the Constitutional Revolution was what gave the movement its indigenous foundation.

DEPARTMENTS OF HISTORY AND NEAR EAST STUDIES
UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN, ANN ARBOR

NOTES

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¹Most studies of the Constitutional Revolution, including E. G. Browne's classic *The Persian Revolution of 1905–1909*, and Ahmad Kasravi's monumental study *Tārīkh-i Mashrūṭah-i Īrān* (History of Constitutionalism in Iran), have addressed the urban dimensions of the revolutionary movement. Kasravi alluded to the support that the Tabriz provincial council of 1906 received from the rural communities in Azerbaijan in its political activities. In particular, he described how the grievances of the villagers of Qarachaman in Azerbaijan led to the greater radicalization of the Tabriz

council in the spring of 1907; in that process, the leading Mujtahid of Tabriz was expelled from the city by angry crowds, much to the chagrin of the Tehran Constitutionalists. See Kasravī, *Tārīkh-i Mashrūṭah-ī Īrān* (Tehran, Amirkabir Publications, 1984, originally published in 1951), pp. 283–46. See also Asghar Fathi, “The Role of the ‘Rebels’ in the Constitutional Movement in Iran,” *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 10 (1979), 55–66; and Mohammad Reza Afshari, “The Pishivaran and Merchants in Precapitalist Iranian Society: An Essay on the Background and Causes of the Constitutional Revolution,” *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 15 (1983), 133–55.

²See Afshari, “The Pishivaran and Merchants in Precapitalist Iranian Society,” pp. 144–45.

³The word *anjuman*, meaning “gathering, association, society,” is an old Persian name that was revived in order to refer to the secret or semi-secret councils formed both before and after the 1906 revolution. For a history of the term, see M. Bayat, “Anjoman,” in Ehsan Yarshater, ed., *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, vol. 2 (London and Boston: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1983), pp. 77–88.

⁴Seyyed Hasan Taqizadeh, “Tārīkh-i Inqilāb-i Īrān,” *Yaghmā* (1961), p. 27. I am grateful to Ahmad Ashraf for providing me with this document.

⁵“La situation agraire en Perse à le veille de la revolution,” *Revue du Monde Musulman*, 12 (December, 1910), 622. The many writings of Pavlovitch on the Iranian revolution need to be examined elsewhere. It is interesting, however, to note that E. G. Browne found Pavlovitch’s commentary on the 1907 Anglo-Russian Alliance of sufficient merit to include it as an appendix to his *Persian Revolution*, pp. 429–31.

⁶See Sultanzada’s “Le mouvement revolutionnaire en Iran,” in Cosroe Chaqueri, ed., *La social-democratie en Iran* (Florence: Mazdak Publications, 1979), p. 70; published originally in *Zizn Nacional Nosti*, no. 29 (1920).

⁷The diary is reproduced in the original form by Muḥammad Rawshan in *Mashrūṭah-ī Gīlān az Yād’dašt hā-yi Rābinū* (Rasht: Ta’atī Press, 1352/1973), henceforth referred to as *Mashrūṭah-ī Gīlān*. Rabino was no ordinary European diplomat of this period, however. Muḥammad Rawshan, editor of Rabino’s diary, cites over forty manuscripts by Rabino on various aspects of Iran’s history, economy, agriculture, literature, language, and grammar (see Introduction, pp. xiv–xvii). Indeed, Rabino seems to have been among the first to have used oral history in the region and to have solicited the contribution of the community in his studies. He recounts how, with his Iranian secretary Mirza Hasan Khan Samsam al-Kitab, they would “visit the different classes of people, the ulama and the nobility, the tradesmen, the poor and the destitute peasants, the rich and the landlords, and take down their comments.” The results of these studies were once again checked with these informants. This process meant at times engaging the peasants in a heated quarrel over the many different “types of rice” which were cultivated on the land, or it meant appealing to the shepherds and peasants of the Gilan region to present their folk songs and stories, whereupon they came and “told many stories and sang songs,” which Rabino and his secretary recorded (see *Mashrūṭah-ī Gīlān*, Introduction, pp. xxiii–xxiv).

⁸Firiydun Adamiyat, *Fikr-i Dimūkrāsī-i Ijtimā’ī dar Nahzat-i Mashrūṭiyat-i Īrān* (Tehran: Payam Publications, 1984), pp. 65–91.

⁹Ann Lambton points out that the equality of shares was based on quality as well as quantity of land (Ann Lambton, *Landlord and Peasant in Persia* [London: Oxford University Press, 1969], p. 6). There were also variations to this general practice, such as in areas where the division of land depended on water rights. In Yazd, for example, land and water were separately owned, and the size of land was not equalized by plough land or water share but depended on the “ability and enterprise of the individual peasant” (see Ann Lambton, *The Persian Land Reform: 1962–1966* [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969], p. 8).

¹⁰Nikki Keddie, “Historical Obstacles to Agrarian Change in Iran,” in Charles Issawi, ed., *The Economic History of Iran: 1800–1914* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1971), pp. 54–57. See also Charles Issawi, “Geographical and Historical Background,” in the same collection, pp. 1–19. This volume includes a number of valuable essays which have been used throughout this study. See also M. Pavlovitch, “La situation agraire,” and Avetis Sultanzada, “The Lines of Development of Modern Persia,” originally written and reprinted in 1928 in Cosroe Chaqueri, ed., *Avetis Sultanzade: The Forgotten Revolutionary Theoretician (Life and Works)* (Tehran: Padzahr Publications, 1986), pp. 35–34. In a chapter on the “Breakdown of Central Authority,” in *Iran: Monarchy, Bureaucracy, and Reform under the Qajars, 1858–1896* (London: Ithaca Press, 1978), Shaul Bakhash includes some interesting material on the riots and protests against landowners and government officials in this period

(see pp. 287–89). See also Khusraw Khusravī, *Jāmi‘ah Shināsī-i Rustā-yi Īrān* (Sociology of the Iranian Village) (Tehran: Intisharat-i Payam, 1358/1979).

¹¹James B. Fraser, *Historical and Descriptive Accounts of Persia* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1834), p. 258.

¹²*Ibid.*

¹³George N. Curzon, *Persia and the Persian Question*, vol. 2 (London: Frank Cass and Company, 1966, originally published in 1892), pp. 470–71.

¹⁴Issawi, *Economic History of Iran*, pp. 17–18.

¹⁵*Ibid.*; see also Pavlovitch, “La situation agraire,” p. 620.

¹⁶Keddie, “Historical Obstacles,” p. 56.

¹⁷Issawi, *Economic History of Iran*, p. 17.

¹⁸Lambton, *Landlord and Peasant in Persia*, p. 152.

¹⁹Keddie, “Historical Obstacles,” pp. 54–55.

²⁰Pavlovitch, “La situation agraire,” p. 620.

²¹Keddie, “Historical Obstacles,” p. 55.

²²Pavlovitch, “La situation agraire,” p. 621.

²³Lambton, *Landlord and Peasant*, p. 169.

²⁴Hasan Hakimian, “Wage Labor and Migration: Persian Workers in Southern Russia, 1880–1914,” *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 17 (1985), 443–62.

²⁵*Ibid.*, p. 447.

²⁶Z. Z. Abdullaev, “Bourgeoisie and Working Class, 1990s,” in Issawi, *Economic History of Iran*, p. 51.

²⁷*Ibid.*

²⁸Hakimian, “Wage Labor and Migration,” p. 450.

²⁹Eric R. Wolf, “Peasant Rebellion and Revolution,” in Jack Goldstone, ed., *Revolutions: Theoretical, Comparative, and Historical Studies* (San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1986), p. 175.

³⁰Nāzīm al-Islām Kirmānī, *Tārīkh-i Bidāri-i Īrāniyān*, vol. I (History of the Awakening of Iranians) (Tehran: Agah Press, 1983); see also Bayat, “Anjoman.”

³¹Kasravī, *Tārīkh-i Mashrū‘ah-ī Īrān*, pp. 174–75.

³²For a discussion of these anjumans, see Janet Afary, “On the Origins of Feminism in Early Twentieth Century Iran,” *Journal of Women’s History*, 1, no. 2 (1989), 65–87.

³³The power of Kasravī’s momentous study is due to the fact that he presents the history of the Constitutional Revolution ostensibly from the point of view of the Tabriz anjuman and the revolutionary anjumans of the Mujahidin fighters. See also the more recent study by Manšūrah Rafī‘ī, *Anjuman* (Tehran, 1983), which discusses some of the social reforms carried out by the Tabriz anjuman.

³⁴For a discussion of the Ijtimā‘iyyūn-i ‘Āmmiyyūn and its relation to RSDWP and Himmat, see Tadeusz Swietochowski, “Himmat Party: Socialism and the Nationality Question in Russian Azerbaijan, 1904–1920,” *Cahiers du monde russe et soviétique*, 19 (1978), 119–42.

³⁵In 1908 the British officials estimated the number of members of the Mujahidin to be 86,150 in the regions of Azerbaijan and the Caucasus (reported in *Habl al-Matīn*, no. 205, 12 January 1908).

³⁶“Programme de l’organisation revolutionnaire Iranienne Mojahid,” in *La social-democratie en Iran* (Florence: Edition Mazdak, 1979), pp. 157–60.

³⁷*Anjuman* no. 62, 14 April 1907; see also *Anjuman* no. 74, 5 May 1907.

³⁸*Majlis* no. 57, 30 March 1907.

³⁹*Majlis* no. 60, 5 April 1907.

⁴⁰*Ibid.* The term *ra‘iyyat*, meaning “peasant,” can mean “citizen” in Persian. I have translated the term as “peasant” only when the circumstances in the text clearly indicated that such was the case.

⁴¹*Majlis* no. 59, 3 April 1907.

⁴²*Majlis* no. 77, 24 April 1907.

⁴³*Majlis* no. 61, 8 April 1907.

⁴⁴See Adamiyat, *Fikr-i Dimūkrāsī-i Ijtimā‘ī*, p. 84.

⁴⁵*Majlis* no. 147, 1 August 1907.

⁴⁶*Ibid.* The *Fidā‘ī* were revolutionary fighters in the organizations of the Mujahidin who took responsibility for acts of political terror; however, the terms *Fidā‘ī* and *Mujahid* were often used interchangeably by the public when referring to any volunteer fighter.

⁴⁷ *Majlis* no. 147, 1 August 1907.

⁴⁸ *Majlis* no. 61, 8 April 1907.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰ See *Majlis* no. 61, 8 April 1907. There were 83 votes to abolish *tas'ir*, 74 votes to return *tuyūl* revenues to the central government, and 68 votes to allocate *tafāvut-i 'amal* excess taxes to the central government as well. A summary of the reforms appears in Kasravī, *Tārīkh-i Mashrūṭah-ī Īrān*, pp. 228–29; and Lambton, *Persian Land Reform*, pp. 32–33. Lambton has also pointed out that the reforms would not alter the basic structure of the landowning classes in the country, though they prevented, “in theory at least, the alienation of large areas of land from the control of the central government,” and paved the way for the creation of a modern tax administration (p. 33).

⁵¹ Adamiyat, *Fikr-i Dimūkrāsī-i Ijtimā'ī*, p. 87.

⁵² *Majlis* no. 135, 13 June 1907.

⁵³ *Majlis* no. 157, 14 August 1907.

⁵⁴ *Majlis* no. 157, 14 August 1907.

⁵⁵ *Majlis* no. 103, 22 April 1908.

⁵⁶ See Lambton, *Persian Land Reform*, pp. 22–23.

⁵⁷ The party program appears in *Īrān-i Naw*, no. 20 (20 March, 1911), 1–2. The delegates to the *Majlis*, with all their professed admiration for the French Revolution, had ignored the fact that even in that revolution, which had occurred more than a century earlier, the night of August 4, 1789, when the assembly had attacked feudal property rights, and the day of July 17, 1793, when all feudal and seigneurial dues and rights had been abolished and land was expropriated without compensation, were indispensable components of the newly formed bourgeois republic, without which the republic would not have long endured.

⁵⁸ Adamiyat, *Fikr-i Dimūkrāsī-i Ijtimā'ī*, p. 83.

⁵⁹ The Caspian region has a much more extensive history of resistance, which is beyond the scope of the present essay. For the peasant revolts of the Safavid period, see James J. Reid, “Rebellion and Social Change in Astarabad, 1537–1744,” *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 13 (1981), 35–53. Reid points out that such peasant protests were not limited to the Caspian region, and concludes: “The peasants of Iran in the Safavid period were the furthest thing possible from a ‘nonrevolutionary’ peasantry. The record of rebellion as found in the various chronicles of the Safavid period is immense” (p. 52).

⁶⁰ George N. Curzon, *Persia and the Persian Question*, vol. 1 (London: Frank Cass and Co. Ltd. 1892/1966), p. 354.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 388.

⁶² *Ibid.*

⁶³ British Consular Report, “Land Tenure in Gilan,” in *Economic History of Iran*, p. 225.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

⁶⁵ See Issawi, “Agriculture,” in Issawi, *Economic History of Iran*, pp. 210–11.

⁶⁶ K. E. Abbot, “Report on Journey to Caspian,” in Issawi, *Economic History of Iran*, pp. 255–56.

⁶⁷ Eugene Aubin, *La Perse d'aujourd'hui—Iran* (Mesopotamia, Paris: Armand Colin, 1908). References are to the Persian translation of this book, which appears as *Safar Nāmah va Barrāsī'hā-yi Safīr-i Farānsah dar Īrān: Īrān-i Imrūz, 1906–1907*, trans. 'Alī Aṣghar Sā'idī (n.p.: Zavvar Press, 1362/1983), pp. 149–50.

⁶⁸ Abbot, “Report on Journey,” p. 256.

⁶⁹ Adamiyat, *Fikr-i Dimūkrāsī-i Ijtimā'ī*, pp. 88–91.

⁷⁰ See Rawshan, *Mashrūṭah-ī Gīlān*, p. 50.

⁷¹ *Majlis*, no. 20, 30 December 1906.

⁷² See Rawshan, *Mashrūṭah-ī Gīlān*, pp. 100–101. Another important aspect that is apparent through the British reports of the period is the degree of international solidarity which was seen among workers on both sides of the border. Thus, by spring 1907, Sir Cecil Spring-Rice, the British ambassador in Iran, reported on the support of the Anzali boatmen for the Baku sailors, writing that: “A strike occurred at Baku among the sailors of the Baku-Enzeli line, which paralyzed the service for a time. The mails were brought to Persia in steamers manned by Russian bluejackets but travelers were not taken. The boatmen in Enzeli subsequently struck in sympathy” (*Great Britain: Correspondence Respecting the Affairs of Persia, December 1906 to November 1908*, Extract from Monthly Summary of Events, Spring-Rice to Grey, no. 25, 24 April 1907 [London: Harrison and Sons, 1909]).

- ⁷³Adamiyat, *Fikr-i Dimūkrāsī-i Ijtimā'ī*, p. 21.
- ⁷⁴Rawshan, *Mashrūṭah-ī Gīlān*, p. 24.
- ⁷⁵Ousley to Court of Directors, "Silk Production and Trade, 1812," in Issawi, *Economic History of Iran*, p. 231.
- ⁷⁶*Ibid.*, pp. 231–32.
- ⁷⁷F. Lafont and Hyacinth Rabino, "Silk Production, 1900s," originally in *L'industrie sericole en Perse* (Montpellier, 1910), in Issawi, *Economic History of Iran*, p. 236.
- ⁷⁸See *Great Britain: Correspondence Respecting the Affairs of Persia*, Spring-Rice to Grey, no. 25, 24 April 1907.
- ⁷⁹Rawshan, *Mashrūṭah-ī Gīlān*, p. 31.
- ⁸⁰*Ibid.*
- ⁸¹The Sattar Committee would play an important part in the reestablishment of the Constitutional government in Gilan and the takeover of Tehran in July 1909. 'Aṭā' Allāh Tadayyun, *Tārīkh-i Gīlān va Naqsh-i Gīlān dar Nahzat-i Mashrūṭiyyat-i Īrān* (Tehran: Furughi Publications, 1353/1974), pp. 228–29.
- ⁸²Rawshan, *Mashrūṭah-ī Gīlān*, p. 32.
- ⁸³*Ibid.*, pp. 32–35.
- ⁸⁴See *ibid.*, p. 54, and Adamiyat, *Fikr-i Dimūkrāsī-i Ijtimā'ī*, p. 73. The 'Abbasi anjumans were also known as the Abu al-Fazl anjumans. Both names refer to the brother of Imam Husayn, 'Abbas, who perished along with other followers of Husayn in Karbala in A.D. 680. Abbas tried to bring water to the besieged group, and his name is often invoked as one who brings relief and exhibits selfless dedication to others.
- ⁸⁵Rawshan, *Mashrūṭah-ī Gīlān*, p. 54.
- ⁸⁶*Ibid.*, p. 111; and Adamiyat, *Fikr-i Dimūkrāsī-i Ijtimā'ī*, p. 75.
- ⁸⁷Rawshan, *Mashrūṭah-ī Gīlān*, pp. 54–55.
- ⁸⁸*Ibid.*, p. 55.
- ⁸⁹*Ibid.*, p. 56.
- ⁹⁰*Ibid.*, p. 43.
- ⁹¹*Anjuman-i Millī-i Vilāyatī-i Gīlān*, no. 4, September 30, 1907, p. 3.
- ⁹²*Ibid.*
- ⁹³See *Ḥabl al-Matīn*, no. 111, 8 September 1907; and *Ḥabl al-Matīn*, no. 113, 10 September 1907.
- ⁹⁴*Anjuman-i Millī-i Vilāyatī-i Gīlān*, no. 1, 31 August 1907.
- ⁹⁵*Ibid.*
- ⁹⁶See Amīrkhīzī, *Qiyām-i Āzarbāyijān* (Tehran: Tehran Books, 1960), pp. 170–71.
- ⁹⁷Reported later in *Ḥabl al-Matīn*, no. 25, 27 May 1907.
- ⁹⁸Ibrāhīm Fakhrā'ī, *Gīlān dar Junbish-i Mashrūṭiyyat* (Tehran: Kitabha-yi Jibi Publications, 1974), pp. 212–13.
- ⁹⁹Rawshan, *Mashrūṭah-ī Gīlān*, p. 65.
- ¹⁰⁰*Great Britain: Correspondence Respecting the Affairs of Persia*, Spring-Rice to Grey, no. 34, 19 July 1907.
- ¹⁰¹*Awraq-i Tāzah yāb-i Mashrūṭiyyat va Naqsh-i Taqīzāda*, ed. Īraj Afshar (Tehran: Javidan Publications, 1980), p. 52.
- ¹⁰²*Ibid.*
- ¹⁰³*Ibid.*, p. 53.
- ¹⁰⁴Rawshan, *Mashrūṭah-ī Gīlān*, p. 72.
- ¹⁰⁵*Ibid.*, pp. 72–73.