

## IRANIAN LADIES AND THEIR ROLE IN THE REVOLUTION OF JUNE 6, 1963

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### ABSTRACT

Due to their importance, effectiveness, and well-known roles in this field, researchers have overlooked the issue of women and their role in recent Iranian revolutions. As such, it is important to conduct more research on this topic to make Iranian history more equitable by stating the historical role of women in the Islamic Revolution. This is because women are regarded as half of Iranian society and should have ample opportunity to demonstrate their role in political and social events. This led to examining the roles and responsibilities that women played throughout the 1963 events. Therefore, the primary focus of the current study is the proportion of women who participated in protests and other activities and provide an explanation for their involvement in the revolution. Consequently, the researcher employed primary sources to gather the necessary data, extracted the fundamental subjects from them, and conducted a descriptive analysis to arrive at the right conclusion.

**Keywords:** Iranian Woman, Pahlavi regime, June rebellion, Tehran, Imam Qumeini.

### INTRODUCTION

Iranian women have suffered greatly throughout their long history due to a variety of social, cultural, and civilizational obstacles that have kept them from realizing their goals and have been dominated by the rigid value and tradition system that has been imposed on them by generations. However, she surprisingly demonstrated her presence by joining her father, brother, and husband in the majority of the social and political movements of the day. The Iranian women's involvement in the June 1963 uprising, which called for the release of Imam Khomeini and other academics and clerics detained by the second Pahlavi government for opposing his policy and strategy of westernizing Iran by adopting practices and policies that go against Islamic law and religion, is the clearest example of this.

Along with their position, they wore black to honor those who had been killed in the Fayziyeh School courtyard, carried axes, knives, and iron bars, and shouted slogans during the protests, particularly the well-known "Either death or Imam Khomeini." They also did not hesitate to confront the police and imperial apparatuses, encouraging men to resist the campaigns of arrest, torture, and killing. They did not escape these campaigns. Along with treating the injured who had been shot by the Savak personnel and the police, these units attempted to hunt them down and examine them because of concern that they could be carrying weapons, but that did not lessen the man, her brother posed a threat to Shah's government.

In order to make the study's substance and organization clearer, it is important to separate it into an introduction and three significant sections chapters in addition to the findings. The first section explained the political and social role of Iranian women during the Qajar era. The

second section clarified their role during the Pahlavi era, and the third section addressed their role in the June 1963 uprising.

### **Section One**

#### **Introduction to the Role of Women in the Qajar era**

Iranian women's political and social activism began during the Qajar era. In addition to playing a significant part in the political and social resistance to the then-current administration, they were compelled to oppose the foreign colonial governments—represented by Britain, Russia, and the local Qajar government—because of the government's weakness. Originally only joining to support males, women later took a significant role in various social movements. Following Iran's defeat in the war with Russia, the first national women's movement in the modern era began when the people of Tehran spontaneously came together to defend a Muslim Georgian woman who the Russian dictator wanted to interpret as violating one of the terms of the Turkmenchay Treaty by separating her from her husband and children and sending them to Georgia to convert to their faith. Muslims viewed this as a betrayal of their faith and national honor. (Mustafa, 1375: 34)

The Iranian people reacted strongly against this issue. When the Russian embassy was destroyed and the people responsible for this choice were killed, Tehrani ladies were there, and they refused to leave. They took part in more protests in support of Amir Kabir in Tehran. The solidarity of women in the fight against tobacco use is more significant than these two events combined. The tobacco monopoly was transferred to foreign corporations during the conclusion of Nasser al-Din Shah Qajar's rule, and Sayed Hassan Ayatollah Mirzai led the people (even government women) who were under the Shah's general control in this conflict. During the time of Nasser al-Din Shah, one of the most significant and extensive political movements of the Qajar era, the people were able to force their demands on the Qajar regime and, for the first time, rebel against colonialism and oppression. Iranian women had a significant role in this revolution that followed the academics' fatwa against the ceding of the tobacco concession to the English. Many of them shut down marketplaces and jeopardized economic life to support the tobacco uprising and its continuation. Large groups of women marched toward the government castle when the market was shut down, and men followed them. (Wahid, 1373: 13)

Every woman at Nasser al-Din Palace disobeyed the Shah's clear commands and broke every hookah. Many women from large cities participated in this movement by taking to the streets to protest; it was not just Tehrani ladies. Together with men, indigenous women took part in this movement. Women tended to defend men because government officials did not interact with them. As a result, women's active involvement in the tobacco movement increased its strength and clout. Even in the legislative struggle, Iranian women were not apathetic, and the true awakening of women started on that occasion. The demonstration by Tehrani women to bring the scholars back was one example of how women were represented in the legislative movement. The protest by Tehran women to bring the scholars back to Tehran from the shrine of Abdul-Azim was one example of how women were represented in the legislative movement. (Timuri, 1361: 152)

In the legislative rebellion, women accompanied males in carrying scholars to the mosque and were in charge of saving the speakers' lives by lecturing women. To prevent the tyrants from

rioting and sabotaging, the freedom-loving women of Tehran designated one of these women to serve as a guard for the scholar speaking on the pulpit. They did this with the assistance of other women and sticks hidden beneath their cloaks. Women joined the males who were sitting in and took part in the plan to sit with the lawmakers at the British embassy. But not everyone was allowed in by the embassy security. According to Nazim al-Islam Kermani:

The market was closed today, the 8th of Jumada Al-Akhir, 1324 AH–1945 AD. Because their husbands had been at the embassy for a while, the women were considering getting together and protesting. Hajj Muhammad Taqi was met by an unidentified woman who visited the embassy. She handed him some cash and told him to use it for the folks who were demonstrating. He didn't know the woman till this time, but the Hajj took the money.

Women's rights were disregarded in the initial ruling, despite their bravery and participation in every step that resulted in the legislative win. Women, children, and foreign nationals were prohibited from running for parliament and even from having a role in the selection of candidates under the third and fifth articles of the parliamentary election regulations. Nonetheless, women monitor parliamentary activities and work to resolve conflicts and end colonialism. (Avari, 1379: 135)

## **Section Two**

### **The Role of Women in the Pahlavi Era**

The Pahlavi era marked the beginning of significant reforms in women's affairs. A modernizing movement brought forth by the Pahlavi era gave some members of the upper and middle classes advantages. However, the majority-representing clergy class and the general populace suffered as a result of this process. The government, people, and the clergy were always at odds because of the close ties between the common people and the clergy.

Regarding the question of whether or not women should participate in social activities, for example, new divisions arose between the modernists the masses, and the clergy. This presence was one of the contentious issues. The government aimed to achieve this because, from the perspective of the Pahlavi era's modernists, women's presence in society, their removal of veils, and their break from religious and cultural practices were all signs of modernity. This movement created a deep division between the early adopters of Western culture and the religious people under the leadership of the church.

Following Muharram (1320 AH–1941 AD) and Reza Shah's exile, women engaged in social and political activities just like any other member of society, particularly because they disagreed with the declaration that the hijab should not be worn and the rule that required its removal, which was seen as a necessary tribute to Western culture. The hijab was discovered during Reza Shah's reign, however all women disregarded the regulations and limitations placed on it. In Iran, the hijab debate contributed to the politicization of certain societal groups, particularly women. During this time, Iranian women started participating in social events and occasionally joining anti-regime political parties. (Hafezian, 1380: 62)

## **Section Three**

### **Iranian Women and the June 6 Events**

Imam Khomeini's disputes with the Pahlavi regime escalated following the passing of Ayatollah Seyed Hussain Boroujerdi in April 1961 and his growing influence in the nation's political and social affairs. Particularly since the conflict began with disagreements over the country's draft law, state assemblies, province division, and other issues like women voting and not donning the hijab, which meant that the elected officials of the Pahlavi government would no longer be able to practice Islam, which the clerics believed went against both Islamic law and the constitution.

Ultimately, the government backed down and agreed to the demands of the clerics, particularly Imam Khomeini, and relative calm returned to the country for some time. Following the cancellation of the state and provincial assemblies' decision, there were rumors that a referendum would be held in government circles. The administration attempted to call a referendum on February 26 in the early days of February 1963. The public and church opposed the referendum, while women opposed both the referendum and the holding of elections. (Rosenbakhsh, 1380:127)

Furthermore, Ayatollah Sayed Mohammad Behbahani's home was visited by several Tehrani merchants, many of whom were women, on February 2. They then proceeded to the market and requested that it be closed. Additionally, the market was closed, and when the women came to the stores, they would say:

Here we are, your sisters, we have been taken prisoner and our religion is in danger.

The earliest instance of women taking part in the fight against the second Pahlavi administration, which set the stage for their later actions, is this one. After the White Revolution was approved and the referendum entered a new phase, the clergy's opposition and protests intensified, particularly on March 29, 1963, when women's voting rights were declared. (Falsafi, Muhammad Taqi, 1378: 212) The clergy logically opposed the removal of Islam because they felt excluded from the presence of women to do so. The topic was investigated politically to eliminate Islam's constraints.

On March 23, 1963, Mohammad Reza Shah called the clerics reactionaries and threatened to impose sanctions on them at the Dezful Air Base. Soon after, the clergy, under the leadership of Imam Khomeini, made it plain that they would not celebrate Nowruz 1963 and would instead grieve. Numerous people were killed and injured when the dictatorship stormed the Fawziyeh School on April 2, 1963. The Talibeh School in Tabriz was also assaulted on this day. (Rouhani, 1360: 319)

Numerous protesters, many of them women, staged anti-regime protests in Tabriz on Shaban 2. They attacked the agents and attempted to burn down the Savak headquarters and the police station. We will give up our lives for the sake of Islam, the Quran, and scholars, the women declared.

Following his address on the evening of Ashura 1342, Imam Khomeini was taken into custody by police at 3 a.m. on June 6 and sent to Tehran. (Baqeri, 1387:102). Large crowds of people from all over the city flocked to the shrine of Lady Masoumeh (AS) in Qum to support the Imam and his liberation after hearing of Imam Khomeini's imprisonment. (Rouhani, 1360: 460)

The remarkable aspect of this day was the significant number of women from that city who were present with males who were calling for their Marja'-e-Taqlid to be freed. As if their kid

had died, women wept over this great scholar's imprisonment and yelled, "Either death or Khomeini." On Hakimi Street, the women of Qum were there like actual combatants. They arrived at the shrine of Lady Masoumeh (AS) armed with wood, knives, skewers, and even daggers to confront the Pahlavi government forces' rifles and the men in the streets (Rouhani, 1360: 460).

There was a lot of enthusiasm and passion as hundreds of veiled women, primarily from the middle class, entered the building with images of the Imam and singing pro-Imam slogans while sobbing and crying. According to the Savak report, a significant number of ladies were singing pro-Imam slogans in the Great Mosque of Qum at 9:30 in the morning. The protesters and sit-inners were energized by this female action. People's animosity toward the regime grew as a result of the women's murmurs and sighs. For many years, the congregation was unable to seek sanctuary in the shrine because of the agitated emotions sparked by the women. After staying for a certain period, the audience became bored and decided to leave the shrine. (Sher Khan, 1375: 58-59).

The women emerged from the shrine, moving forward while yelling anti-Shah and pro-Imam slogans. When the officers approached them, they did not move more than a few meters. They first shot the ladies on the front lines, which resulted in many martyrs and wounded women being slaughtered along with many of their brothers. Therefore, it is important to note that a strong and subtle kind of cooperation between women and the clergy began to emerge in the early 1340s.

The teachings of Imam Khomeini had a significant impact on this class. In his lectures, he consistently emphasized the chastity of Iranian women and protected women's religious liberties while placing a strong emphasis on wearing the Islamic veil. The women of Qum who lived in the "Chahar Mardan" neighborhood played a significant role in the protests and were the ones who organized the women of Qum to take part in Imam Khomeini's revolution. (Mansuri, 1378:125)

According to Imam Khomeini, Iran has a significant role in the world's political development. The city of Qum has played a significant part in the political development, activity, and self-sacrifice of the Iranian nation throughout its history. It has been documented that Iranian women play a significant role. It has been documented how important the women of Qom were. It has been documented that the "Chahar Mardan" neighborhood played a significant role. The women of Qom and the "Chahar Mardan" neighborhood led this Islamic movement, demonstrated their political maturity, and guided it. You are the movement's leaders, women are our movement's leaders, and we follow them, and you have my acceptance as a leader. Women's participation in the June 6, 1963, rebellion was so significant that it was reported by Savak and the police. According to Savak's report: Qum on June 9 at 9:00 a.m:

Senior clerics are having a consultative conference in Hajj Seyed Ahmad Zanjani Mojtahed's home, ladies are congregating in the Grand Mosque in support of Khomeini, and the crowd is still in the courtyard. (Mansouri, 1387:18)

The police report on the June 6 incidents states that ladies (men) also followed them and that women were distributing knives and other weapons among the mosque's patrons while carrying them in a sugar bag. The effectiveness and impact of women's participation in the June 6 rebellion to protect Islam and Shiite authority are demonstrated by these two reports.



Documents indicate that women also played a significant role in the June 6 demonstrations in Tehran, although there aren't many signs that women were involved in this movement because many of the martyred and injured over these two days were women. Four women and Narges Pashaei, one of the 23 wounded and injured who were sent to Sina Hospital, were martyred.

One woman was present among 19 patients at Firouz Abadi Hospital, 17 patients at Pahlavi Hospital (Karaj Road), and 19 patients at Shafa Yahya Hospital. Six of the injured were spread across the four hospitals. (Kandari, 1383: 250). Women developed a strategy for fighting during the June 7, 1963, protests in Tehran, which was eventually applied to other protests and movements. This was an effort to ally with the troops and win their support for the cause. To encourage the soldiers assigned to quell the crowds to move and refrain from harming the protesters, several women in the market and artillery square gave out fruits and candies to the troops. Women were heavily involved in the June 6, 1963, activities and protests. Khomeini residents were ecstatic when they learned of the Imam's detention and assembled in the city's main squares and streets to demonstrate against the government's decision.

The role of women in these protests was significant. They moaned and sobbed, yelled "either death or Khomeini," mixed dirt and straw in mourning for the Imam's incarceration, and poured it over their abayas, just like the women of Qum. Women were the first to deal with the protesters when the government police arrived, which inspired the males and urged them to fight the officers. Because of their observance of Ashura and their sadness, the Varamin people's protests took on the hue and scent of Ashura Hussain. When people learned of Imam Khomeini's incarceration, they were engaged in religious rites; nonetheless, the sorrow quickly descended into anti-government protests, and the youth put on shrouds and moved to Tehran. (Baqeri: 1388; 115).

During these protests, women enthusiastically joined men as well. The men objected to their arrival, but before they could reach the Hajj Bridge (Martyr Chamran Square), they noticed the ladies surreptitiously following them and stopped them from returning. Nonetheless, the names of two female martyrs who perished in route from Varamin to Tehran were listed among the victims of the June 6 uprising in Varamin. (Kandari, 1383:250).

On the evening of June 6, Ayatollah Seyed Abdul Hussain Dastgheib and Seyed Majd al-Din Mesbahi, citing Sheikh Baha al-Din Mahallati, declared from the pulpit that the public should boycott the market and stores on Friday, June 7, in protest of the arrest of the Imam of the mosque gathering. Agents raided Ayatollah Dastgheib's and other Shiraz academics' homes right after this address. His wife resisted the agents' attempts to arrest him, and because of his bravery, Ayatollah Dastgheib managed to flee the scene of the conflict. However, other crimes and horrors were committed by the government officials who broke into his home. Using everything they could reach from their hands and feet, they attacked and battered everyone. They were extremely harsh and brutal, breaking people's heads, hands, and feet. They also did not spare women or children, and one pregnant woman was beaten so severely that she lost her unborn. The head and arm of another woman were fractured after she was beaten. (Baqeri, 1388:161)

Unaware of what had happened the night before or the government's plans to arrest the city's academics, many Shiraz inhabitants, including many women, assembled in the enormous Ateeq Mosque on June 7 by the scholars' directives. To get to the new mosque, they walked. When

the women-led protesters arrived at the new mosque, they sat and yelled pro-imam and pro-regime slogans.

After waiting for Ayatollah Dastgheib to come, people exited the mosque in anger, staged group demonstrations in the nearby streets, and went for a walk. To assist the police, the Southern Army was dispatched. The police initially used tear gas on the protesters, but as the demonstration grew more violent, they started shooting, which resulted in several female martyrs, the exact number of whom is still unknown. (Baqeri, 1388:115)

Since no one suspected them, women were entrusted with the charge of distributing leaflets both before and after the June 6 insurrection. Additionally, women sent telegrams calling for the Imam's release after he was imprisoned on June 6; they are also highlighted in Savak files. One of these is a telegram that 92 ladies in Ahwaz sent to Savak leader Hassan Pakravan, requesting the Imam's release.

## CONCLUSION

1. Because they participated in movements like constitutionalism and others, performed their religious and national duties against colonialism and tyranny, and looked good in public, the Qajar era marked the beginning of women's participation in social and political movements. But historically, women's roles were not given the support they deserved.

2. Reza Shah sought to give this class a Western social character by removing the veil and putting it in his eyes during the Pahlavi era when Iranian society was undergoing modernization. Officially, Iranian women were supposed to adjust to the new Pahlavi regime's policies. They ought to emulate their Western counterparts in terms of education, attire, and social interactions, which have occasionally failed.

3. On June 6, 1963, women's participation in Imam Khomeini's movement peaked. In actuality, women's active participation began with this rebellion.

4-The ruling body, which saw itself as pro-women, was taken aback by this group (of women) because of Imam Khomeini's continuous references to Iranian women's chastity and defense of their religious rights by highlighting the practice of the Islamic hijab.

5. The degree of women's involvement in the rebellion was determined by how strongly and weakly the cities reacted to the Imam's arrest. As a result, Iranian women in Tehran, Qum, and Shiraz played a bigger role than those in other cities.

6. It is important to remember that women's fights persisted after the June 6 rebellion, albeit with a propaganda component. They resisted the regime's anti-religious measures, joined in marches and demonstrations, and acquired the techniques of struggle through their participation in mosques and women's groups. In the protests following June 6, women clenched their fists and chanted anti-Pahlavi slogans, to the extent that the late Ayatollah Taleqani compared them to angels.

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