

6-30-2006

Constitutionalists and Cossacks: The Constitutional Movement and Russian Intervention in Tabriz, 1907–11

James D. Clark

University of Nebraska at Omaha, jdclark@unomaha.edu

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.unomaha.edu/histfacpub>

 Part of the [History Commons](#)

Please take our feedback survey at: https://unomaha.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_8cchtFmpDyGfBLE

Recommended Citation

Clark, J.D. (2006). Constitutionalists and Cossacks: The Constitutional Movement and Russian Intervention in Tabriz, 1907–11. *Iranian Studies*, 39(2). <https://doi.org/10.1080/00210860600628757>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Department of History at DigitalCommons@UNO. It has been accepted for inclusion in History Faculty Publications by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@UNO. For more information, please contact unodigitalcommons@unomaha.edu.

Constitutionalists and Cossacks: The Constitutional Movement and Russian Intervention in Tabriz, 1907-11

James D. Clark

James D. Clark is currently the resident director for The American Institute of Iranian Studies.

It is well known to the students of Iranian history that the great powers of Britain and Russia played important roles in shaping events and their course during the period of the Constitutional Movement (1905-11). And nowhere was Russia's involvement greater than in the northwestern province of Azerbaijan, the closest Iranian to Russian territory in the Caucasus. Beginning in 1907, the extent of her involvement in the province increased, although it continued to be restricted to material support for the royalists in their struggles with the province's constitutionalists. The first example of direct intervention on the part of the Russians came when their forces arrived to lift the royalist siege of Tabriz in 1909 and deliver food to a starving population. That action brought the unwelcome arrival of troops into the province. Thereafter followed an uneasy two years of coexistence wherein the Russians repeatedly tried to weaken the constitutionalists. That came to an end in December when the troops went on the offensive, defeated the constitutionalists, and executed many of those whom they apprehended. The overall result of that victory was the elimination of the most radical exponents of constitutionalism in Iran, the end of the second phase of the Movement, the severing of Azerbaijan from the rest of Iran, and the beginning of a Russian occupation of the province that lasted for the next six years.

As the historian Janet Afary points out, the conflict between Iranian constitutionalists and royalists "took place in the context of imperialist rivalries- especially between the two major contenders for power in the region, Russia and Britain"¹ The intensifying antagonism between the supporters of the

¹Janet Afary, *The Iranian Constitutional Revolution, 1906 1911: Grassroots Democracy, Social Democracy, and the Origins of Feminism* (New York, 1996), 3.

constitution and their royalists opponents led by the Shah constituted only part of the picture as it began to unfold after Mohammad Ali's assumption of power. "The problem with Iranian politics," Mehdi Qoli Khan Hedayat concluded, "is Azerbaijan and Fars. In one place the finger of the incitement of Russia and the Ottomans is at work; in the other place Britain wants security of the roads."² Russian imperial expansion toward the Iranian border and Azerbaijan began at the end of the eighteenth century. In 1795, Catherine the Great sent an army to take the Caucasus from the newly-established Qajar dynasty in response to Aqa Mohammad Khan's earlier raid into Georgia. The conflict between the two nations over the Caucasus started in earnest in 1805 with the outbreak of the first Russo-Iranian war. That lengthy conflict finally ended in 1813 with Iran losing the entire region to Russia save for the Khanates of Yerevan and Nakichevan. Those came under Russian suzerainty in 1828 with the termination of the second Russo-Iranian war. The Iranian loss of the Caucasus had major repercussions for Azerbaijan. During both wars it served as the staging area for the Iranian forces defending the Caucasus. The province, under the energetic leadership of Abbas Mirza, bore the brunt of the military and financial costs. With the end of that second war, the province became contiguous with the new Russian territory just across the Aras River to the north. It was also in 1828 that Tabriz was occupied by Russian forces; a precedent that was to be repeated twice more in the course of modern Iranian history, one of them to come in 1911.³

Three events in particular accounted for the alteration in Russian policy that clearly emerged in 1907, namely, the Russian revolution of 1905, the Iranian Constitutional Movement (1906-11), and an agreement reached in 1907 between Russia and Britain to divide Iran into two spheres of influence. At roughly the same time that the Constitutional Movement began in Iran, the Russian government headed by Nicholas II became embroiled in its own struggle with democratic forces within its empire that were seeking to limit royal autocracy and institute the elements of a representative government. The Russian Revolution of 1905 was, to a great extent, fueled by the reaction to Russia's disastrous performance and eventual defeat in the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-5. Due to the pressure that that

²Mahdi Qoli Mokhber os-Saltaneh Hedayat, *Gozdmh-e frdn: Qdjdriyyeh va Mashruteh*, ed. Mohammad Ali Sowti (Tehran, 1363), 210.

³For the two Russo-Iranian wars, see John F. Baddeley, *The Russian Conquest of the Caucasus* (London, 1908) and Muriel Atkin, *Russia and Iran, 1780- 1828* (Minneapolis, 1980).

disastrous performance and eventual defeat in the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-5. Due to the pressure that that rebellion brought to bear upon government officials and even the Czar himself, elections were held and the first Duma convened in the summer of 1906. It was closed the next summer, and followed by a second Duma in 1908.⁴

Two other events that occurred in 1907 bore particular relevance to what would come afterwards in Azerbaijan with respect to preparing the ground for later Russian intervention. The first was Mohammad Ali Mirza's ascension to the Iranian throne early that year. The former governor of Azerbaijan was far less inclined to accept limits to his autocratic power than his father, Mozaffar od-Din Shah, had been. "In spite of the many oaths of fidelity to the Constitution which Muhammad 'Ali Shah had sworn," Edward G. Browne said in his famous history of the Constitutional Revolution, "his enmity to the National Assembly was deadly and sleepless, and during his short reign manifested itself in a hundred ways."⁵ Mohammad Ali Shah's antagonistic attitude toward the Movement led to a steady intensification of the conflict between him and Iranian constitutionalists over the next year and a half. Constitutionalists from Azerbaijan reciprocated his animosity and demonstrated a particularly strong distrust of Mohammad Ali based on their experiences during his decade-long governorship, and they did not consider his acceptance of the constitution to be sincere. They were suspected of "fanning the fires" of resentment against him, the primary suspects when attempts were made on his life, the first to advocate his removal from the throne, and they maintained that he was completely dependent upon the Russians.⁶

⁴Opposition to absolute monarchy in Russia had been building for some time prior to the revolution of 1905. But the confluence of these sentiments, with the disillusionment from the war, led to sometimes quite violent protests. Those forced Czar Nicholas II to allow the formation of the first Duma, which was in session from May 1906 until he dissolved it in July of the same year. A second Duma was later convened from February to June 1907. See Andrew M. Verner, *The Crisis of Russian Autocracy: Nicholas II and the 1905 Revolution* (Princeton, 1990), 330-341, and Hugh Seton-Watson, *The Decline of Imperial Russia, 1855-1914* (New York, 1952), 254-260.

⁵Edward G. Browne, *The Persians, Revolution, of 1905-1909* (Cambridge, 1910), 148.

⁶Hedayat, *Gozamh*, 185; Hajj Mirza Sayyed Ahmad Hosayni-Tafrashi, *Ruznameh-ye akhbar-e mashrutiyat va mqelab-e Jrar*, 1321-1328, ed. Iraj Afshar (Tehran, 1957), 96, and Ahmad Kasravi, *Tarikh-e hijdah saleh-ye Azarbajjar*, (Tehran, 1376), 1; Mehdi Qoli Mokhber os-Saltaneh Hedayat, *Khaterat va khatarat tusheh'i az tdrikh-e shish pddeshdh va gusheh'i az dowreh-ye zmdegdni-ye mar*, (Tehran, 1363), 150, 151; Browne, 165.

The other significant event to occur that year was the termination of the Great Game conflict between Russia and Britain that had begun in 1832. The so-called Agreement or Convention between St. Petersburg and London effectively removed the barrier presented by British opposition to Russian encroachment into Iran that had heretofore existed for three-quarters of a century and thereby allowed the Russians to take steps to protect whatever they perceived to be their interests.⁷ Robert A. McDaniel has a slightly different view and avers that the agreement represented a realization by the Russians that they were reaching their imperial limit and that they "lacked the resources to digest any further acquisitions with the primordial impulse to expand."⁸ Vanessa Martin maintains that at the time the agreement was concluded St. Petersburg was "determined to pursue a non-aggressive policy in Asia, intent only on protecting its existing position...."⁹ It may have signaled the attainment of a limit, but Russia was still prepared to protect what she considered her interests and position in Iran. Rouhollah Ramazani claims that the Convention gave Russia the freedom to do that. During the Great Game, Britain's role as a "counterweight kept Russia from unilaterally absorbing Iran," but the "rapprochement" that took place between the rivals in 1907 offered St. Petersburg "an unprecedented opportunity to intervene" in the country.¹⁰ The observations of the young Abdullah Mostowfi, who served as an official in the Iranian embassy in St. Petersburg from 1904 to 1909, more or less corresponded with that interpretation of Russian policy. He said that, "After the Russian and British agreement of 1907 regarding the division of power in Iran, the two rivals of 150 years had at last reached an understanding. The Russians did not observe formalities with Iran anymore. Besides, the democratic movement in Iran was another source of grievance for the Russians. The penetration of the democratic movement into

⁷For the text of the agreement, see J. C. Hurewitz, *The Middle East and North Africa in World Politics: A Documentary Record*, 2nd ed., vol. 1 (New Haven, 1975), 538--541.

⁸Robert A. McDaniel, *The Shuster Mission, and the Persian Constitution, and Revolution* (Minneapolis, 1974), 15.

⁹Vanessa Martin, "Hartwig and Russian Policy in Iran 1906-8," *Middle Eastern Studies*, 29, no. 1 (January, 1993): 6.

¹⁰Rouhollah K. Ramazani, *The Foreign Policy of Iran: A Developing Nation, in World Affairs, 1500- 1941* (Charlottesville, 1966), 89.

Caucasia and eventually to Russia could not be avoided. They blamed the entire issue on Iran and retaliated."¹¹

What the full extent of Russian policy was with respect to Iran is not entirely clear. Firuz Kazemzadeh, in his study of Russian and British involvement over the last of the nineteenth and the first of the twentieth centuries, argued that there were two Russian policies at work with respect to Iran between 1905 and 1909.¹² There was that of the Russian foreign minister Alexander Izvolsky "to work with the British and compromise over mutual problems in Iran, and the second that of Hartwig, backed by his powerful friends in St. Petersburg, to pursue the old forward policy, protect and advance Russian interests, and thereby also undermine the Anglo-Russian Agreement."¹³ As Martin concludes in her article, though, "There was only one Russian policy towards the Anglo-Russian Agreement it [sic] Iran in 1906-8, and it was to support it." She admits that there was another policy of protection Russian interests, but is uncertain whence it issued within the Russian system.¹⁴

Nonetheless, Russian policy had major repercussions for Azerbaijan, both because of the province's proximity to Russian territory in the Caucasus and because of the leading role its constitutionalists were playing within the Constitutional Movement as a whole. It was the Russian belief that the constitutionalists were responsible for the political chaos that had come to envelope Azerbaijan at least since 1906. Nikolai G. Hartwig submitted a report in early September 1908 summarizing the Russian view of events that had taken place over the previous two years. Therein he explained that the "tumultuous conditions in Azerbaijan" had continued since November 1906 when Mohammad Ali Mirza had left Tabriz for Tehran. That trip corresponded "with the apex of the liberal movement in Iran, which had taken on a very intense and rapid condition in Azerbaijan due to the special geographical and ethnic situation of this area." Hartwig blamed that condition on the absence of "any kind of power" in Tabriz. For that reason, he had advised the Shah and his ministers repeatedly to assign a governor to the province. After a delay of eight months Abd ol-Hosayn Mirza Farmanfarma was finally sent in August

¹¹Abdullah Mostowfi, *The Administrative and Social History of the Qajar Period: From Mozaffar ed-Din Shah to Vos'at od-Dowlat's Anglo-Persian Agreement*, vol. 2, trans. Nayer Mostowfi Glenn (Costa Mesa, Calif., 1997), 517.

¹²See Firuz Kazemzadeh, *Russia and Britain in Persia, 1864-1914: A Study in Imperialism* (New Haven, 1968), 511-532.

¹³Martin, 1- 2.

¹⁴Martin, 17.

1907, but he quickly realized that he would not be able to carry out his duties because "in actuality, all of the power was in the hands of the Provincial Anjoman, which was more influential than any of the Anjomans in Iran and had a branch in Tehran to whose words all of the deputies in the Majlis listened." Farmanfarma therefore turned over the administration of the province to the Anjoman, which was accused of having "continuous contact" with "anarchists in the Caucasus." When Farmanfarma left Tabriz to deal with rebellious Kurds in the western regions, the province was essentially left without a governor again. With tensions on the rise, Hartwig blamed the Azerbaijanis for leading the "radicals" among the constitutionalists and preventing any reconciliation between the Shah and the Majlis. He claimed that both Tabriz and Tiflis were aware of preparations for the attempt on the shah's life that occurred in February 1908. The province descended into a state of chaos, which included the raiding of Russian settlements and posts along the border. The situation did not improve when Mehdi Qoli Khan Hedayat became governor at the end of April. Although the constitutionalists were succeeding in their efforts to withstand the siege by the royalists that had begun in August 1909, Hartwig ended his evaluation of the state of affairs in Azerbaijan by expressing support for the Shah's decision to suppress them. "Establishing calm in Azerbaijan," he wrote, "which has a general importance for our interests, is only possible under the shadow of employing military force."¹⁵

Deteriorating conditions in Azerbaijan attracted the attention of the Russians early on in the Movement's history. That was particularly the case along the province's common border with the Caucasus where the Iranian government had proven increasingly incapable of providing security from tribal raids. Concern for that state of affairs was voiced by the diplomat Ivan A. Zinovief when he wrote that, "From the view of the interests of Russia, the disorderliness of the northern areas of Iran, and especially Azerbaijan, from wall to wall the neighbor of the Caucasus, whose people are ethnic Turks and famous

¹⁵Hartwig, 6 September 1908, *Ketab-e naranji*, ed. Ahmad Bashiri, vol. 1 (Tehran, 1366), 286- 288; Farmanfarma arrived in Tabriz on 12 September 1905. Ahmad Kasravi, *Tarikh-e mashruteh- ye Iran*, 8th ed. (Tehran, 1349), 427; The documents in the four volumes of *Ketab-e naranji* are Persian translations of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs documents entitled *Sbornik diplomat- icheskikh dokumentov kasaiushchikhsia sobtii v Persii s kontsa 1906 g. po iiul. 1909 g.* Published in 1911 in St. Petersburg, Marcin says that the documents therein are by all appearances complete and genuine. Martin, 2.

for their roughness and toughness, is very damaging."¹⁶ In January 1908, developments began to take place along the northern border when twenty-two Russian cavalrymen crossed the Aras River and entered Azerbaijan while other troops took up positions in the border town of Jolfa.¹⁷ Until being appointed as governor of Azerbaijan, Hedayat conceded that he was largely ignorant of the province and its affairs, but that he had to begin quickly trying to deal with a maelstrom of conflicting parties. One of the first things he learned after reaching the province was that the Russians had assembled a sizeable force on the border at Bileh Savar where they were preparing to settle accounts with the Shabsavan tribe. In a meeting with Kakhanuski, the Russian official in charge of foreign affairs in the Caucasus, he was able to postpone Russian interference by gaining a month's reprieve before they took any action. However, on the return trip to Tabriz following the meeting, he observed evidence of the Russians' preparations, particularly the chains that they had placed "everywhere on the road."¹⁸

The immediate cause of Russian discontent was two huts the Kuchirian tribe had built on the border at Dayman in Russian territory and to whose presence the Russians strongly objected. In response, they dispatched six thousand soldiers to remove what they termed "fortresses." Major Snarsky sent Hedayat an ultimatum six days later on 3 May 1908 announcing that he would cross the border on 9 May to burn and destroy the property of the tribesmen. Hedayat appealed to Tehran for instructions as to what to do. The Iranian foreign minister, Mirza Hasan Khan Moshir od-Dowleh, suggested that the governor ask the Russians for another extension of fifteen or twenty days before they took any action. The appointed day approached without any other word from Tehran. Knowing that the Russian commander wanted his payment in rubles, and with only fourteen hours remaining, Hedayat arranged to have a sum of 50,000 *manats* delivered to Tiflis within twenty-four hours. In reflecting on the entire event, he

¹⁶Ivan Aleksavich Zinovief, *Enqelab-e mashrutiyat-e Iran: nazara/-e yek diploma/-e rus; havades-e Iran dar salha-ye 1905 ta 1911*, ed. Abu ol-Qasem E'tesami (Tehran, 1362), 59-60.

¹⁷Tafrahi-Hosayni, 68; Farmanfarma resigned as governor in Azerbaijan in April 1908 and was replaced by Mehdi Qoli Khan Hedayat. Hedayat, *Khaterat va khatarat*, 167.

¹⁸Hedayat, *Khatmit va khatarat*, 170.

considered it "strange" that the Russians would send a force of

six thousand soldiers to the border for such a small amount of money.¹⁹

The mutual animosity that existed between the constitutionalists and Mohammad Ali Shah continued to mount until 23 June 1908 when royalist forces headed by the Russian-led Cossack Brigade attacked the parliament building in Tehran. The royalists quickly reestablished their hegemony over most of the country, save two places: the northern provinces of Gilan and Azerbaijan. Resistance in the former soon subsided, but constitutionalists in Tabriz rallied and began what became a prolonged battle with royalists that endured for eleven months. An army under the command of Abd ol-Majid Mirza Ayn od- Dowleh was sent from Tehran to suppress the insurrection. The first siege, in which the city was divided between neighborhoods held by the constitutionalists and those held by the royalists, ended when the former took over the entire city in October. A second siege began in January 1909 and lasted until April when Russian forces arrived to lift it.²⁰

Both Kazemzadeh and Ramazani see the Russians as bent upon destroying the Constitutional Movement in Iran. Ramazani saw Russian support for the royalists in the summer of 1908 as "intervention in favor of the Shah and his Russian agents." They backed the bombing of the parliament building with the objective of suppressing the constitutionalists. He maintains that Russia played a key role in the overthrow of not just the first parliament, but the second one also three years hence.²¹

Kazemzadeh says that, "Through the tense months from October 1908 to April 1909, Russia either left Persia more or less to herself or cooperated with the British in maintaining an uneasy balance between the Shah and the nationalists."²² But that was not entirely true. The Russians were not idle bystanders during the sieges of Tabriz in 1908 and 1909. Abdullah Mostowfi claimed that the Russian consul-general at

¹⁹Hedayat, *Khaterat va khatarat*, 170.

²⁰For accounts of the first and second sieges of Tabriz, see Browne, 233-291, and Ahmad Kasravi, *Tarikh-e Mashr11te-ye Iran*, 8th ed. (Tehran, 1349), 676-793.

²¹Ramazani, 94-102.

²²Kazemzadeh, 530.

the time in Tehran, Ivan F. Pokhitanoff²³, provided Ayn od-

Dowleh's army with weapons and supplies during the eleven month-long assault.²⁴ As a carrot to supplement the stick of the sieges, the Russians encouraged the Shah to reinstate the constitution and to hold new elections as a means of pacifying the constitutionalists in Tabriz.²⁵ In the wake of an attack by the tribal leader and royalist sympathizer Rahim Khan, people congregated in the mosques where they listened to preachers rail against the actions the tribesmen had perpetrated. Thus inspired, crowds poured into the streets and went to the culprits' camp at Bagh-e Shomal. Rahim Khan and his men were able to flee before the crowd arrived, but the protesters found the text of a telegraph from the shah to the chieftain that alluded to Russian consultation with the royalists. Therein the monarch had said, "I told [you] the instructions when [you] left. Don't hold back in suppressing the insurgents. Kill and plunder everywhere. You are not responsible. Consult with the Russian consul about the actions."²⁶

Yet the successful resistance that the Azerbaijani constitutionalists were able to mount against the forces that Mohammad Ali Shah had sent against them and the prospect that a radical government might be established on their southern border worried the Russians. The British ambassador in Russia, Sir Arthur Nicolson, stated in a report to Foreign Secretary Sir Edward Grey that the suspected relationship between Sattar Khan and the Young Turks, who had recently come to power in the Ottoman Empire with the overthrow of Abdul Hamid II, worried St. Petersburg. The Russian fear was that the constitutionalists would set up "an independent socialist republic" in Azerbaijan on the borders with the Caucasus. Nicolson was of the opinion that, "This nervousness on the part of the Russian Government proved that their anxiety was sincere," and he lauded the Russians

²³Hedayat described Alexander V. Miller, the Russian consul general in Tabriz, as "an upright man." He was not so flattering of Pokhitanoff, whom he called "corrupt" (*mofsed*). Hedayat, *Kha-terat va khatarat*, 209.

²⁴Abdullah Mostowfi, *Sharh-e zendegani: Je man: tarikh-e ejtema'i va edari: Je dowreh: 1e Qajariyyeh*, vol. 2 (Tehran, 1360), 276.

²⁵See Hartwig's correspondences for 10, 24, and 25 September 1908, *Ketab-e narat! Ji*, 1:288, 290.

²⁶Mohammad Taqi Jurabchi, *Harft az hezaran /eandar 'ebarat amad: vaqaye' :Je Tabriz va Rasht, 1326-30 A.H.*, eds. Mansureh Ettehadieh (Nezam-Mafi) and Sirus Sa'dvandian (Tehran, 1984), 4

For their "patience and forbearance in not adopting active measures of intervention" up until that time. In showing self-restraint, he believed that they were adhering to the intention of the Agreement that the two countries had signed two years before.²⁷ The time for restraint on the part of St. Petersburg was, however, coming to an end.

The second siege of Tabriz was, in Afary's words, "one of the most moving chapters of twentieth-century Iranian history."²⁸ In spite of the continuing success the constitutionalists were having in holding out against the royalist forces surrounding Tabriz, and additional to the carnage and destruction, by the spring of 1909 the deprivations brought on by the second siege were beginning to take their toll. With no supplies allowed to enter the city, stores of food had been exhausted, the population was reduced to eating grass, and deaths from starvation had begun to occur.²⁹ On 11 April 1909 the Russian, British, French, Ottoman, and American consuls in Tabriz met and composed a letter asking Ayn od-Dowleh to allow supplies to pass into Tabriz.³⁰ After waiting two weeks in vain for the Iranian government to act, the Russian and British consuls informed the Anjoman that their governments would deliver the needed supplies to the beleaguered city.³¹

In the middle of April, the Russian and British governments finally came to an agreement on sending a contingent of Russian troops to relieve the siege.³² The reason given was to open the roads and to deliver wheat to Tabriz. But whereas the Europeans preferred to see their decision to intervene in the intra-Iranian conflict as basically motivated by humanitarian concerns, the Iranian constitutionalists tended to see the move

²⁷Annual Report on Russia for the year 1908, Enclosure in Nicolson to Grey, no. 92, St. Petersburg, February 8, 1909; F.O. 371/727. Cited in Kazemzadeh, 532.

²⁸Afary, 211.

²⁹For a description of the dire conditions that existed in Tabriz during the first four months of 1909, see Browne, 270-272, Sablin, 16 April 1909, *Ketab-e naranji*, 2:136-137, Sablin, 18 April 1909, *Ketab-e naranji*, 2:138-139, and Miller, 19 April 1909, *Ketab-e naranji*, 2:141.

³⁰Esma'il Amirkhizi, *Qiam-e Azerbaijan va Sa'far Khan* (Tehran, 1379), 310.

³¹*Amirkhiz.i*, 311-312.

³²Sablin to Russian Foreign Minister, 26 April 1909, *Ketab-e naranji*, 2:177-179; For a Persian translation of the text of the joint Russian and British announcement of their decision to send troops to Tabriz, see *Ketab-e naranji*, 2:179-180; St. Petersburg, London, and their respective embassies in Tehran, discussed the sending of supplies and Russian troops to Tabriz during the course of the siege, and it was considered to be necessary. Mostowfi claimed that the British lost nothing by agreeing to this plan. It was the Russians who were assuming the risk for taking the Iranian "snake by the head" he said. Furthermore, they were simply carrying out the two spheres agreement with "their own money and skin." Mostowfi, Sharh, 2:277.

as an "excuse" for direct intervention on the part of the Russians.³³

The plan to dispatch Russian troops to Azerbaijan was not welcomed in Tabriz. The "terrifying news" agitated the populace as they gathered at the office of the Anjoman. Telegraphs were sent to the Shah in an attempt to reach a compromise whereby the roads to the city could be opened and food delivered, thereby obviating any reason for the Russians to come. In a surprising turnabout, they even expressed their loyalty to Mohammad Ali Shah.³⁴ The constitutionalists inside Tabriz called a meeting to discuss the situation. Hasan Taqizadeh, one of the fore- most constitutionalist leaders in Tabriz and among the first group of representatives sent to the new parliament in 1906, urged the gathering to telegraph the Shah immediately and have him allow supplies to enter the city in order to thwart any "excuses" foreigners might have for interference. He said they also had to forsake the demands they had been making on the Shah and profess their allegiance to him. Some Anjoman members objected to making amends with the Shah after all of the sacrifices they had made during the sieges in an effort to resist his obliterating them. Taqizadeh's retort was that the first priority was to prevent any "foreign conquests." They could resume pursuit of constitutionalism afterwards. All too correctly he warned that if foreign forces entered Iran, removing them would not be easy.³⁵ On 22 June, the Anjoman sent a telegraph to the Mohammad Ali Shah expressing their loyalty to him and their desire that the Russians not be allowed to come.³⁶ The Shah accepted their appeal and sent instructions to Ayn od-Dowleh to open the roads to the city so that provisions could enter.³⁷ He also assured the constitutionalists that he recognized

³³ Kasravi, *Tarikh-e hijdah 1aleh*, 36; Mirza Asadollah Zamiri, *Yadda1htha-ye Mirza A1ado/Jah Zamiri*, ed. S. Baradaran-Showkuhi (Tehran, n.d.), 36; Mostowfi believed that the thinking of the Russians was that "this conflict between the government and the nation should not end until the weakness of both sides had helped them advance their ideas on executing the agreement on two spheres of influence [in Iran], thus making the affair of occupying their own sphere easier in the future." For that reason, he claimed, Russia helped whichever side seemed to be losing at any particular time. Mostowli, *Sharh*, 2:276.

³⁴Jurabchi, 44.

³⁵Amirkhizi, 312-313.

³⁶Amirkhizi, 313-314; Jurabchi, 44; Kasravi, *Tari/eh-e hizhdah saleh*, 36; Tehran sent its embassy in St. Petersburg a telegraph instructing it to halt the action. Abdullah Mostowli spoke with the head of the Eastern Section of the Russian Foreign Ministry, but to no effect. Mostowli, *Sharh*, 2:277-279.

³⁷Amirkhizi, 314.

the loyalty the people of Azerbaijan had to him, and he told them that, "The same amount that my fathers and grandfathers understood Azerbaijan to be the shirt of the monarchy, you are that way." He told them that they were "safe," and that he had ordered Ayn od-Dowleh to open the roads to travelers.³⁸

The constitutionalists' sudden turnabout and decision to submit to the Shah in order to preempt the coming of the Russians came too late. While those exchanges were taking place between Tabriz and Tehran, a telegraph arrived from Jolfa stating that Russian troops had crossed the border into Azerbaijan. The news struck those gathered in the telegraph office in Tabriz like a "lightening bolt."³⁹ The same day, representatives of the Anjoman inquired of the Russian and British consuls the reason for the troops' coming to Tabriz. The consuls gave their assurances that the action was only temporary. In a joint letter they stated that, "After restoring peace and security, this force will leave the territory of Iran and return to Russia without delay or condition and without the representatives of the Iranian government making a claim in the future."⁴⁰

The Anjoman also sent a delegation to the British and Russian consulates asking that the two governments not interfere in the conflict occurring between the Iranian factions.⁴¹ The Anjoman inquired of the Russian consul why his nation's army was coming to Tabriz. The official replied that it was to open the roads and to deliver food. He said that when that was accomplished, the army would promptly leave Azerbaijan and return to Russian soil. This apparently satisfied the constitutional organ, and it subsequently granted its approval for the Russians to proceed with their plan.⁴²

³⁸Jurabchi, 44; Rahim Khan and other royalists were both surprised and disappointed at the shah's telegraph to Ayn od-Dowleh telling him to allow provisions into the city. They telegraphed Mohammad Ali explaining that Tabriz was on the verge of capitulation because of the famine, but their attempt to change the shah's mind was in vain. Kasravi, *Tari/eh-e mashruteh*, 905.

³⁹Amirkhizi, 316.

⁴⁰Amirkhizi, 318; Kasravi, *Tarikh-e hizhdah sa/eh*, 36; Jurabchi, 46.

⁴¹Kasravi, *Tarikh-e hizhdah saleh*, 36.

⁴²Jurabchi, 46; Aqa Mirza Nurollah Khan Yekani, however, refused to let the Russian army cross the Aras river at Jolfa until instructions from the Provincial Anjoman in Tabriz arrived. Kasravi, *Tarikh-e hizhdah saleh*, 36; In an effort to halt the dispatch of Russian troops to Azerbaijan, Tehran sent its embassy in St. Petersburg a telegraph instructing it to persuade the Russians to halt the action. The young diplomat Abdullah Mostowfi spoke with one **Mr.** Klein, the head of the Eastern Section of the Russian Foreign Ministry, but to no effect. Mostowfi, *Sharh*, 2:277-279.

Despite the guarantee of a timely withdrawal, the decision to allow Russian soldiers onto Iranian soil aroused strong resentment not only in Azerbaijan, but in other parts of the country too. That was expressed in a "night letter" (*shabnameh*) that appeared in Tehran and which called the Russian action a form of "occupation" (*tasarrof*) and labeled those responsible for bringing the Russians as "traitors" (*kha'enin*) who had "surrendered" and who must accept the blame for "intimidating and weakening the hearts of the nation."⁴³

The contingent of two thousand men under General Znarsky that arrived in Tabriz on 28 June consisted of four squadrons of Cossacks, three battalions of infantry, two batteries of artillery, and a company of sappers.⁴⁴ They set up camp on the north side of the Aji Chai River Bridge, and Alexander V. Miller, the Russian consul in Tabriz, stipulated that no soldiers were to enter the city itself.⁴⁵ Relations between the Iranians and the Russians began on a cordial note. The Anjoman, for its part, tried hard to prevent any outbreak of violence given its understanding that the Russians would return after delivering the wheat.⁴⁶ Sattar Khan and Baqer Khan's instructions to the Mojahedin not to provoke any action, the shah's acceptance of the constitution in a vain attempt to retain his throne, and the dispersal of the royalist army that had besieged the city all resulted in an easing of tensions, such that the constitutionalists contemplated dispersing their forces as well.⁴⁷

A few days after the troop's arrival, however, some soldiers did enter the city and took up residence in some houses near the offices of the Anjoman.⁴⁸ The first serious conflict with the Russians came in the middle of May when a soldier fired shots from a rooftop and was in turn wounded in the leg by a bullet from an unknown assailant. In response, other soldiers ascended the roof and began firing

⁴³Nazem ol-Eslam Kermani, *Tarikh-e bidari-ye Iranian*, vol. 2 (Tehran, 1362), 428-431.

⁴⁴Browne, 273; Jurabchi, 45.

⁴⁵Kasravi, *Tarikh-e hizdah saleh*, 36; Jurabchi, 46. Kazemzadeh said that Miller "belonged to the extreme imperialist wing of the consular service...Like most of his colleagues he felt nothing but dislike and disdain for the Persians." His assignment in Tabriz "had been unhappy until he managed to have Russian troops enter it in 1908." Beyond that, he wanted a restored shah, a pliant governor, control of the administration, and the arrest all

⁴⁶Kasravi, *Tdrih-e hizdah sdleh*, 36.

⁴⁷Kasravi, *Tdrih-e hizdah sdleh*, 37; Jurabchi 48-49.

⁴⁸Kasravi, *Tdrih-e hizdah sdleh*, 37; for a listing of grievances against the Russian troops stationed in Tabriz, see Browne, 275-282.

indiscriminately across the city, killing one Iranian in the process. The incident angered the city's populace, but they continued to refrain from taking any action. General Znarsky, however, did not let the incident pass so easily. He demanded a payment of ten thousand *tumans* within forty-eight hours as compensation for the wounding of the soldier. Unable to produce the entire amount, Ajlal ol-Molk, the temporary governor, paid three thousand before the deadline.⁴⁹

The Russians then demonstrated the first signs of exceeding their initial goals of just opening the roads and delivering wheat. Determined to eliminate the threat the *fedaryan*, or constitutionalist fighters, presented to their troops in Tabriz, they began disarming everyone in the city on 10 May.⁵⁰ Miller ordered that the perpetrators be found and punished and that measures be taken to prevent any repetition of the attacks.⁵¹ After destroying barricades that the constitutionalists had erected during the siege, the Russians gave the Anjoman twenty-four hours to turn over all of the weapons in the city. At the end of that period they themselves began collecting them from the populace.⁵² Most of the Iranians who had procured their weapons from the city's arsenal or Arg during the battle for the city returned them there, went home, and changed clothes, thereby diminishing the atmosphere of war.⁵³ In an attempt at keeping them out of Russian hands, weapons vanished from the bazaar and shops as people hid them. One of the exceptions the Russians allowed was that anyone carrying a weapon also had to be wearing a uniform. In order to keep more of his men under arms, Sattar Khan therefore issued uniforms to some of his men so that they, like the city's police (*nazmryyeh*), could

⁴⁹Kasravi, *Tdrih-e hizhdah sdleh*, 37; Amirkhizi, 327-328; Ajlal ol-Molk was the stand-in governor or *ndyeb ol-hokumeh* following the end of the **siege**. Jurabchi, 48; See Miller's reports in *Ketdb-e ndranji*, 2: 169, 170, and 173; Znarsky reduced the amount of the fine to seven thousand *tumdns*. *Ketdb-e ndranji*, 2:175

⁵⁰Miller, 13 May 1909, *Ketdb-e ndranji*, 2:175.

⁵¹Charikof to Russian ambassador in London, *Ketdb-e ndranji*, 2:174. Miller made four demands to be met within forty-eight hours. They were to find and execute the perpetrators, pay the sum of ten thousand *tumdns* in compensation, disarm the constitutionalist fighters (*fedaiyan*), and allow Russian soldiers to patrol the city streets. "In case our demands are not met," he threatened, "houses, caravanserais, and neighborhoods will be destroyed by cannon fire. The first houses to be destroyed will be those used to fire on the soldiers. Then the quarter of Amir Khiz of Sattar Khan will be targeted." *Ketdb-e ndranji*, 2:174.

⁵²Jurabchi, 48.

⁵³Kasravi, *Tarikh-e hizhdah saleh*, 38.

remain armed.⁵⁴ To lessen the possibility of further conflict and to alleviate the tension, the Anjoman issued an order that no Iranians appear in the streets of Tabriz with their weapons.⁵⁵

On 15 May, Miller reported that the actions had "achieved their purpose." The removal of the barricades sufficed for the time being. "The number of *fedaryan* appearing in the streets has declined relatively much. In the streets, there are no armed men to be seen. They have hidden the permitted weapons." He believed that Ajlal ol-Molk should assume responsibility for confiscating weapons there- after.⁵⁶ Yet, the abundance of weapons in Tabriz, and especially those in the hands of constitutionalists, continued to be an important concern of the Russians for the next two years, and they repeatedly insisted that the Iranian government collect them.

During the first phase of the Iranian Constitutional Revolution, the constitutionalists in Azerbaijan had been the vanguard of the Movement, expressing the most radical views and being the most staunchly opposed to Mohammad Ali Shah. With the suppression of constitutionalism everywhere but in Tabriz in 1908, Afary says that the Tabriz Anjoman "replaced the Majlis as the center of constitutionalism" in Iran and the city became the "new center of national resistance."⁵⁷ The British reporter Arthur Moore said in one of his dispatches to London at the end of the siege that Russian intervention in Tabriz "averted the complete collapse of the Constitutional movement."⁵⁸ That wasn't true. He couldn't know otherwise because of his confinement inside the city, but the refusal to submit had kept the Movement alive long enough for it to reemerge elsewhere around the country. "The events in Tabriz became the prelude to a series of uprisings throughout the country, particularly in Gilan and Isfahan which continued the unfinished task of the Azerbaijani revolutionaries."⁵⁹ Kazemzadeh has said that "the presence of Russian troops in Tabriz neutralized that city, taking its nationalists out of the revolutionary struggle" and that it also "saved Tabriz and its nationalist defenders." He considered Russian intervention "paradoxical" in that "it was to the advantage of the nationalists and hurt Mohammad

⁵⁴Jurabchi, 49-50.

⁵⁵Kasravi, *Tarikh-e hizhdah saith*, 37-38.

⁵⁶*Ketab-e naranji*, 2:176.

⁵⁷Afary, 6.

⁵⁸Kazemzadeh, 536.

⁵⁹Afary, 212.

Ali."⁶⁰ As McDaniel points out, Mohammad Ali thought Russian intervention would allow him to take Tabriz, but it actually "played into constitutionalists hands" by delivering them from capitulation.⁶¹

The Russians repeatedly maintained that their only purpose in going to Tabriz was to open the roads and deliver wheat. But they soon began to conduct actions that suggested that their stay was not going to be as temporary as first maintained. For one, they began mapping the city. Though the Anjoman objected to the action, it was to no effect.⁶² Miller also requested a report on the arsenal and the number of cannons, and photographs were taken of the city.⁶³

Despite Miller's initial announcement, the Russian military presence inside Tabriz soon increased. He at first limited the number of soldiers who could enter the city to one hundred and seventy-nine, in spite of the fact that there were already twenty-five more than that in the city when he made the announcement. The result was a constant Russian presence in Tabriz. The soldiers wandered about the city in groups, noisily and unrestricted, even going atop the Shams ol-Emareh and the Arg to look out over the city. The troops were rotated in and out of the city; when one soldier returned to camp, another would replace him.⁶⁴

Then, in the middle of June, the Russians transferred their camp inside the city, mainly because of the summer heat, which was intensifying with the approach of summer. They set up their new camp at Bagh-e Shomal, which Mohammad Ali Shah allowed them to use.⁶⁵ There were other indications of increasing Russian activity within the city. Mehdi Qoli Khan Hedayat, who had returned to become the governor of

⁶⁰Kazemzadeh, 536.

⁶¹McDaniel, 87.

⁶²Kasravi, *Tarikh-e hizdah saleh*, 39.

⁶³Kasravi, *Tarikh-e hizdah saleh*, 39; Jurabchi, 49; Miller also granted protection to some Iranians, one of the capitulations that frequently angered and frustrated the Iranian government. Kasravi, *Tarikh-e hizdah saleh*, 40.

⁶⁴Kasravi, *Tarikh-e hizdah saleh*, 39; The Russians, in the course of their wanderings through the city, were accused of pestering Iranians, stealing food from shops, walking across the roofs of houses, and galloping their horses through the streets. The Iranians eventually published an eighteen-page list of grievances (*daftarcheh*). Kasravi, *Tarikh-e hizdah saleh*, 40. For other examples of Russian actions in Tabriz, see Amirkhizi, 326-327.

⁶⁵Kasravi, *Tarikh-e hizdah saleh*, 49-50.

Azerbaijan for a second time after departing Tabriz for a short time during the first siege in 1908, said that he received reports daily from the city's police about how the Russians "are stringing a telephone line between their camps at Bagh-e Shomal and at the bridge over the Aji Chai river" and "pounding it up and down into people's houses." Some residents complained that the Russians had destroyed their walls; others that soldiers were looking inside their houses where they could see the women of their households unveiled. Hedayat cautioned them not to say anything about the intrusions and assured them that he would have the walls fixed. In the meantime, he advised that their women wear a *chador* even at home. As usual, the Russians neglected to consult the Iranian municipal or provincial authorities or to obtain their permission before carrying out any of these actions. When the Anjoman did voice any objections, they were usually ignored.⁶⁶

The Russians soon took on the added task of bringing security to the city. In that regard they saw the constitutionalists as the main source of instability. Under the pretext of removing troublemakers, the Russians first apprehended individuals from the Caucasus who had come to fight with the *majahedin*, such as Hajj Shaykh Ali Asghar Va'ez.⁶⁷ Two incidents occurred at the end of May 1909 that elicited angry responses from the people of Tabriz. The first occurred when the Russians abducted Hajj Shaykh Ali Asghar Laylava'i and sent him back to the Caucasus. The other was the apprehension of Yusuf Hokmavari and his companions on the same day.⁶⁸ The Russians then threatened Sattar Khan and Baqer Khan with the same fate. They claimed that the former owed twenty-two thousand *manats*, the equivalent of eleven thousand tumans, to the carriage road.⁶⁹ Sattar Khan and Baqer Khan avoided arrest by taking refuge with some of other companions in the Ottoman consulate known as the *shahbandar-khaneh*.⁷⁰ Eventually, Russian interest in them waned and the two constitutionalist leaders left their refuge and stayed quietly at home.⁷¹

⁶⁶Hedayat, *Khitmit*, 208; Kasravi, *Tarikh-e hizhdah saith*, 38-39; Jurabchi, 46.

⁶⁷Jurabchi, 49; According to Hartwig, it was after an attempt to assassinate Mohammad Ali Shah on 28 February 1908 that "an enormous wave of people from the Caucasus flowed down toward Azerbaijan" taking "weapons and supplies with them." *Kttab-t naranji*, 1:286.

⁶⁸Kasravi, *Tarikh-e hizhdah saleh*, 40-45; Amirkhizi, 327.

⁶⁹Kasravi, *Tarikh-e hizhdah saith*, 45.

⁷⁰Kasravi, *Tarikh-e hizhdah saith*, 47.

⁷¹Kasravi, *Tarikh-e hizhdah saith*, 84.

Over the two years between the summers of 1909 and 1911, numerous incidents occurred with the Russians. For example, in May 1910 Miller complained to Hedayat that the Iranian police had failed to investigate shots that came from a house where two Russian soldiers were lodging.⁷² Another incident involved the desertion of two Russian soldiers whom Miller insisted on getting back.⁷³ A similar situation occurred when a Russian soldier took refuge in the house of Mirza Ali Seqqat ol-Islam and converted to Islam.⁷⁴ There were also Russian complaints about the behavior of Iranian police towards Russian citizens. In one case when the police beat some Armenians, the Russians took it upon themselves to arrest the policemen responsible.⁷⁵ One particular case was drawn out for a long time and involved an Armenian named Babayan who was a Russian citizen.⁷⁶

Insofar as Iranian constitutionalists were concerned, the Russians directed their attention in particular towards Sattar Khan and Baqer Khan, the leaders of the *fedaryan* in Tabriz. When they threatened to arrest the two men, the latter, along with some of their companions, took refuge in the Ottoman consulate. Miller was adamant on removing the commanders, however, for he believed that "ordinary order in Azerbaijan depends on disarming the faction of Sattar and Baqer ... and expelling those two from Tabriz."⁷⁷ The Russian foreign minister agreed and instructed his ambassador in Tehran to advise the Iranian government that it was only with the disarming of the *fedaryan* under Sattar Khan and Baqer Khan and the expulsion of the two leaders from Tabriz that "permanent order" could be achieved in the province.⁷⁸ When the Iranians hesitated, the Russians threatened to send more troops across the Aras to Tabriz if the men did not go to Tehran.⁷⁹ The two

⁷²Hedayat, *Khaterat*, 208-209.

⁷³Hedayat, *Khaterat*, 212.

⁷⁴Hedayat, *Khaterat*, 202.

⁷⁵Hedayat, *Khaterat*, 204-208.

⁷⁶See the reports exchanged between Tabriz, Tehran, and St. Petersburg in Miller, 16 June 1910, *Ketab-e naranji*, 4:137, Izvolsky to ambassador in Tehran, 17 June 1910, *Kttab-e naranji*, 4:139, S. S. Poklusky (Tehran) to Tabriz, 18 June 1910, *Ketab-e naranji*, 4:140, Miller to Tehran, 20 June 1910, *Ketab-e naranji*, 4:143, and Miller, 17 June 1910, *Ketab-e naranji*, 4:139, 148-151.

⁷⁷Kasravi, *Tarikh-e hizdah saleh*, 45; Miller, 6 March 1910, *Ketab-e naranji*, 4:51.

⁷⁸Izvolsky to ambassador in Tehran, 8 March 1910, *Ketab-e naranji*, 4:53.

⁷⁹Izvolsky to ambassador in Tehran, 13 March 1910, *Ketab-e naranji*, 4:60-61, and 14 March 1910, *Ketab-e naranji*, 4:63.

constitutionalist leaders finally agreed to leave Azerbaijan following a meeting with Seqqat ol-Islam, and they departed Tabriz on 19 March 1910.⁸⁰

Sattar and Baqer Khans' departure came at a time when stories were circulating of Mohammad Ali Shah's return to Iran, and royalists in Tabriz strung up lights for the occasion.⁸¹ When the constitutionalist forces under 'Aliqoli Khan Sardar-e As'ad took Tehran in May 1909, Mohammad Ali fled to the Russian embassy and thence to Odessa, but he did not forsake his hopes of regaining the throne. The anticipated royalist resurgence came in the summer of 1911 wherein the former Shah personally led an attack through Mazandaran. That ended in failure, but another assault launched in Azerbaijan garnered greater success. From his base in Maragheh, Samad Khan Shoja'od-Dowleh advanced on Tabriz, surrounded the city, and cut off assistance and supplies from Tehran.⁸²

As the third siege of Tabriz ensued, the Russians who were inside the city this time took steps that were indisputably in support of the Iranian royalists. On 30 June 1911, Miller asked that the royalist Taqi Khan be released to him. When the temporary governor Amanollah Zia od-Dowleh refused, Russian troops returned shortly thereafter and forcefully took him away.⁸³ Similarly, after officials in Marand arrested Shoja'-e Nezam, the Russians forced them to hand him over.⁸⁴ Later, towards the end of July, two regiments of Cossacks accompanied by regular Russian troops equipped with mountain cannons and machine guns entered Tupkhaneh Square and the central government building of Ali Qapu, expelled all of the officials and workers from the building, ransacked the offices, and freed the royalist leader Sardar-e Rashid from the Shams ol-'Emareh,

⁸⁰Zamiri, 38; Kasravi, *Tarikh-e hizhdah sdleh*, 47; Miller, 19 March 1910, *Ketab-e naranji*, 4:67; Miller to Tehran, 19 March 1910, *Ketab-e naranji*, 4:72; Sir George Barclay to Sir Edward Grey, 20 March 1910, in Amirkhizi, 419; Hedayat had his own reasons for wanting Sattar and Baqer Khan out of Tabriz. See Hedayat, *Khaterat*, 197-198.

⁸¹Kasravi, *Tarikh-e hizhdah saleh*, 84.

⁸²Naser Daftar Rava'i, *Khaterat va Asnad-e Naser Daftar Rava'i*, eds. Iraj Afshar and Behzad Razzaqi (Tehran, 1363), 28; On Samad Khan, see Mehdi Bamdad, *Sharh-e hal-e rejal-e Iran dar qorun-e 12, 13, va 14 hejri*, vol. 2 (Tehran, 1347), 180-181 and Mas'ud Gholamiyyeh, *Haji Samad Khan Shoja 'od-Dowleh va regim-e mashruteh* (Tehran, 1380).

⁸³Kasravi, *Tarikh-e hizhdah saleh*, 177.

⁸⁴Kasravi, *Tarikh-e hizhdah saleh*, 179.

all in one quarter of an hour.⁸⁵ After taking him to their camp at Bagh-e Shomal, Russian soldiers reentered the city half an hour later, went into the bazaar and the quarters, behaved insolently, and performed maneuvers. In short, the Russians supported Samad Khan on the one hand while increasing pressure on the city's population on the other.⁸⁶ As Samad Khan received weapons from the Russians, the Russians took them away from anyone inside the city except for the police.⁸⁷ Miller even told the *mojahedin* that they would have to go outside the city to fight since Russia was responsible for the city's security.⁸⁸

Yet the royalists were no more successful in taking Tabriz during the third siege in 1911 than they had been during the first two in 1908 and 1909. Then a series of developments began in Tehran that led to a change in the course of events in Tabriz. It began in November when Russia and Britain issued an ultimatum to the Iranian government demanding the removal of Morgan Shuster, the American who had been hired to reform the Iranian financial system. A second and more demanding ultimatum came on 11 November 1911 that caused such anxiety in Tehran that "an absolute silence reigned." It also produced excitement in Tabriz, and the Anjoman sent a telegraph to Tehran encouraging the government to reject the Russian demand.⁸⁹ Tehran decided to accept the Russian demand. Nevertheless, the Azerbaijani constitutionalists had again demonstrated their reluctance to compromise constitutionalist ideals, in spite of the fact that Tabriz was still under siege by royalists and Russian troops were present inside the city.

A few weeks later, Russian behavior became distinctly more aggressive towards the constitutionalists in the besieged city. That more adamant attitude in general toward the Iranian government that appeared in late November and early December

⁸⁵Zamiri, 40; W. Morgan Shuster, *The Strangling of Persia: The Story of the European Diplomacy and Oriental Intrigue That Resulted in the Denationalization of Twelve Million Mohammedans* (New York, 1968), 111.

⁸⁶Zamiri, 40, 41.

⁸⁷Zamiri, 42.

⁸⁸Kasravi, *Tarikh-e hizhdah saleh*, 206.

⁸⁹Kasravi, *Tarikh-e hizhdah saleh*, 249; The first Russian ultimatum was delivered verbally by the Russian ambassador on 2 November 1911. The second came on 29 November and was written. It demanded that Shuster be removed, that Iran get the permission of Russia and Britain before hiring foreign nationals, and that Iran pay for the dispatch of Russian troops to Iran. Shuster, 157, 164-165; "The Russians intended their action as a specific warning to Shuster that he was to consult them before making any administrative change in northern Persia." McDaniel, 181.

1911 issued from St. Petersburg.⁹⁰ Zinovief blamed the Iranians for initiating the conflict saying that Russian soldiers and officials were attacked on 8 December 1911 and that some of the wounded and dead were tortured and brutally abused. He said that since the Iranian government was powerless to do anything,

... the commanders of our forces were instructed to immediately carry out the harshest measures for punishing those responsible for the aforementioned attacks under the supervision of the Russian consuls in Tabriz ... and to eliminate all of the causes that caused the occurrence of this kind of happening. These measures consisted of: arresting all Iranian and Russian citizens who participated in an attack against Russian forces; trying them according to the rules in time of war; disarming the *fedaryan* and other uneasy elements; destroying all of the houses that resist and similarly every measure that is considered necessary related to the kind of attacks for creating order and punishing those responsible.⁹¹

There were still about four thousand Russian soldiers and Cossacks in Tabriz at this time. Rather than going to the Russian camp at Bagh-e Shomal, a new contingent of seven hundred troops from Ardebil took up residence in the Mohammadiyeh caravanserai in front of the Iranian army barracks and dispersed into the bazaar and streets the same day. A group of Russian Cossacks also stationed themselves in the neighborhood of Mahad Mahin near Miller's residence, and a Russian camp was set up again beside the Aji Chai Bridge.⁹²

Towards the middle of the month, Russian actions took on an added intensity as they took weapons from policemen, whom they beat along with any bystanders who happened to be watching.⁹³ Then the Russians went on the offensive. On the night of 21 December 1911, they killed an Iranian policeman and gendarme at the Bagh-e Misheh gate and left the bodies where they lay.⁹⁴ Soldiers entered the city in groups beginning at the Bagh-e Misheh police station, which they had occupied,

⁹⁰McDaniel, 187.

⁹¹Zinovief, 157-158.

⁹²Kasravi, *Tdrikh-e hizhdah sdleh*, 253.

⁹³Zamiri, 42.

⁹⁴Zamiri, 42; Kasravi, *Tdrikh-e hizhdah sdleh*, 264; Zamiri, 44.

singing the Russian national anthem and of victory. Some shots were fired, and they entered the quarters where they beat people and stole goods. If they happened to run into a woman, they followed her. "In several places they even went into the [public] baths."⁹⁵ Two hours before sundown of the next day the intensity of Russian actions increased still further. Zia od-Dowleh tele-graphed Tehran that "three hours before sunset, the [Russian] Cossacks and soldiers began firing volleys from Armanestan," the Armenian quarter where most of the Europeans lived. They fired indiscriminately at everyone they saw, he said, including "adults, children, and infants." The troops in the Bagh-e Shomal did the same.⁹⁶ The Russians occupied intersections and passageways in the city, engaged in pilfering, spoke insolently to Iranians, and beat those passing by in the streets, some of them severely.⁹⁷

The Russians launched attacks against the *mojahedin* from both the Bagh-e Shomal and their consulate. They occupied the Ali Qapu, the police station, the Arg, and other important buildings before morning on Saturday. At dawn they extended their efforts to consolidate control of the city by going to the bazaar and the streets.⁹⁸ "They attacked in the morning, entered the police station and shot whomever they encountered. They wounded and stripped most of the persons. When it came to this point, they entered houses. They killed everyone they saw, women and children."⁹⁹ Murdering, pillaging houses, and harassing women ensued. They entered the houses beside the Bagh-e Shomal, made holes in the walls of the neighboring houses, and entered them. Though they damaged and looted houses in Armanestan too, they spared those of foreigners or of individuals specifically under Russian protection. HIO Haj Aqa Khalil, the agent of the Iranian Foreign Ministry in Tabriz, reported that "Until now, one hour before sunset, they are busy shooting cannons and rifles from several points. The number of casualties is not known."¹⁰¹

⁹⁵Zamiri, 45; Zamiri claims that fourteen to fifteen Russians and one hundred Iranians were killed on this day. Zamiri, 47.

⁹⁶Kasravi, *Tarikh-t hiz.hdah saith*, 273.

⁹⁷Zamiri, 45.

⁹⁸Kasravi, *Tarikh-t hiz.hdah saith*, 264.

⁹⁹Kasravi, *Tarikh-e hiz.hdah saith*, 273.

¹⁰⁰Zamiri, 48.

¹⁰¹Kasravi, *Tarikh-e hijdah sdleh*, 268.

The fighting continued until sundown. That night the Russians entered the houses of Hajji Abu ol-Qasem Dallal and Amir Heshmat and set both of them afire. The6: emitted a plume of smoke that wafted out over the city for the next ten days.¹⁰²

Zia od-Dowleh stated that it was impossible for him to meet with Miller under such circumstances. The Iranians, he said, were merely defending themselves.¹⁰³ When Khalil went with Mirza 'Abd ol-Vahab Khan Nezam ol-Molk to talk with Miller about stopping the conflagration and to inquire into the reason for it, Miller blamed the fighting on the Iranians.¹⁰⁴ Khalil asked Miller to bring a halt to the soldiers' firing and have them return to their own locales. He said an investigation could be conducted after the conflict had ceased. Miller retorted by demanding that the Anjoman order its soldiers to surrender their weapons and that the agent tell the Iranian army to cease firing. The foreign agent discussed the consul's demands with the Anjoman and Zia od-Dowleh. "With their sanction," he said, "I wrote in response that surrendering the weapons of the army and the city's defenders is not possible when the city is surrounded," as it still was by the royalist forces. Nevertheless, following that exchange, the constitutionalist fighters "ceased firing and returned to their own positions, and the disturbance ceased." The Anjoman agreed to collect all of the weapons, which were "in the hands of everyone," not just the army and those defending the city.¹⁰⁵

The Russians began Sunday, 24 December with yet another assault. Seqqat ol-Islam sent a message to Zia od-Dowleh desperately encouraging him to take some action in response to the Russian attacks. "It is not a day to be sitting down," he said. "The city is afire and the city is being lost. In whatever way possible, we have to go to the consulate and extinguish this flame. Otherwise, it will become horrendous."¹⁰⁶ Mirza Asadollah Zamiri, the assistant of Seqqat al-Islam, claims that it was the fear of Russians entering their homes, killing, and plundering that finally compelled the people of the city to

¹⁰²Zamiri, 48.

¹⁰³Kasravi, *Tdrikh-e hiz.hdah sdleh*, 273.

¹⁰⁴Kasravi, *Tarikh-e hiz.hdah saleh*, 268.

¹⁰⁵Kasravi, *Tdrikh-e hizhdah sdleh*, 268-269.

¹⁰⁶Zamiri, 48.

begin defending themselves.¹⁰⁷ Partial preparations had already been made by the Iranians with the erection of barricades and the gathering of supplies, and they succeeded in pushing the Russians back.¹⁰⁸ They retook the Arg and the Ali Qapu, which the Russians evacuated along with the Russian Bank. Russians inside the surrounded police station were less fortunate. When a man sent to negotiate their surrender was shot and killed, the Iranians ended up killing everyone inside.¹⁰⁹ The constitutionalists renewed their advance near sundown, driving the Russians from the Mohammadiyeh caravanserai.¹¹ Fighting resumed the next day around the Russian camp in Bagh-e Shomal whither all of the soldiers had retreated except for those still in the consulate in the center of the city.¹¹¹

Following the initial Russian successes, the constitutionalists had surprisingly reclaimed most of the city. Yet, despite the continued fighting on Monday, 25 December, attempts were now made to bring about a cease-fire. As Seqqat ol- Islam, Zamiri, provincial officials, and British representatives were meeting with Miller, Zamiri took notice of a copy of the Iranian newspaper *Shafaq* that was hanging on the wall of the room in which they were meeting. Angered by how Russian actions were being represented in the Iranian press, at one point in the course of the talks, Miller stood up, placed his finger on the phrase "the northern bear" that appeared in the newspaper, and remarked to the other men present, "It is clear these newspapers have gone to all points in the districts and provinces of Iran and [that] they are everywhere. Iran has to be turned over some so that all of these newspapers can rot under the dirt."¹¹²

In spite of Miller's ire towards anti-Russian propaganda, efforts were made on all sides to bring a halt to the new outbreak of hostilities. Instructions arrived from the Iranian and Russian governments for their respective parties to desist from participation in the fighting. The British, French, and Russian

¹⁰⁷Zamiri, 45.

¹⁰⁸Bzamiri, 52-53.

¹⁰⁹Kasravi, *Tdrikh-e hizdah sdleh*, 264.

¹¹⁰Kasravi, *Tdrikh-e hizdah sdleh*, 265.

¹¹¹Kasravi, *Tdrikh-e hizdah sdleh*, 269.

¹¹²Zamiri, 53-54: The Russians paid close attention to the contents of Iranian newspapers, and their ambassador in Tehran gave summaries of their contents in his weekly reports

consuls and the Iranians all agreed to halt the conflict, but Miller was unable to execute the order because of his inability to communicate with the army stationed in the Bagh-e Shomal, which had become isolated from his consulate in the center of the city.¹¹³

The people had considered the fighting finished and stores were beginning to open when something occurred that changed the tide of events irreversibly in favor of the Russians. One hour before sundown on Tuesday as snow was falling, the roar of cannons arose from the direction of the Aji Chai Bridge. It signaled the arrival of the 5th Brigade from Yerevan, one of the three armies sent to reinforce the Russian forces already in Tabriz. Although the firing stopped at sundown, the advantage in the conflict had abruptly and clearly shifted in favor of the Russians. Miller told Zia od-Dowleh that he was ignorant of the situation since the roads were blocked. On a different note, the Russian consul said, "We must arrest some persons, or you yourselves should arrest [them] and hand them over to the head of the army." Zia od-Dowleh said that "arresting those persons and to surrender them was impossible for me." No matter how much Iranian officials insisted on a delay of a few days, Miller refused.¹¹⁴

On Tuesday Zamiri went to collect Iranian prisoners in the hands of the Russians and the bodies of Iranians, especially from the Khita'i family.¹¹⁵ The houses of the Khita'is were located near the Bagh-e Shomal and therefore some distance from the main areas of conflict. The city had been engulfed in fighting all day and the *mujahedin* knew nothing of what had happened to them. The fighting died down at sundown and news of the family's experience spread after the Russians withdrew back to the Bagh. "Because of Russian actions against the Khita'is," Ahmad Kasravi said, "the city today took on a different mood." The city's inhabitants began to complain of the *mujahedin*, "and a large number of the [constitutionalist] followers stopped participating [in the fighting]."¹¹⁶

Zia od-Dowleh added that "a large crowd came to the Provincial [Anjoman saying] that, 'We don't want the Anjoman.' They pulled me from the room to take me to Basmanj and bring

¹¹³Kasravi, *Tarileh-e hizdah saleh*, 261.

¹¹⁴Kasravi, *Tarileh-e hizdah saleh*, 285-286.

¹¹⁵Zamiri, 59-61; Some of the Khita'is had been killed, some had fled, and eleven boys, girls, and a daughter-in-law had disappeared or were Russian prisoners. Zamiri, 56-57.

¹¹⁶Kasravi, *Tarileh-e hizdah saleh*, 271-273.

Samad Khan. With a great deal of difficulty, I was able to escape from the midst of the crowd. They left the Provincial [Anjoman] and broke the door and the banner of the Anjoman. They carried away its furniture. They wanted to kill the representatives, [but they] fled."¹¹⁷ Following that encounter, Zia od-Dowleh took refuge in the British consulate.¹¹⁸

That night the constitutionalist organization in the city disintegrated as every man sought to save himself. The members of the Anjoman dispersed.¹¹⁹ The *mujahedin* fighters scattered as well after giving up their encirclement of the Russian camp in the Bagh. One group of them tried to escape the city across the Aji Chai Bridge, but was prevented from doing so when they came under Russian fire.¹²⁰ Russian shelling resumed at dawn on Wednesday, this time shooting randomly out across the city. Fear gripped the inhabitants as the bombardment commenced. Viewing the scene, Kasravi said, "It may be an exaggeration, but I saw lips on this day that were split from fear. I saw a man in the alley leaning against a wall, having fallen down. His lips were parched and split. I called to him, but he couldn't answer. Having taken his hand, I took him to his house."¹²¹

The regiment from Yerevan continued its shelling until late in the morning, their shells even hitting houses belonging to Europeans and the foreign consulates. A stray shot from one of the cannons brought down the American flag. The reason for the confusion was that the unit's colonel had failed to inform the other Russians of his arrival.¹²² Miller was finally able to get an order to the Yerevanis to stop their firing, after which they went to the main Russian camp. When the soldiers in the Bagh-e Shomal heard the firing, they emerged from the camp and entered the city.¹²³ The arrival of the new force led to a Russian resurgence. The Cossacks reoccupied the Arg, which the *mujahedin* had already abandoned. Soldiers again swept through the city's streets and bazaar, stealing whatever they could from the Iranians they encountered. This continued

¹¹⁷Kasravi, *Tarileh-e hijdah saleh*, 286.

¹¹⁸Kasravi, *Tari/eh-e hijdah saleh*, 286-287; He killed himself several days later "from the pressure of the Russians and the insensitivity of the British." Zamiri, 63.

¹¹⁹Kasravi, *Tririkh-e hijdah srileh*, 297.

¹²⁰Kasravi, *Tririkh-e hijdah srileh*, 287, 297.

¹²¹Kasravi, *Tririkh-e hijdah srileh*, 288.

¹²²Kasravi, *Tririkh-e hijdah srileh*, 288.

¹²³Kasravi, *Tririkh-e hijdah srileh*, 299.

for three days, and Kasravi lost everything he had with him of value during this time.¹²⁴

Zia od-Dowleh informed the Iranian government by telegraph that,

On the morning of the fifth [27 December], from the direction of Amir Khiz, the sound of cannon fire arose. Some of the people, disobeying, resisted. After a quarter [of an hour] they fled. Two hours before noon the cannon fire stopped. The new [Russian] army, having entered, went out of the city. The two armies exchanged shots until one hour before sundown. With the city calm, one hour to sunset, the sound of intense mortar, rifle, and cannon fire arose from the north of the city. Clearly, the new army had entered the city [and] they are clearing the environs.¹²⁵

After Wednesday, 27 December, Tabriz lay securely under Russian control. "Most of the people put up white flags A large group left to bring Samad Khan."¹²⁶ The successes that the Russian troops had achieved over the constitutionalists also gave inspiration to the Iranian royalists. Indeed, a sizeable portion of the city's residents still supported the royalist cause, particularly the inhabitants of the neighborhoods of Sorkhab, Davachi, Qara Malek, the followers of the Mirza Hasan Mojtahed and the Imam Jom'eh, and most of the city's religious establishment.¹²⁷

In a meeting with Seqqat al-Islam, Miller listed three demands with which the Iranians had to comply. The first was that all of "the persons who have picked up rifles against the Russians ... have to be executed. Secondly, every place there is a barricade, and they fired at Russians from there, have to be destroyed." The third demand came from the Russian emperor Nicholas II. It was that the army was to bomb and decimate the section of the city that lay between the Aji Chai Bridge and Bagh-e Shomal.¹²⁸ Prior to the morning prayer, Seqqat al-Islam advised the *mojahedin* and all of the other fighters to abandon the city.

Expecting the worst, some of the populace sent their families to safety outside the city. The Russian cannons began firing at

¹²⁴Kasravi, *Tririkh-e hijdah srileh*, 289.

¹²⁵Kasravi, *Tririkh-e hijdah saleh*, 289.

¹²⁶Kasravi, *Tarikh-e hijdah saleh*, 289.

¹²⁷Kasravi, *Tarikh-e hijdah saleh*, 298.

¹²⁸Zamiri, 63-64.

daybreak from both the bridge and the Bagh and continued their barrage until nearly noon. Shells burst overhead spreading shrapnel across the streets and houses below. There was still confusion among the Russians in the two sites, as the soldiers at the Bagh apparently didn't know that the guns by the bridge were Russian. In time, Miller managed to stop the ones by the bridge. Gunfire erupted again for a short time in the afternoon, but this time it was fired out of joy at the arrival of the fresh Russian troops.¹²⁹ Two hours after sundown, the firing resumed, soon quit, and then started again around midnight.¹³⁰

The people of Tabriz awoke on Thursday, 28 December to the roar of Russian cannons as the Czar's soldiers began their trek across the city from the bridge towards the Bagh-e Shomal. The populace fled from the path of the onslaught. As Zamiri said, "No one stayed in the city so as to [still] count himself among the living by sundown."¹³¹ When the Russians reached the Arg, they removed all of the wheat, barley, and provisions to their camp. The Cossacks occupied the Ali Qapu, the customs house, and the post office.¹³² The soldiers searched the people in the streets and the residences of the city's inhabitants for weapons, taking advantage of the situation to steal as well. That night, the new army, having just crossed the city to the Bagh, retraced its course back to the Aji Chai Bridge where it had begun, wreaking the same destruction it had on its first pass. That night, Zamiri said, "was so terrifying that the head never touched the pillow to rest." In the anxiety, "sleep was forgotten and the people of the city were ready to flee." Then, one hour after sunrise, the army marched through the midst of the city a third time back to the Bagh-e Shomal, reaching its destination an hour before sundown.¹³³

With the city now having been completely subdued, the Russians began the next day to hunt down constitutionalists. The Iranian ambassador in St. Petersburg telegraphed his government that,

On the 7th of Moharram (Friday, 29 December), the (Russian) Council of Ministers decided to give complete

¹²⁹Kasravi, *Tarikh-e hijdah saleh*, 301.

¹³⁰Kasravi, *Tarikh-e hijdah saleh*, 303.

¹³¹Zamiri, 66.

¹³²Kasravi, *Tarikh-e hijdah saleh*, 303.

¹³³Zamiri, 68.

authority to the leaders of the army in Tabriz, Rasht, and Anzali. According to the Russian consul, those guilty of the disturbances, whether subjects of Iran or Russia, were to be imprisoned and dealt with according to martial law. They were to disarm the *fedaiyan* and to destroy the places whence they put up resistance.¹³⁴

Anxiety set in amongst the constitutionalists as they tried to find whatever way they could to avoid falling into Russian hands. Some fled the city, others went into hiding, and still others sought refuge in the British and Ottoman embassies.¹³⁵ It was on this Saturday that Russian soldiers went through the city in groups, each with a map of the city in hand. They went street by street, accompanied by two or three Iranians, indicating some places on their maps and asking the names of individuals. Shaykh Salim, Aqa Karim Sadeq ol-Molk, and the sons of Ali Mesu were all apprehended.¹³⁶ By this time, Seqqat ol-Islam was the only apparent constitutional leader remaining in the city. He refused to leave, although he helped others to do so. He was encouraged to go to the Ottoman embassy with the others, but declined, mentioning Mir Fattah and the black legacy of his cooperation with the Russians in 1828.¹³⁷ Cossacks and a carriage were awaiting him outside his house on 31 December as he was preparing to go on a visit. They took him first to the Russian embassy and then on to the camp at the Bagh.¹³⁸

Monday the first of January in 1912 corresponded with the tenth of Moharram in the Islamic calendar, the day when Shi'is mourn the death of their third imam, Hosayn, who was killed at Karbala in Iraq in the seventh century. It was a conspicuous day for the first Russian executions of

¹³⁴Zamiri, 68.

¹³⁵Zamiri, 66.

¹³⁶Zamiri, 68-69.

¹³⁷Kasravi, *Tdrikh-e hijdah sd/eh*, 305.

¹³⁸Kasravi, *Tdrikh-e hijdah sd/eh*, 307; Zamiri, 72-74; Zia ol-'Olama, Sadeq ol-Molk, Aqa Mohammad Ebrahim Qafqazchi, and the sons of Ali Mesu were arrested the same day. Kasravi, *Tdrikh-e hijdah sd/eh*, 307; When the Russians entered Tabriz, the Mojahedin wanted the Provincial Anjoman's approval to fight in writing. Sayyid ol-Mohaqqeqin, the head of the Anjoman at the time, Mirza Esma'il Nobari, Seqqat ol-Islam, Shaykh Salim, Hajj Naser Hazrat, and Sadeq ol-Molk were among those who placed their seals on the document. They were all therefore known when the Russians took control of the city, and all of them were either arrested, executed, or went into exile. Mansureh Rafi'i, *Anjoman* (Tehran, 1362), 42-43.

constitutionalist leaders in Tabriz to be carried out. Soldiers and Cossacks were stationed everywhere in readiness for any disturbance. About six hundred occupied the Iranian barracks and constructed a simple gallows. The Russian tricolor flag was raised, and one hour before noon the troops took up positions on the rooftop of the barracks as people gathered quietly.¹³⁹ Three and a half hours before sundown, the Russians delivered the eight men to be executed-Seqqat ol-Islam, Shaykh Salim, Mirza Abu ol-Qasem Zia ol-'Olama, his uncle, Mohammad Qoli Khan, Sadeq ol- Molk, the two sons of Ali Monsieur, and Mashhadi Ebrahim-to Training Square (*mf.fdan-e mashq*).¹⁴⁰ The Russians did not carry out the executions themselves. That was left to three Iranian royalists who stripped the prisoners until they were only wearing their pants.¹⁴¹ Once the men had been placed on chairs and the ropes slipped around their necks, the doors to the barracks were opened and a crowd of people was allowed to come in to watch the event.¹⁴² After the hanging, the men were taken down from the gallows near sundown of the next day and buried by their families.¹⁴³ "From this time on," Shuster remarked, "the Russians at Tabriz continued to hang or shoot any Persian whom they chose to consider guilty of the crime of being a 'constitutionalist.'"¹⁴⁴

The city was abuzz the following day with talk of the hangings as Russian arrests and plundering continued apace. The victors in the struggle for Tabriz set about attacking everything that had been associated with their opponents. On Wednesday, 3 January, Russian troops looted the houses of Hajj Mohammad Bala, Hajj Nasr Allah Khosroshahi, Karbala'i Hosayn Fashangchi, and Hajj Abu ol-Qasem Dalla!. They then blew up that of the latter with dynamite along with those of Baqer Khan and Sattar Khan.¹⁴⁵ Pillaged days later was *thejابه khaneh* (arsenal), called the "small barracks," where Ali Mohammad,

¹³⁹Kasravi, *Tarikh-e hijdah saleh*, 309.

¹⁴⁰Zamiri, 76; Hedayat, *Khateral*, 202.

¹⁴¹Kasravi, *Tarikh-e hijdah saleh*, 310.

¹⁴²Kasravi, *Tarikh-e hijdah saleh*, 311.

¹⁴³Kasravi, *Tarikh-e hijdah saleh*, 326; Zamiri says that the men were removed from the gallows the next morning. Zamiri, 77.

¹⁴⁴Shuster, 219-220; Shuster says that a British journalist compared the hanging of Seqqat ol-Islam on 10 Moharram A.H. to hanging the Archbishop of Canterbury on Good Friday for the British. He also claims that the Russian Foreign Minister said in an interview that the Russians would annihilate the "revolutionary dregs" in Tabriz. Shuster, 220.

¹⁴⁵Kasravi, *Tarikh-e hijdah saleh*, 326-327.

the founder of Babism, had been executed sixty years before. The walls of the Arg fortress were also destroyed.¹⁴⁶ They hanged three more men-Reza Qoli Malani, Mohammad Taqi Beg Khiabani, and Naqeb Abd ol-Ahad Banabi-at the barracks just before sundown.¹⁴⁷ The next day they dynamited the building of Zafar os-Saltaneh, which had been the office of the Provincial Anjoman.¹⁴⁸ On 9 January they hanged three more men, but it was now done outside the city in the Qom Garden (*Qom baghi*), behind the Bagh-e Shomal.¹⁴⁹ Three days later they hanged four more men there.¹⁵⁰

The Russians also hanged Ostad Mohammad Ja'far Sartarash, his nine year old student Abbas Ali, and a man named Ali in the Arg.¹⁵¹ The day after that, which corresponded with the Armenian Christmas, they hanged Petrus Khan, the head of the Armenian Dashnaks, whose wife was on hand to watch the execution. As if by a fortuitous piece of luck, the rope broke the first two times the chair was taken out from under him. The third time it held, and that night the Russians made an intimidating marched through the Armenian quarter of Tabriz.¹⁵² A few days later, they tore down Petrus Khan's house along with that of Hajji Ghaffar Bazzaz.¹⁵³ On Friday, 25 January, they hanged six more

¹⁴⁶Kasravi, *Tarikh-e hijdah saleh*, 341.

¹⁴⁷Kasravi, *Tarikh-e hijdah saleh*, 327-328.

¹⁴⁸Kasravi, *Tarikh-e hijdah sdleh*, 328.

¹⁴⁹Kasravi, *Tarikh-e hijdah saleh*, 331; The three men were Hajji Ali Davaforush, Mirza Ahmad Sohayli, and Mohammad Khan. The last two were nephews of Sattar Khan. Nayeb Mohammad Aqa, Mashhadi Abbas Ali, and Mirza Ahmad were questioned but not hanged. Kasravi, *Tarikh-e hijdah saleh*, 331-336.

¹⁵⁰Kasravi, *Tdrikh-e hijdah sdleh*, 342-345; Kasravi gives a vivid account of the scene he encountered when the bodies of the executed men were being turned over to their families. Kasravi, *Tarikh-e hijdah sdleh*, 345; The men were Aqa Mirza Ali Va'ez, Hajj Samad Darzi, Hajji Khan Qafqazi, and Mashhadi Shokur Kharrazi-forush. Kasravi says that three other men-Mirza Mahmud Salmasi, Hajj Ahmad Naqqash, and the Ottoman Hafez Effendi-were killed at this time in the Bagh-e Amir, but that he had no information on when or how that was done. Kasravi, *Tarikh-e hijdah saleh*, 346-347.

¹⁵¹Kasravi, *Tdrikh-e hijdah sdfeh*, 353-355.

¹⁵²Kasravi, *Tdrikh-e hijdah sdleh*, 355-360; In contrast with the sieges of 1908 and 1909, Kasravi said that few non-natives of Tabriz participated in the 1911 fighting except for some Georgians and Caucasians. Kasravi, *Tdrikh-e hijdah sdleh*, 356; On Armenian participation in the Constitutional Revolution, see Chosroe Chaqueri, ed., *The Armenians of Iran* (Cambridge, Mass., 1998).

¹⁵³Kasravi, *Tdrikh-e hijdah sdleh*, 367.

men in the Arg.¹⁵⁴ The Georgian Yektani was hanged there at the end of January as well, and in a strange repetition of what had happened with Petrus Khan, the rope broke twice before finally holding.¹⁵⁵ Mashhadi Ghaffar Khan, the brother of Sattar Khan, was hanged several days after that.¹⁵⁶ The Russians' campaign to obliterate the constitutionalists was so relentless that one Iranian Cossack officer committed suicide following the hanging of Seqqat ol-Islam "out of fear of the Russian search for excuses."¹⁵⁷

A week after having secured the city, the Russians finally decided to allow their royalist Iranian allies, who had been surrounding Tabriz, to enter. Samad Khan arrived from Basmanj with constitutionalist prisoners in tow and accompanied by two thousand horsemen. Russian soldiers lined the road while royalist supporters turned out to greet him. As he passed through the quarter of Khiaban, other soldiers were pillaging the house of Baqer Khan.¹⁵⁸ He went to Sheshkalan in Bagh-e Amir Nezam where still more supporters were gathered to receive him.¹⁵⁹ Other leaders of the royalist cause, such as the Imam Jom'eh, Mirza Sadeq and his brother, and Mirza Hasan Mojtahed, all returned to Tabriz amidst much celebration over the succeeding days.¹⁶⁰ As Afary has stated, the Russians and the Iranian royalists set about expunging "whatever was accomplished during the revolution" which included closing two schools and ceasing the teaching of modern subjects.¹⁶¹

An important part of the explanation for the firmer stance Russia took over the second half of 1911 against the Iranian constitutionalists was the second Moroccan Crisis of July and considerations for the balance of power in Europe. The British needed Russian support against Germany, and, as Afary says, "Iran was the price it was willing to pay. The Russian government now tried to dismantle the constitutional order in

¹⁵⁴Kasravi, *Tarikh-e hijdah saleh*, 368-374; Two of them were Aqa Mir Karim and Mashhadi Mohammad Amu Oghli. The former had been arrested three days previous, taken to the Bagh-e Shomal, and tried along with seven other men.

¹⁵⁵Kasravi, *Tarikh-e hijdah saleh*, 376.

¹⁵⁶Kasravi, *Tarikh-e hijdah saleh*, 378-379.

¹⁵⁷Mostowfi, *Sharh*, 2:89.

¹⁵⁸Kasravi, *Tarikh-e hijdah saith*, 323; Rava'i, 30.

¹⁵⁹Kasravi, *Tarikh-e hijdah saith*, 325-326.

¹⁶⁰Kasravi, *Tarikh-e hijdah saleh*, 336.

¹⁶¹Afary, 338.

Iran by supporting Muhammad Ali Mirza in his military campaign, and the British government mostly remained silent throughout this struggle."¹⁶²

The fall of Tabriz had come during a period when the constitutionalist government and its sympathizers throughout the country were on their heels. Aside from those already in Azerbaijan, by the middle of December 1911, there were thousands of Russian troops in the Caspian province of Gilan and in the city of Qazvin, a mere eighty miles distant from Tehran. On 21 December, and after protracted resistance, the Iranian Majlis finally succumbed to pressure from Russia, Britain, and its own conservative government and accepted the terms of the second Russian ultimatum. Three days later, the government adjourned the Majlis. It wouldn't convene again for three years. Shuster left the country the month after, and the other Americans who had been working with him followed suit the next month.¹⁶³

The dissolution of the Iranian Majlis on 24 December 1911 is frequently considered to mark the termination of the second phase of the Constitutional Movement, which had begun in 1909 following the ouster of Mohammad Ali Shah.¹⁶⁴ But rather than that event, it would be more appropriate, in some respects, to consider the Russian conquest of Tabriz, a week later, to be a more appropriate climax to the Movement. As clearly demonstrated by their refusal to accept the demands of the second ultimatum, the constitutionalists in Azerbaijan continued to hold the most radical views even though the Movement had been led from Tehran since 1909. That action was all the more daring given that Russian troops were present inside the city and it was still under siege by the royalists.

The leading role the constitutionalists from Azerbaijan held in the Constitutional Movement, the province's accessibility from the Russian Caucasus, and the Russian government's general antipathy towards Iranian constitutionalism made it all but inevitable that Russia would try as best it could to eradicate the constitutionalists in the province. The removal of British

¹⁶²Afary, 321.

¹⁶³For more details on the events surrounding the reception of the ultimatum and its eventual acceptance by the Iranian government, see McDaniel, 190-210.

¹⁶⁴ One of those is McDaniel, who calls the dissolution a defeat of reform in Iran and a victory for the "Qajar bureaucracy;" McDaniel, 202

countervailing force with the signing of the Agreement of 1907 was the initial factor that made that possible. The Russians had looked upon the constitutionalists as the main source of unrest in Azerbaijan since the early days of the Movement, and it was that understanding that largely accounted for their actions in Tabriz such as support for the royalists, the arrest and eviction of constitutionalist leaders, and the repeated attempts to disarm the *mojahedin* and *feda!Jan*. It also explains their remaining in the city in spite of assurances to the contrary. Once encamped on the outskirts of Tabriz, the Russians superseded their professed goals of merely opening the roads and providing wheat and took upon themselves the much more entailed responsibility of bringing security to the city.

Though the Russians succeeded in weakening the constitutionalist organization between 1909 and 1911, it was only partially effective. The successful defense the constitutionalists were able to mount against the third royalist siege in 1911 was a clear demonstration of that. Until 1911 the Russians had refrained from fighting the constitutionalists outright and had tried to overcome them indirectly by providing support to the Iranian royalists. That policy of using a proxy failed not once, but thrice. All indications were that the third siege was going to be no more successful than the first two until the Russians made the fateful decision to intercede directly on behalf of the royalists, which happened only after the constitutionalists in Tabriz encouraged the government in Tehran to reject the second ultimatum. The Russians' decimation of the constitutionalists and their organization in Tabriz reflected the extent of their antipathy toward them and effectively removed the constitutionalist faction most opposed to St. Petersburg's involvement in Iran. Following their conquest of Tabriz, the Russians turned over governance of Azerbaijan to Samad Khan and his royalist followers. Thus began six years of occupation that virtually severed the province from the rest of Iran. It did not come to an end until revolutionary turmoil in Russia itself compelled the troops to return home in 1917.¹⁶⁵

¹⁶⁵Samad Khan only stayed in Azerbaijan for a couple of years and spent most of the First World War in Russia. He wanted to declare Mohammad Ali shah after reentering Tabriz in 1912, but the Russians prevented him from doing so because of British opposition. See Kazemzadeh, 651-655.