

#1327 America as Media-Persia, II – Toward the Iran Hostage Crisis: 1925-1979, The Time of the Pahlavi Dynasty, which warred against the influence of Islam in the country of Iran

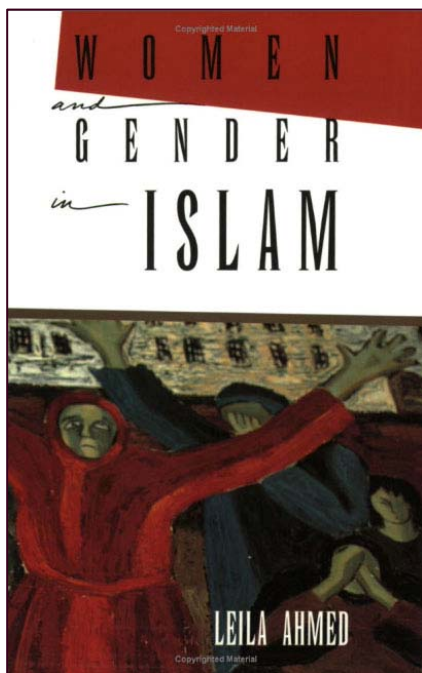
Key Understanding: *Westernizing Iran in the image of Cyrus the Great's Media-Persia.* The rise of the Pahlavi Dynasty created an Iran in which the state was attempting to Westernize while simultaneously attempting to mold its image after the great Persian dynasty of Cyrus the Great, which necessitated the attempt to undermine the influence of the religion of Islam in Iran.

Here is an excerpt from the book *The Iranians: Persia, Islam and the Soul of a Nation*, by Sandra Mackey, © 1996, about the dramatic changes that occurred in Iran after Reza Shah came to power:

Twin issues of the veil and a requirement that men wear the billed Pahlavi cap that prevented a Muslim from touching the ground with his forehead during prayer served as sparks in the clash between the Shah's military power and the moral authority of Shiism. In 1935, a year after a government decree banned the veil entirely, angry clerics and equally angry laymen turned the main courtyard of the sacred shrine of Imam Reza into a platform from which to denounce the Shah's assault against Shiism. On the third day of protests, the Shah sent soldiers in to machine gun the protesters. Around a hundred people died and



Shrine of Imam Reza



along with their deaths came the deaths of the protests. A massacre had happened within the most holy site of Iran, but the intimidating power of the Shah was overwhelming. The Shah continued his war on the veil. Laws were passed that forbade bus and taxi drivers to accept veiled women as passengers. Police roamed streets to snatch scarves from the heads of women still trying to observe Islamic dress. While women of the educated elite rejoiced in a type of liberation, the majority of women felt disgraced and stained with sin. They did not want to leave their homes.

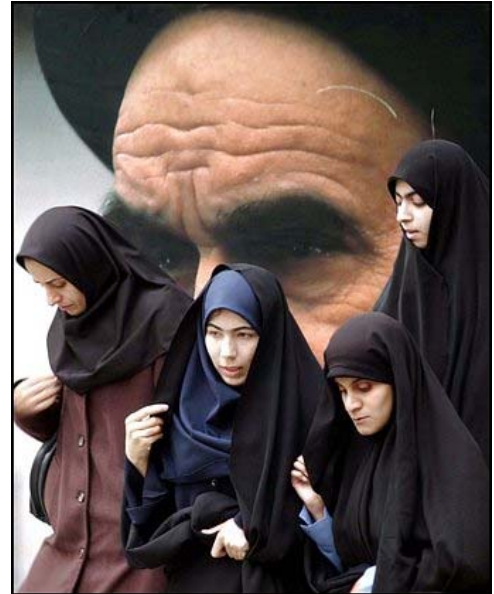
Bloodied and bruised in its battles with the Shah, the clergy essentially retreated from politics. They were forced to recognize that only the king, a secular man, ran the country. Many Iranians through all of this accepted what a leader in education and a servant of the Shah's wrote: "The whole history of Persia bears out . . . [that] whenever there has been a great leader . . . Persia has risen to the pitch of glory and zenith of power . . . The regeneration of Persia under the

leadership of Reza Shah Pahlavi is toward its destiny.”

For all his efforts, however, Reza Shah failed to shred the fabric of traditional society. He wrested control of the army, parliament, and other instruments of power, but he never completely subverted the clergy.

Since 1979 (when Iran became an Islamic Republic), all women must wear veils in public

*Isaiah 44:28 (KJV) [Thus saith the Lord] **THAT SAITH OF CYRUS, HE IS MY SHEPHERD, and shall perform all my pleasure: even saying to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be built; and to the temple, Thy foundation shall be laid.***



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