

*If I sit silently, I have sinned*  
Who was Dr. Mohammad Mossadegh?

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Since the establishment of the United States, the country played and still plays a significant role in the development and destruction of many nations. In the 1950s the United States used their influence and power to make an everlasting effect on the country of Iran, particularly in foreign affairs. During the Cold War, Iran controlled an extremely important natural resource and geographic location desired by both the Soviet Union and the United States. The main obstacle in the way of the Soviet Union and the United States, Prime Minister Mohammad Mossadegh, wanted to nationalize the oil and distribute it for the benefit of the Iranian people. Due to the conflicts of the Cold War, the United States opposed the Soviet Union's involvement in Iranian businesses, especially with the close proximity between the nations. The Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), more powerful than ever, helped the United States gain sovereignty over the Iranian oil and overthrow Mossadegh. Measures taken by the U.S. paved the way for the extreme fundamentalism of the present day regime. The Western influence over the region played a vital role in the strife and chaos present in the Middle East today.

The main component in the conflict over Iranian oil, Mohammad Mossadegh, hailed from a prosperous family in Tehran. His father, Mirza Hedayat Ashitiani, a former Finance Minister of Iran, stimulated his son's future aspirations in politics. After his father's death, Mossadegh began on his path to political success when appointed as Mostofi (Chief of Finance) of the Province of Khorasan at an adolescent age of fourteen. The monarch Nasir al-Din Shah, with close ties to his mother, entitled him "Mossadegh al-Saltaneh", because she raised him alone. Five years later, he married Princess Zia al-Saltaneh whom he referred to as "my most cherished person after my mother", who would give him five children.<sup>1</sup>

Even though his mother descended from the Qajar Dynasty, he firmly believed monarchs require boundaries and limitations of what they can and cannot do. In 1906, an elected assembly drafted a constitution, and despite the monarchy's opposition; they approved it. The establishment of the constitution built the foundation of the Majlis, which Mossadegh strongly supported. He also believed in political and economic independence, reflected in his guidebook *Capitulation*. He distributed the guidebook free of charge to enlighten the public about the negative consequences of capitulation. His political legacy started with the distribution of his book which exemplifies one of the many ways he served his country. He obtained many political positions such as minister of Finance, Justice, Foreign Affairs and Defense. His mother once told him "a person's worth in society is dependent on how much he endures for the sake of the people."<sup>2</sup> Mossadegh lived with that belief.

Many leaders came and went; however, none accomplished what Mossadegh did. He conquered not only independence, but also obtained the loyalty of the Iranian people. They believed in him and that he fought for their well-being.<sup>3</sup> Evidently the people of Iran returned the token of gratitude. Mossadegh stated in a letter to Ayatollah Kashani, an alleged anti-Western,<sup>4</sup> "I put my trust in the Iranian people. That is all."<sup>5</sup> "One of his many qualities was his generosity alongside humility. He was a person for common man."<sup>6</sup> Mossadegh, known by the Iranian people as the "Father of Iran," fought for the rights of the Iranians. He once spoke out to them on Iranian broadcasting radio where he pleaded for their forgiveness because he no longer maintained a budget to provide them with what they needed. That same day the women of Iran took their gold, silver, and all of their jewelry and sold it to help their

beloved Prime Minister. This national support proved how much they admired and revealed a lot about his character.<sup>7</sup>

Positioned in the focus of conflict due to the wealth in “liquid gold,”<sup>8</sup> Iran suffered greatly in the hands of colonists such as the British. The British demonstrated their neocolonial imperialism in the measures taken by the world’s largest oil refinery, the AIOC. The Anglo-Iranian Oil Company, established by the British and located in Abadan (on the Persian Gulf), made the Brits extremely wealthy off of Iranian oil. Supposedly a joint venture, the Iranians possessed no authority to review the transactions. Abadan became a “colonial post”<sup>9</sup> for the British, where they swam, played tennis, and went to the movies while the tens of thousands of Iranian workers slept in tenement housing. It surprised no one when the Iranians showed no sympathy toward the British because of the way they mistreated the Iranian workers.

The members of Majlis demanded that Iran deserved a better deal. Therefore Sir William Fraser, “a famously obstinate Scotsman who hated the idea of compromise,”<sup>10</sup> entered Tehran with an offer called the Supplemental Agreement that proposed improvements on behalf of the Iranian people. The improvements consisted of much divergent deals and promises. One such promise stated that the AIOC’s annual payments to the Shah never drop below four million in British currency. The British also promised a reduction of the drilling area, and guaranteed an increase in numbers of Iranians in superior positions. The main components that the Iranian people wanted changed included the right to review business transactions and increased jurisdiction with what went on in the company. Mossadegh saw Fraser’s visit as an opportunity to negotiate their priorities and invited him to do so.<sup>11</sup> It stunned no one when Fraser reacted uninterested to compromise in the attempt by

Mossadegh. After an enraged Fraser hurried back to London, Finance Minister Abbasgholi Golshayan commented that, “The British want the whole world!”<sup>12</sup>

Despite the efforts by Mossadegh to modify the terms of the Supplemental Agreement, nothing adjusted or changed in the offer. On the contrary, the Shah structured the cabinet to comply with the terms of the agreement on July 17, 1949 to appease the British. However all laws must undergo deliberation from the Majlis before enforced and regulated; not even the Shah obtained the power to overrule what they ultimately decided. Even before the cabinet accepted the Supplemental Agreement, many representatives of the Majlis immediately and publicly declined it. Others followed after Finance Minister Golshayan betrayed the British when he turned in a fifty-page report on how the AIOC scammed Iran out of tremendous amounts of money. His move shocked everyone because of the unusual supervisory position he held in the company. It outraged the people of Iran; one specific infuriated deputy Abbas Iskandari announced his opinion in a speech that addressed the conflict head on. He recommended that Iran receive fifty percent of what the British collected, and if rejected the Iranian oil industry be nationalized.<sup>13</sup>

Although many deputies held no motive to displease the Shah by opposition to the Supplemental Agreement, the outraged public voice made it inevitable. They decided to filibuster, although they came to no conclusion or middle ground. Due to this complication, the decision for the agreement was left to the next Majlis. The Shah made no exceptions and tried every attempt for the next Majlis to vote in his favor; he bribed candidates, cheated on votes, and so on. It amazed him when he realized he no longer possessed the power of fear to accomplish what he wanted. The cities uncontrollable protests, especially in Tehran, reflected the longing urge for democracy for the nation of Iran that proved to be undeniable.<sup>14</sup>

Mossadegh, along with six other initiators of the National Front elected to the new Majlis, marked a new beginning in history for the entire nation of Iran. It meant one thing for the entire country; one step closer to democracy. Although the Shah favored the weak for the obvious reason of effortless control, Mossadegh possessed no such weakness. The political and economic experience he acquired and the confidence he portrayed in the way he held his head up high made him a worthy opponent of the Shah. Mohammad Reza Pahlavi conquered the throne on September 16, 1941, and Iran declared war on Germany in September of 1943. Iran hosted the Tehran Conference from November 28 to December 1, where British Prime Minister Winston Churchill, United States President Franklin Delano Roosevelt and Soviet Union leader Joseph Stalin discussed how to get Germany to completely surrender without compromise. They also negotiated how to aid Iran in their economic crisis. On the contrary, the economic instability worked to the advantage of the Tudeh Party in the rise of communism. However, in almost no time after an attempted assassination of the Shah on February 4, 1949, the government banned Tudeh Party.<sup>15</sup>

Mossadegh returned to the Majlis and held the title of the first deputy in Tehran. After elected chairman of the government's Oil Committee in 1950, Dr. Mossadegh turned down an offer made by the AIOC that hardly revised some of the terms; however, not the equal share of profits. Although it became too late for the British to give in to the offer of squared profits for both the British and the Iranians, they offered it in anyway in 1951. On March 8, 1951, the Iranian Parliament voted to nationalize the oil and Prime Minister Mossadegh succeeded his life-long goal.<sup>16</sup> He believed "the moral aspect of oil nationalization is more important than its economic aspect."<sup>17</sup> Mossadegh, mostly concerned with the independence of the country, stopped at nothing to detach itself from the grasp held on by the British.<sup>18</sup>

The Iranian Parliament voted at the end of April 1951. By majority rule, Mohammad Mossadegh became Prime Minister of Iran. When the new Prime Minister visited the U.S. in 1952, President Harry Truman tried to establish a middle ground where both the Prime Minister and the British agreed. The American Ambassador to Iran, Henry Grady, primarily wanted to maintain peace between Iran and the U.S. While Mossadegh triumphed, Reza Shah envied him for it. He desperately wanted to lead the future of Iran; however, Mossadegh made it clear that he did not think monarchs should lead politics, and the Shah despised him for it.<sup>19</sup>

The conflict and events all led up to the planned covert operations to overthrow the Prime Minister of Iran, initiated by the CIA. The covert operations involved many people. A few of the initiators that carried out the plan included the Secretary of State John Foster Dulles and his brother Allen Dulles as the head of the CIA. The two brothers instituted the coup that got rid of the “madman,”<sup>20</sup> because they believed he possessed traits of a communist, which John Dulles loathed.<sup>21</sup> Then Prime Minister Winston Churchill, who supported the covert actions one hundred percent, paired up with Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden to win the support of President Truman; who declined. Only after President Eisenhower came in to office did it become possible for the operations or the TPAJAX plan<sup>22</sup> to take place. When he approved, the CIA immediately called upon one of their best, Kermit Roosevelt, whom called upon Asadollah Rashidian, an Iranian agent and crucial aspect of the operation. Rashidian used techniques such as bribery in order to gain support for the coup.<sup>23</sup>

Basically the British pressured the U.S. to do their dirty work, and they did. The CIA and SIS chose General Fazollah Zahedi as the portrayed leader of the coup. His assignment consisted of ways to bring down and ultimately succeed Mossadegh.<sup>24</sup> Ironically, during the

war the British put him away for involvement with the Nazis.<sup>25</sup> Everyone took their places on the stage of the operation, but one cast member who, indeed, held the script of the lead role, Shah Reza Pahlavi, needed more guidance and encouragement than anyone else. The CIA appointed two important people to his aid; his twin sister Ashraf, a conniving, ambitious young woman “with the heart of a snake”<sup>26</sup> and General H. Norman Schwarzkopf, the father of the Desert Storm commander, who also arranged the coup and helped keep him calm and collected especially under pressure.<sup>27</sup> Ashraf, a devious being, accepted bribes naturally,<sup>28</sup> one of the known “gifts” she accepted consisted of a mink coat as an incentive from a British agent when she persuaded her brother to support the coup.<sup>29</sup> Ultimately the Shah fled the country the country before they finished the job and achieved all their goals.<sup>30</sup>

On August 19, 1953, the reign of the one and only democratic leader of Iran ended. Two hundred people died that day. One of the victims of murder included Mossadegh’s Foreign Minister and loyal friend, Hossein Fatemi who spoke out on his behalf. Fatemi openly criticized the Shah on his broadcast radio. He shouted “long live freedom, long live Mossadegh, Iran forever”<sup>31</sup> before they killed him. Mossadegh himself escaped and then surrendered the next day. General Zahedi announced himself the new Prime Minister of Iran and assured that his forces controlled much of the city.<sup>32</sup> When arrested, Mossadegh spent three years in prison and the rest of his life on house arrest in Ahmad Abad. The military convicted him of treason.<sup>33</sup> Dr. Mossadegh died one year after his beloved wife at the age of eighty-five.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> “Dr. Mohammad Mossadegh”, *Mohammad Mossadegh Biography*, [www.mohammadmossadegh.com/biography](http://www.mohammadmossadegh.com/biography).



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<sup>2</sup> "Dr. Mohammad Mossadegh", *Mohammad Mossadegh Biography*, [www.mohammadmossadegh.com/biography](http://www.mohammadmossadegh.com/biography).

<sup>3</sup> Mohammad J. Mirzai "Mohammad Mossadegh." Personal interview. August 23, 2008.

<sup>4</sup> Stephen Kinzer. *All The Shah's Men*. Hobek: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2003.

<sup>5</sup> "Dr. Mohammad Mossadegh", *Mohammad Mossadegh Biography*, [www.mohammadmossadegh.com/biography](http://www.mohammadmossadegh.com/biography).

<sup>6</sup> Fariba Amini. "Mossadegh: Humility and Integrity in government." <http://www.iranian.com/History/2001/May/Amini/index.html>. Internet;

<sup>7</sup> Mohammad J. Mirzai "Mohammad Mossadegh." Personal interview. August 23, 2008.

<sup>8</sup> William Blum, *Killing Hope: U.S. Military and CIA Interventions Since World War 2*, 484.

<sup>9</sup> Stephen Kinzer. *All The Shah's Men*. Hobek: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2003.

<sup>10</sup> Stephen Kinzer. *All The Shah's Men*. Hobek: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2003.

<sup>11</sup> Stephen Kinzer. *All The Shah's Men*. Hobek: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2003.

<sup>12</sup> Stephen Kinzer. *All The Shah's Men*. Hobek: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2003.

<sup>13</sup> Stephen Kinzer. *All The Shah's Men*. Hobek: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2003.

<sup>14</sup> Stephen Kinzer. *All The Shah's Men*. Hobek: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2003.

<sup>15</sup> Stephen Kinzer. *All The Shah's Men*. Hobek: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2003.

<sup>16</sup> "Mohammad Mossadegh." Moreorless. <http://www.moreorless.au.com/heroes/mossadegh.html>. Internet; accessed 21 September 2008.

<sup>17</sup> Fariba Amini. "Mossadegh: Humility and Integrity in government." THE IRANIAN: History, Amini & Mossadegh, Fariba Amini. <http://www.iranian.com/History/2001/May/Amini/index.html>. Internet; accessed September 21, 2008.

<sup>18</sup> Stephen Kinzer. *All The Shah's Men*. Hobek: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2003.

<sup>19</sup> William Blum "Iran 1953 KH." *Killing Hope* (1995): [Third World Traveler.]

<sup>20</sup> William Blum "Iran 1953 KH." *Killing Hope* (1995): [Third World Traveler.]

<sup>21</sup> William Blum "Iran 1953 KH." *Killing Hope* (1995): [Third World Traveler.]

<sup>22</sup> James Risen "Secrets of History: The C.I.A. in Iran." *New York Times Special Report: The C.I.A. in Iran* (2000): The New York Times On The Web.

<sup>23</sup> James Risen "Secrets of History: The C.I.A. in Iran." *New York Times Special Report: The C.I.A. in Iran* (2000): The New York Times On The Web.

<sup>24</sup> James Risen "Secrets of History: The C.I.A. in Iran." *New York Times Special Report: The C.I.A. in Iran* (2000): The New York Times On The Web.

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- <sup>25</sup> William Blum, *Killing Hope: U.S. Military and CIA Interventions Since World War 2*, 484.
- <sup>26</sup> Gohar Taherian "Ashraf Pahlavi, the conniving sister of the Shah." Personal interview. September 28, 2008
- <sup>27</sup> James Risen "Secrets of History: The C.I.A. in Iran." *New York Times Special Report: The C.I.A. in Iran* (2000): The New York Times On The Web.
- <sup>28</sup> Batool Zamani "Dr. Mohammad Mossadegh." Personal interview. October 10, 2008
- <sup>29</sup> Stephen Kinzer. *All The Shah's Men*. Hobek: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2003.
- <sup>30</sup> "Stephen Kinzer, Author of "All The Shah's Men: An American Coup and The Roots of Middle East Terror"" Interview. BuzzFlash Interviews. 29 July 2003. 21 Sept. 2008  
<[http://www.buzzflash.com/interviews/03/07/29\\_kinzer.html](http://www.buzzflash.com/interviews/03/07/29_kinzer.html)>.
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<http://www.mohammadmossadegh.com/biography>. Internet; accessed 20 September, 2008.
- <sup>32</sup> Malcolm Byrne and Mark J. Gasiorowski, *Mohammad Mosaddeq and the 1953 Coup in Iran*, New York: Syracuse University Press, 2004.
- <sup>33</sup> William Blum "Iran 1953 KH." *Killing Hope* (1995): [Third World Traveler.]
- <sup>34</sup> Malcolm Byrne and Mark J. Gasiorowski, *Mohammad Mosaddeq and the 1953 Coup in Iran*, New York: Syracuse University Press, 2004.