

The Pahlavi Dynasty

1921- Reza Khan, little known military officer, stages a coup d'état with the help of the British government and rises to power as commander of the army which he combines with the post of Minister of War.

1925- Reza Khan seizes power by overthrowing the Qajar Dynasty and is declared Reza Shah by the Majlis (parliament). He changes his name to Reza Shah Pahlavi, thus founding the Pahlavi Dynasty.

1935- Reza Shah calls for Persia to be called Iran. During his sixteen year rule, Reza Shah implements the modernization and westernization of Iran through education, religious reform and industrialization. Islamic dress and the veil are forcibly banned.

1941- Reza Shah sympathizes with Germany during WWII and declares Iran a neutral zone. The Soviets and British invade Iran and Reza Shah is forced to abdicate in favor of his son, Mohammad Reza.

The Shah

1941- Mohammad Reza becomes The Shah and continues his father's reform policies.

1951- Prime Minister Mohammed Mossadeq nationalizes the oil industry.

1953- Help from the CIA as well as British intelligence, organize a coup against Mossadeq and he is overthrown. The Shah returns to power.

1957- SAVAK (secret police) is formed with the help of the CIA.

1963- "The White Revolution" occurs, which includes land reform and the enfranchisement of women.

1971- By the 70's Iran is no longer self sufficient in food. The Shah holds a grand celebration in Persepolis of the 2,500 year anniversary of the Iranian Monarchy. Millions of dollars are spent on the celebration (as well as others) and the discontent for the Shah grows as the class division, already deeply established between the rich and poor grows as well.

1972- The SAVAK grows to be even more brutal throughout the 1970's. The organization increases spying, torture, repression, and killing against those who oppose the Shah.

1975- Economic hardships inflate the people's opposition to the Shah as the oil revenue lowers and inflation occurs.

1978- First major demonstrations against the Shah are started.

- Shah's police kill hundreds of protestors in Qom, Tabriz, and elsewhere.
- Cinema Rex fire incident occurs killing hundreds of people.
- The Shah imposes martial law and bans demonstrations.
- An incident which became known as “Black Friday” occurs where thousands of protestors who demonstrated in Zhaleh Square are killed.

The Islamic Revolution

1979- Islamic Revolution Begins.

- Led by Ayatollah Khomeini, a religious man thought of as a hero by many of the Iranian people. Khomeini wants to create a Muslim state which will reinstall Islamic ideology. The Shah is exiled and Khomeini takes power.
- A referendum is held over whether to replace the monarchy with an “Islamic Republic”. The referendum is addressed to the people as a yes or no vote without any additional information.
- US embassy hostage crisis occurs. Students, upon hearing of the Shah being treated in New York for medical reasons, occupy the US embassy and hold American hostages for over a year.

1980- Oppression and war.

- The new regime is still repressive as Khomeini also rules with an unforgiving fist. Many who oppose the new regime are killed or sent to prison. Executions are frequent. The veil is mandatory, as well as the segregation of sexes. Many women protest against this as women also lose other rights such as being banned from positions (such as a judge). Vigilantes search for “un-Islamic” western elements, and distrust also occurs between the people of Iran. The hope for a life of less oppression is lost for many Iranian people who do not agree with the fundamentalists and Islamic Rule.
- Iraq invades Iran. This begins the 8 year war between Iran and Iraq. Thousands of Iranian children are enlisted in the army and die.

1982- Iran gains back most of the territory lost in the invasion.

1983- Borders are reopened.

1988- As the war ends between Iraq and Iran, the number of Iranian lives lost is estimated near three-quarters of a million.