

[PROVISIONAL TRANSLATION FROM PERSIAN]

[Translator's notes appear in square brackets.]

[Personal information has been **redacted**.]

[The excerpt below is from the section of the article that pertains to the Baha'i Faith]

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Baha'i Honeymoon in Iran

By: Zahra Saiedi

The government of Mohammad Reza Pahlavi can be considered the honeymoon of the Baha'is in Iran, since many Baha'is were able to gain a foothold in politics and government by approaching the shah and the imperial court. The Baha'i Faith is a perverse sect in Iran, whose leaders, including Baha'u'llah and Ali Muhammad, the Bab, gathered supporters in the nineteenth century with the support of Russians and British colonialists.

In many respects, Baha'ism opposed Islam and Muslims, and therefore it is not endorsed by Islam and Muslims. For this reason, Article 58 [sic] of the Constitution emphasizes the principle that government ministers should be Muslims, stating that "No one can hold the ministerial post unless he/she is Muslim with Iranian origin and Iranian citizenship." This principle was violated during the reign of Reza Shah; because he had a favourable view of the Baha'is, he chose a person named Saniee as the crown prince's special aide. Saniee was a major at the time and was a leading Baha'i [sic]. He later became a general; for some time he was the minister of defence, and for some time was in charge of another ministry.

Mohammad Reza Pahlavi had great confidence in the Baha'is and believed that they did not pose a threat to the monarchy and its survival. The shah's view of the Baha'is was influenced by their role in the preservation and survival of the monarchy. The similarity and closeness of the vision of Pahlavi and the Baha'is on the issue of "modernity in Iran" forced the Baha'is to cooperate and establish relations with the established government, unlike in the past.

In his memoirs, Alam recounts the people's dissatisfaction with the presence of Baha'is in the cabinet: "In the afternoon, I went to Golestan Palace to celebrate the birthday of the Imam of Time [Twelfth Imam]. I usually did not attend religious services at the court because I did not have time. Dr. Baheri, my deputy, went and arranged a reception for the people, which was very welcomed by the people. But I regularly attended this Eid [birthday of the Imam of Time] separately, by myself, away from the Baha'i circle."

The people repeatedly targeted the centres and the institutions that had some connection to the Baha'is, as during the memorial gathering for the 40th anniversary of the death of the martyrs of the City of Qom, which led to an uprising in the City of Tabriz, in the north of the country. There, the

insurgent groups in the city looted and ransacked the bank facilities, as well as other public facilities, with a particular emphasis on the Bank Saderat, which was owned by a Baha'i.

The confrontation of the Muslim people with the centres in which the Baha'is were engaged was not limited to one or more cities, but in many cases other cities and towns and scientific-educational centres also witnessed such scenes. In one example, Dr. Jahanpour (a professor at Shiraz University) left the university after accusations of being a Baha'i.

In any case, Baha'is found ample opportunity to gain power during this period. And some of them were able to become friends and relatives of the shah. It is natural that this issue could not be tolerated by the people who, despite their merit, due to being religious, were considered extremists and did not have the opportunity to participate in politics and run for government; on the other hand, these posts were dominated by non-Muslims, such as Baha'is, and this caused their dissatisfaction.