ABSTRACT

The oppositional attitude of the Shi'i 'ulama' towards the Pahlavi regime increased tremendously during the reign of Mohammad Reza Shah (1941-79). This opposition, obviously, had certain theoretical bases. Though the power and authority of 'ulama' vis-a-vis the existing government began to increase right from the Safavi period, an attempt to make a direct bid for power is certainly a recent phenomenon. Although there are quite a few general works available on the changing roles of the Iranian 'ulama', there is no serious study of the theoretical changes that took place in the thoughts of Shi'i 'ulama' during the reign of Mohammad Reza Shah. This dissertation tries to fulfil this gap.

The dissertation is divided into seven chapters. The first chapter deals with the origins of Shi'i theory of imamate. Most of the basic concepts of Ithna 'Ashari Shi'ism (the Twelvers) such as imamat, ghaybat, intezar and taqiyya were crystallised during the Buyid and Mongol periods. According to Ithna 'Ashari Shi'i belief only the Prophet and imams possess legitimate authority
to rule over the people. They enjoyed spiritual as well as temporal *velāyat* over the people. Thus the classical Twelver Shi'i theology considered all the temporal governments as illegitimate and tyrannical (*jā'er, zālim*). However, the Shi'i theologians co-operated with the existing governments, keeping in view wellbeing of the community. They evolved accommodationist theories to adjust themselves with the existing rulers.

The second chapter deals with the development of Shi'ism in Iranian environment. The Safavids rulers were first to proclaim the Ithna 'Ashari Shi'ism as the state religion. The 'ulama's power and authority during this period increased. The cooperation between the clergy and state also increased. But in principle the Safavid 'ulama' continued to consider the rulers as illegitimate and tyrants. During the Qajar period the 'ulama's power and authority further increased. The victory of usūlis over the akhbāris also helped in consolidating 'ulama's power. During this period 'ulama' developed oppositional attitude towards the government. At the turn of this century, 'ulama' actively participated in the constitutional movement. They demanded constitution of a body of mujtahids to supervise the legislation of the parliament. Shaykh Fazlollah Nuri developed the concept of *mashruta-ye mashru* (constitution based on shari'a).
The next chapter deals with the 'ulama's attitude towards the Pahlavi government during the period from 1941 to 1961. We find basically two trends in the attitude of 'ulama' during this period. A majority of 'ulama' under the leadership of Ayatollah Boroujerdi followed the traditional quietism and rejected the idea of active participation in the politics. They remained largely preoccupied with the juridical problems. They declined to actively oppose the Shah or the regime. They kept contacts with the Shah and the government. They, however, opposed the land reform programme of the government. They also unanimously opposed the women enfranchisement. The other group of 'ulama' led by Ayatollah Kashani took active part in the politics of Iran. They supported the nationalization of the AIOC. They opposed the policies of modernization and secularization of the government. They also opposed the increasing role of imperial powers in the affairs of Iran, especially American and British influence on the Iranian economy. They denounced despotism and tyranny of the Shah. However, none among the clergy thought the monarchy to be incompatible with Islam.

The fourth chapter deals with the changing attitude of clergy during 1961-79. With the death of Boroujerdi in 1961 the post of a single marja'-e taqlid came to an end. The clergy's oppositional attitude towards the government intensified. The
reform programme of the Shah in the form of White Revolution was opposed by the 'ulama'. Even the quietist 'ulama' changed their former positions and opposed the regime. There were two main reasons for 'ulama's opposition: The increasing role of imperial powers in the affairs of Iran and the government's policy to curb the power of 'ulama'. During the 1970s 'ulama's opposition reached the extent of confrontation. However, most of the 'ulama' still thought the constitutional monarchy as the best form of government. Only a few 'ulama' such as Ayatollah Taleqani and Ayatollah Khomeini denounced the monarchy as incompatible with Islam.

The fifth chapter discusses the contribution made by Dr. Ali Shari'ati to the Islamic thought. Although he was not an 'ālim in technical sense of the terms, he extensively used the Shi'i notions to evolve a radical Shi'i ideology. He was well-versed in both traditional as well as modern sciences. The westernization or modernization of the Iranian society was the main concern of 'Ali Shari'ati. According to him the Islamic countries including Iran have undergone the worst kind of alienation - the cultural alienation - which is the main cause of their backwardness and decline. He says that the renaissance of the Islamic societies depend upon re-interpretation of religious concepts through ijtihād. He tries to give a sociological interpretation to religious themes.
He says that Shi'ism was a revolutionary ideology which always stood against the status quo. According to him, the present day Shi'ism (which he called Safavid Shi'ism) is a distorted version of original Shi'ism. He was a strong critic of conservative clergy who propagate passive and quietist Shi'ism. The true Shi'ism i.e. 'Alavid Shi'ism is, according to him, a protestant ideology which generates activism, responsibility and militancy to fight the tyranny and despotism.

The sixth chapter deals with Ayatollah Khomeini's political ideas. Khomeini's political ideas show distinct departure from traditional beliefs in many respects. Contrary to well established Shi'i idea, Khomeini believes that the establishment of a government during the occultation period is necessary. As no part of shari'a can be considered suspended its political part should also be implemented. He tries to prove that only the rule of shari'a is a legitimate temporal government on earth. He denounces all non-shari'a governments such as monarchy, constitutional monarchy or democratic republicanism as illegitimate and tyrannical. He advocated 'ulama's active participation in politics and rejected Shi'i concepts of intezar and taqiyya (political quietism).

The last chapter discusses Khomeini's concept of velayat-e fagih. According to Khomeini the only just government
on earth is the government of fāqīh-e 'ādil. To provide legitimacy to the fūqāhā' to act as successors of the Prophet and imams, he narrates a number of Traditions. He says that the 'ulama' inherit each and every prerogative of the Prophet and imams except their spiritual pre-eminence. So they are entitled to rule over the people like the imams. We can find a gradual evolution in Khomeini's political ideas. Previously he followed the quietist 'ulama' and had traditional views. Most of the above mentioned views of Khomeini developed during the late 1960s and early 1970s.