



## The Islamic Revolution as a Value-Oriented Movement: A Case Study: An Explanation of Events during the Premiership of Jamshid Amouzegar

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### Article Info

**Article type:**  
Scientific Research

**Article history:**  
Received: 2025/4/26  
Received in revised form: 2025/7/21  
Accepted: 2025/10/19  
Available online: 2025/10/19

**Keywords:**

Islamic Revolution, Jamshid Amouzegar, Mostafa Khomeini, Religious Value, Social Action.

### ABSTRACT

**Objective:** Impartial scholars believe that pervasive corruption was a key characteristic of the Pahlavi regime. While extensive research has been conducted on this topic, it has not been thoroughly examined through the lens of the leaders of the Islamic Revolution. This article aims to address this gap by asking: 'What is Imam Khamenei's definition of corruption, and how does he view its depth and breadth within the Pahlavi regime?'

**Method:** The research method is qualitative of a historical type, and the analysis is documentary and qualitative. Data collection was conducted through library research and note-taking, and the explanation is provided with a sociological approach centered on religious values.

**Results:** Within the framework of his thoughts and with the aid of historical documents, court insiders' memoirs and writings, and existing research, this study presents examples and evidence of the court's corruption in each area.

**Conclusions:** The findings indicate that, in Imam Khamenei's view, the Pahlavi regime was afflicted by corruption in its moral, financial, managerial, and political aspects, and that this corruption was widespread. The Shah himself was the core of this corruption, and the closer individuals were to this core, the more corrupt they were.

Imam Khomeini's educational approach, through the revival of religious rites, played a decisive role in the general mobilization against the Pahlavi regime. The research findings indicate that the Goethe Poetry Nights, the martyrdom of Mostafa Khomeini, the death of Dr. Shariati, the insulting article in the Ettela'at newspaper, the Cinema Rex fire, and the fortieth-day mourning ceremonies inspired by religious values and derived from the 40th of Sayyid al-Shuhada (Imam Hussein) were among the most important events that acted as carriers of religious values and had sociological impacts on the course of the revolution and the regime's collapse.

**Conclusion:** The results of the study of historical events during the prime ministership of Jamshid Amouzegar showed that the Islamic Revolution was a movement focused on values. The popular movement at the end of the Pahlavi regime was rooted in rational action focused on values, and collective behavior and social movements were formed on this basis; this led to the victory of the Islamic Revolution.

**Cite this article:** Ghasemi&B (2025). The Islamic Revolution as a Value-Oriented Movement: A Case Study: An Explanation of Events during the Premiership of Jamshid Amouzegar. Contemporary Researches on Islamic Revolution, 7 (26), 1-21. <http://doi.org/10.22059/jcir.2025.394167.1702>



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DOI: <http://doi.org/10.22059/jcir.2025.394167.1702>

Publisher: University of Tehran.

## **Introduction**

The main issue of the present research is to analyze the origin and meaning of key political and social events during the premiership of Jamshid Amouzegar, focusing on how these events reflected and instigated religious and revolutionary values in Iranian society. The reasons for the Shah's dismissal of Amir Abbas Hoveyda after a long tenure as prime minister were to solve the country's problems, control inflation, manage the economic recession, and more importantly, silence political opponents. On the other hand, with the change of power in the United States and the Democrats coming to power, the Shah was forced to replace Hoveyda's government with a new one in the resulting "Open political atmosphere." In response to internal and external pressures, the Shah initiated a policy known as the "Open political atmosphere." Some political prisoners were released, and permission was granted for meetings and scientific and literary forums. During this period, the Goethe Poetry Nights were held, and criticism of the regime intensified. Amouzegar's premiership, which lasted less than 400 days, witnessed significant events such as the martyrdom of Mostafa Khomeini, the publication of the insulting article, the Cinema Rex fire, and the 40<sup>th</sup> commemorations for martyrs. Imam Khomeini's leadership approach led to an increase in public awareness and mass mobilization. The central problem and innovation of this article is the explanation of events based on value-rational action.

The research aims to analyze the role of religious values in shaping popular protests during Jamshid Amouzegar's premiership as a reflection of the nature of the Islamic Revolution. This study seeks to answer the question: 'What role did Islamic values play in the events leading to the Islamic Revolution during Jamshid Amouzegar's premiership?' The article aims to explain and argue the hypothesis that the role of religious values in the revolution was of special and distinguished prominence. The impact of the significant events during the studied period on the acceleration and speed of the Islamic Revolution was inevitable; but its cause was oriented towards values and the performance of duty, which does not fit into a mechanical or materialistic analysis. The research method is qualitative-historical, employing documentary and qualitative analysis. Regarding the importance of the article, it is noteworthy that the Islamic Revolution, before and more than any other factor, was value-oriented, and Imam Khomeini, with his divine leadership style, was able to mobilize the people on the path of revolution through enlightenment, like a teacher. Consequently, the benefit of this topic is the explanation of events based on values and the understanding of the revolution's character. Its

necessity lies in explaining the revolution within a scientific framework; if it is not explained in its true and real form, it will be reduced to Marxist, economic, and materialistic analyses and conventional Western theories of revolution. In this respect, it is also considered a critique of other Western theories of revolution.

The innovation of the article lies in the precise explanation of the significant events of the Pahlavi regime (from August 7, 1977, to August 26, 1978) within the framework of religious-revolutionary values. This article uses logical reasoning and analysis of the events of the last days of Pahlavi, a critique of Western theoretical approaches and theories of revolution, a critique of non-religious approaches, and a focus on religious values. It has been attempted to explain the movement's progression during the studied period from discontent and protest to eventual unrest as being oriented towards values, which was accomplished through the mobilizing power of the revolution's leadership. The research method is fundamental-applied in type, using a qualitative method and a case study approach. The temporal scope covers the days of Amouzegar's premiership. Data collection methods include library research, credible sources, newspapers, and documents. In addition to quoting narratives and providing a thick description of historical events, the article performs content analysis and causal explanation within the framework of a value-oriented movement.

## **1. Literature Review**

Within the books and articles written about the Islamic Revolution and the collapse of the Pahlavi dynasty, there are references to the government of Jamshid Amouzegar. Among these studies are:

- Soheila Nazari Ghanbari and Fouad Pourarian (2022 AD/1401 SH), "The Causes and Consequences of the Publication of the Article of January 7, 1978." Conclusion: The publication of the insulting article led to unity among opposition political forces and helped the revolutionary ideology, with intelligent leadership, to become the spark that ignited the revolution.
- Mohsen Beheshti Seresht and Rasoul Saber Damirchi (2008 AD/1387 SH), "The Spark of Revolution: An Analytical Study of the Article by Ahmad Rashidi Motlagh." Conclusion: It accelerated the revolution and was the spark of the revolution.

- Gholamreza Kharkouhi (2017 AD/1396 SH), "The Martyrdom of Haj Agha Mostafa Khomeini." Conclusion: As a factor accelerating the struggles of the Islamic Revolution, the martyrdom of the Imam's eldest son was not considered a simple event but a joint conspiracy by the Iraqi intelligence organization (Estekhbarat) and the Iranian security organization (SAVAK). Iraqi doctors also stated the cause of death was poisoning, which consequently led to the formation and acceleration of the movement.
- Fouad Pour Arian and Arastoo Khodaparast (2012 AD/1391 SH), "The Endeavors of Jamshid Amouzegar's Government to Prevent the Islamic Revolution." Conclusion: They consider the selection of Amouzegar as prime minister an attempt to consolidate the Shah's power and create stability, which was unsuccessful. This trick by the Shah, due to Imam Khomeini's intelligence in leading the movement, actually accelerated the revolution.
- Ali Shirkhani (1998 AD/1377 SH), "The Uprising of January 9, 1978, in Qom." Conclusion: This work is mostly a compilation of memoirs, experiences, and field observations of individuals present in the uprising and is primarily a collection of the event's facts.
- Safa al-Din Tabraian (2002 AD/1381 SH), "The Explosion of an Article and Its Aftershocks." Conclusion: It caused an earthquake in the Pahlavi regime, and the subsequent events were like aftershocks that brought the regime closer to collapse, leading to many protests and uprisings.
- Abbas Naimi, Shahnaz Karimi, and Ali Morshedizad (2013 AD/1392 SH), "Iran: Red and Black Colonialism as an Accelerating Factor in the Islamic Revolution Based on Chalmers Johnson's Theory of Revolutionary Change." Conclusion: They seek to explain the article's subject within the theoretical framework of revolutionary change, explaining the continuous and repeated uprisings and demonstrations in the final days of the Pahlavi regime as a result of this article and within Johnson's theory, thereby highlighting the acceleration of the revolution.

The distinguishing feature of the present article compared to previous research is that, while confirming that the developments during the premiership period accelerated the revolutionary current and the regime's collapse, its new aspect lies in explaining the most important events

of the Amouzegar period in terms of value-rational action and a value-oriented movement. The article intends to explain a new aspect of the Islamic movement's issue that occurred during Amouzegar's premiership within the framework of value-based rational action. In other words, it seeks to explain the cause of the acceleration and speed in the last days of Pahlavi and the development and deepening of the revolution from the perspective of the revolution itself (the strength of the Islamic movement), not the Pahlavi regime. Consequently, it demonstrates the role and position of revolutionary values and the "Value-oriented movement." It goes beyond the usual previous analyses that "If the Shah had done this or that, he would not have fallen," and explains popular actions, the collective action of the people, and their focus on duty within the framework of values. To be clear, the innovation and advantage of this article lie in analyzing the role of religious values in the formation of popular protests during Jamshid Amouzegar's premiership as a reflection of the nature of the Islamic Revolution.

## **2. Conceptual Framework: The Value-Oriented Movement**

The choice of the theoretical framework of value-oriented action is due to the religious-value-based nature of the Islamic Revolution and the sociological effects of values in the revolutionary process; it is the most suitable framework for analyzing the Islamic Revolution and the developments of the Amouzegar period. The Islamic Revolution was one of the most important political phenomena of the twentieth century, referred to as the "Last great revolution," (Wright, 2003 AD/1382 SH: 32-36) the "Revolution in the name of God," (Pierre Blanchet and Claire Brierre, 1979 AD/1358 SH: 11-32) the "Presence of religion and the school of Islam in the equations of the international system," (Foucault, 1985 AD/1364 SH: 24) "Imam and Shi'a," (Eshghi, 2000 AD/1379 SH: 63) and the "Proof of the emergence of religion as a major political force," (Stempel, 1999 AD/1378 SH: 43) and has been described with an emphasis on religion, sect, and Shi'a leadership. The Islamic Revolution has been studied based on various theories. Here, the developments of the Amouzegar period are evaluated based on the concept of a "Value-oriented movement" and a movement directed toward a transcendent goal. In the final years of the Pahlavi regime, Islamic values were transformed into generalized and developed beliefs, becoming a factor for stimulation, excitement, and acceleration in the Islamic Revolution, distinguishing it from other



revolutions. In this research, the approach of "Value action" and "value-oriented movement" is evaluated and explained, drawing respectively on the theoretical views of "Max Weber" (Parkin, 2005 AD/1384 SH; Raymond, 2011 AD/1390 SH) and the theory of collective and value-oriented movement by "Smelser" (Smelser, 2001 AD/1380 SH; Sabbagh Jadid, 2007 AD/1386 SH), in addition to summarizing the essence of the views mentioned above.

In this article, the concept of value-rational action from Weber's perspective and Smelser's theory of collective behavior and social movements are used to apply theories to the Islamic Revolution and the developments of the Amouzegar period. Weber's theory is at the individual (actor) level, while Smelser's theory is at a macro level (social and structural); these two were used complementarily in analyzing the developments of the Islamic Revolution. Weber proposed four types of social action:

1. Instrumental-Rational Action; an action in which the actor has a clear goal in mind and employs all means to achieve it, even at personal risk.
2. Affective Action; arises from specific inclinations and emotional states. If this behavior is consciously controlled, it takes on a rational aspect, but it inherently stems from conscience and internal feelings.
3. Value-Rational Action; rational action based on values and norms not only has roots in history, culture, and ideological values but also has innate roots. This action is internal; the actor behaves rationally while accepting risks and threats.
4. Traditional Action; springs from customs, behaviors, and beliefs that have become habitual. Here, there is no need for reason, logic, goals, or understanding of value; rather, it is shaped by habit and practice over time. The interpretive (verstehen) method seeks to understand the mind of the actor. All actions have a subjective dimension and possess value. Rationality is a tool for calculation (Raymond, 2011 AD/1390 SH: 566). Value rationality is a conscious belief in ethical, aesthetic, or religious values. This type of rationality is not oriented toward external success or a mere goal. The meaningfulness of value-rational action has a prominent obligatory aspect (religious duty); in value-based action, the meaning and purpose are embedded in the actor's behavior.

Smelser defines collective behavior as the non-institutionalized (informal) mobilization to reconstruct a part of social action. Here, social action is a rule-governed effort by an actor in an environmental or situational context to achieve a desired goal or goals. Collective action

has various components, the most important of which are values, norms, mobilization of motivation in organized action, and situational facilities. Among social actions, "Values" hold the highest position and a distinguished role, while "Objective facilities and capabilities" have the lowest role. According to Smelser, a revolutionary movement can be the most complex type of value-oriented movement. He posits that a revolution occurs in a society when:

1. Structural conditions in the society are conducive and the ground is prepared.
2. Multiple structural strains arise and become active.
3. A belief oriented towards redefining or transforming values exists in the society and gains general and public acceptance.
4. Accelerating and precipitating factors occur, which cause the value-oriented belief to become established and, by delegitimizing the previous or existing regime, prepare and mobilize the people for revolutionary action.
5. Effective mobilization and efficient organization of actors for participation in the revolutionary movement take shape; in other words, leadership is actively present and takes control of mobilization and organization in the movement.
6. Agents and organizations of social control become incapable of containing, controlling, and suppressing the movement. The theory of value-oriented action in the views of Weber and Smelser has the ability to explain, to some extent, the developments during Amouzegar's premiership, which played a significant role in the process of the revolution and the collapse of the regime—but not all of it. The fundamental weakness of non-religious and materialistic theories is that they view all factors as linear and of equal importance, whereas this does not seem to be the case. The Islamic Revolution movement was a value-oriented action that, with the presence of leadership, was able to progress from the stage of dissatisfaction and protests to unrest. The reason for the evolution of this process was the presence of an active and teacher-like leadership in the revolution. Consequently, value-oriented goals were formed through stages of education, evolution, and transcendence, and the revolutionary individual acted according to his religious and value-based duty (i.e., made a revolution). In this research, value-oriented events refer to actions and incidents that lead to change, consolidation, or crisis in the values governing the socio-political sphere.

### **3. Descriptive-Explanatory Data and Research Text: The Amouzegar Period and Value-Oriented Events**

Considering that the analysis of the role of religious values in the formation of popular protests during Jamshid Amouzegar's premiership as a reflection of the nature of the Islamic Revolution has been the focus of explanation, this research defines value-oriented events as actions and incidents that lead to change, consolidation, or crisis in the values governing the socio-political sphere at the individual and social actor levels. Among the events of the Amouzegar government, the most important ones, in chronological order, are the Goethe Poetry Nights, the martyrdom of Mostafa Khomeini, the publication of the insulting article in the Ettela'at newspaper, the gatherings and Arba'een commemorations in Qom on January 9, Tabriz on February 18, and Yazd on March 29-30, 1978, and finally, the significant incident of the Cinema Rex fire on August 19, 1978, which have been considered and analyzed.

#### **3.1. Goethe Poetry Nights**

The Goethe Institute's program, executed by the Writers' Association of Iran and the literary guild, had its roots in the Nima and Khusheh poetry nights (Sepanlou, 2005 AD/1384 SH: 81; Baraheni, 1990 AD/1369 SH: 228). It also aligned with the direction of the Islamic movement. In the autumn of 1977, from October 10 to 19, the Writers' Association, in collaboration with the Goethe-Institut in Tehran, held a 10-night program where poets and writers presented poetry and speeches that were a critique of the atmosphere of repression and censorship. The said program was organized by the Writers' Association of Iran in coordination with Dr. Hans Becker, the director of the Goethe Institute in Tehran, for ten nights in the garden of the German Embassy in Iran. Although Hans Becker announced the program's limitations beforehand and applied necessary censorship to the texts before their performance, significant criticism and protest were directed at the Pahlavi regime (E'temadzadeh, 1992 AD/1371 SH: 69; Nogrehkar, 2002 AD/1381 SH: 117). With such actions, the Shah intended to align the thoughts, pens, ideas, and poems of literary figures with the regime's interests and goals (Bigdelou, 2017 AD/1396 SH: 375), but he had no success in this endeavor. Although the most important participants in such associations were, respectively, members of the Tudeh Party, socialists, and nationalist parties, it ultimately contributed to creating dissatisfaction and shaping the subsequent protests at the universities



of Tehran, Sharif University of Technology, and Amirkabir University of Technology, leading to unrest (Baraheni, 1979 AD/1358 SH: 230) and mobilizing the people towards the Islamic Revolution. The most important impact of the poetry nights was supplementary to the value-oriented protests; its significance lay in the fact that the speeches and poetry readings arose from within the intellectuals, academics, students, and artists, representing a kind of emotional sentiment based on value and social action against the regime.

The most significant reflection of the Goethe Poetry Nights was on the revolutionary situation and the weakening of Amouzegar's premiership, consequently accelerating the revolutionary process. The peak of the protests in October 1977 was a result of the promotion of resistance and perseverance literature in the form of poetry and speeches during these ten nights. It was a defense and resistance through culture, art, the creation of artistic ideas and paintings, writing literary stories, and resistance plays against oppression, and composing odes and ghazals by artists and literary figures. The poetry nights sought to reawaken the spirit of vigilance, perseverance, endurance, and continuous struggle against tyranny. Consequently, revolutionary values transformed from an individual form at the Goethe Poetry Nights into a social movement and, ultimately, a collective action.

It is worth mentioning that the Goethe Poetry Nights occurred after Carter came to power in January 1977 and the creation of an "Open political atmosphere" in Iran that winter, which was an important test for the Shah, the results of which became clear a year later. Studies conducted on the ten nights of poetry and speeches at the Goethe Institute show that the prevalence of protest against the regime outweighed its professional guild nature. The concepts used during this period focused on "Westoxification," "anti-Westernism," and "Islamism," which were employed in poems related to the Imam of the Time (Imam Mahdi) and the issue of Palestine (Ebrahimi, 2020 AD/1399 SH: 21). The most important reflection of the Goethe Poetry Nights was in the form of resistance and perseverance literature. The most important components and indicators identified from the ten nights of performance included concepts such as praise of freedom, Mujahidin, and martyrs; calls for empathy and unity for resistance against the regime; attacks on the Shah's internal despotism; rebellion against mercenaries and traitors; exposing colonialism and global arrogance; praising the people and their valiant defense of values; presenting revolutionary role models; attention to the ancient history of Iran and Islam; condemning censorship and praising freedom of the pen, speech, and thought (Ebrahimi, 2020 AD/1399 SH: 22). During the poetry nights, poets with

religious inclinations such as Garmaroudi, Saffarzadeh, and Bahmani were present, and it took on a value-based and critical nature. On the tenth night, all participants poured into the streets and clashed with the police.

### **3.2. Martyrdom of Mostafa Khomeini:**

The Imam's eldest son passed away on October 23, 1977. His untimely death was called martyrdom from the beginning. The Pahlavi regime considered it a natural death due to a heart attack. In any case, the untimely death of Mostafa Khomeini was a suspicious death that stimulated the people's religious values in the revolution. The martyrdom of Mostafa Khomeini is important because its consequences were oriented toward religious and Islamic values. The prominent role of the Imam's eldest son in the struggle, planning for the Islamic movement, managing Imam Khomeini's office and household, and more importantly, his efforts to expand Imam Khomeini's thoughts and ideas were significant. Specifically, Mostafa Khomeini sought to combine Imam Khomeini's propaganda and awareness-raising ideas in the Islamic movement with armed struggle and combat (Rouhani, 1982 AD/1361 SH: 1, 932). In addition to awakening, religious awareness-raising, and preaching, Mostafa Khomeini considered learning military science and arts and guerrilla-partisan warfare necessary and essential. In this regard, he equipped revolutionary individuals and militant clerics and was in the process of providing equipment (Rouhani, 1982 AD/1361 SH: 1, 933). He believed that military training was an unavoidable necessity. Mostafa Khomeini believed that it was not possible to confront and overthrow a 2500-year-old regime with political work alone; therefore, arming prominent figures of the movement and armed struggle was a necessity. This issue was also monitored and observed by the regime's intelligence and espionage apparatus (Mohtashami, 1999 AD/1378 SH: 2, 294). With this description, his suspicious death was part of the regime's goals and plans to extinguish the movement after his martyrdom. As stated in SAVAK documents, clerics opposed to the regime and supporters of Khomeini's movement in Iran, Iraq, and abroad were trying to elevate Mostafa Khomeini to the level of Imam Khomeini so that he could be his successor after his death. SAVAK and the regime's effort was to prevent the rise of a second Khomeini; the assumption was that with the untimely death of Mostafa Khomeini, all the plans of the revolutionaries, clerics, and supporters of the Imam would be thwarted (Document No. 13026, Oct. 30, 1977, SAVAK

Iraq Branch). The regime's analysis of this action was mistaken, and its results were the opposite because this movement was oriented towards religious values and not material calculations. Thus, with the martyrdom of Mostafa Khomeini, the movement accelerated and, in fact, became a fire to a powder keg. After his martyrdom, the people mourned, and his untimely death was considered for the Imam as Ishmael was to Abraham. The Imam's steadfastness and patience in the face of his son's tragedy did not halt the movement, and the Imam's resolve on the path of the movement astonished everyone.

In the first days after Mostafa's martyrdom, the seminary classes were suspended, and from the very first hour, Imam Khomeini's house became a place for comings and goings, offering condolences, and mourning recitations. Grand Ayatollahs, sources of emulation, scholars, and various strata of people constantly came to the Imam's house (Neda Magazine, 1997 AD/1376 SH: No. 22, p. 23). This event led to a greater recognition of the Imam's personality and his ideas and the promotion of the Islamic movement. The seminary of Najaf was closed after the martyrdom of the Imam's son, and mourning ceremonies were held for him in Iraq for three nights in the largest mosque of Najaf. It was even decided that the closure would continue until the fortieth day (40<sup>th</sup>) of Mostafa Khomeini's martyrdom; however, the Imam started his classes on the tenth day so that other scholars could also resume their lessons (Mohtashami, 1997 AD/1376 SH: 1, 181). In holding various ceremonies, even up to the fortieth day, the regime's security forces were on full alert and in fear, and political speeches were delivered in all these ceremonies (Scientific Committee of the Martyr Mostafa Khomeini Congress, 1997 AD/1376 SH: 17). The most important demands in all the ceremonies were based on political and religious requests.

In the demonstrations after the martyrdom of the Imam's son, the people demanded: the Imam's return to the homeland, the release of political prisoners, the reopening of the Feyziyeh School in Qom for scholars and the resumption of classes, the freedom of assembly for religious clerics, confrontation with anti-religious manifestations, the reprimand of those responsible for arrests related to the hijab of female students and the prevention of such anti-Islamic and anti-value acts, the severing of cooperation and political relations with the Zionist regime, and the return of the country's official calendar to the Islamic Hijri calendar (15 Khordad Magazine, 1991 AD/1370 SH: No. 4, p. 562). The most important consequences of Mostafa Khomeini's martyrdom were the promotion of Imam Khomeini's name and the

strengthening of his leadership position. The impact of individual-social action at the societal level led to a value-based transformation and revolutionary acceleration.

### **3.3. The Article "Iran: Red and Black Colonization"**

On Saturday, January 7, 1978, an article penned by Ahmad Rashidi Motlagh was printed and published in the official *Ettela'at* newspaper. The actual author of the article is not definitively known and it was published under the pseudonym Ahmad Rashidi Motlagh (Milani, 2006 AD/1385 SH: 211); it is suspected that the Shah himself may have written it. The article insulted the clergy and Imam Khomeini (RA). The article was published with the following content: "Red and black colonization, both old and new, possesses the spirit of aggression, domination, and plunder, which is consistent with their intrinsic nature. It has seldom happened that these two recognized colonial forces of history have cooperated with one another, except in specific cases; at the beginning of the Shah and People's Revolution on the sixth of Bahman, 2520 [Imperial Calendar], the red and black colonizers of Iran, who ostensibly each had their own specific plans and programs in our country, united with each other. The manifestation of this sincere cooperation became apparent in the turmoil of the fifteenth of Khordad, 2522, in Tehran." (*Ettela'at* newspaper, No. 15506, 2536 [1978]: 7) In addition to insulting the clergy and Imam Khomeini, this newspaper article attributed the 15th of Khordad 1342 (June 5, 1963) uprising to an alliance of landowners and clerics. It claimed that only Imam Khomeini opposed the Pahlavi regime, proposing Islamic laws and inciting landowners whose interests were threatened; it alleged that other clerics were not aligned with Imam Khomeini. It also stated that landowners and clerics saw their plans thwarted after the land reforms and resorted to rioting against the "White Revolution," attempting to unite and reclaim their lost lands (*Ettela'at* newspaper, No. 15506, 2536 [1978]: 7). The published article portrayed the Imam's actions as fame-seeking and indicative of a lack of faith in his character, whereas the Imam had dedicated his entire life to the service of Islam and the people. Furthermore, the article depicted the Imam as an agent of colonialism and an "Indian Sayyid." (Madani, 1983 AD/1362 SH: 2, 242) It accused clerics who opposed the regime of secretly collaborating with communists to neutralize and nullify the achievements of the Shah's White Revolution (Abrahamian, 1998 AD/1377 SH: 624). The article was published at a very sensitive time and triggered value-based actions, provoking the religious and

revolutionary sentiments of the people and causing the revolution to gain twofold speed and acceleration. Moreover, this article coincided with the celebrations for women's liberation and the unveiling, as well as the recent passing of the Imam's eldest son. All of these factors led the Imam to repeatedly herald the imminent downfall of the Pahlavi dynasty (Navid newspaper, 1978 AH/1356 SH: No. 15, p. 2).

That the article's publication led to the expansion of protests and widespread unrest is confirmed in most sources. Why this article was published in this manner and with the Shah's insistence remains a question. Some sources attribute the cause to the elevation of the Imam's status and prestige after the martyrdom of his son, which the Shah sought to diminish (Milani, 2001 AD/1380 SH; Naraghi, 2019 AD/1398 SH), and that it was done after the issue of *Velayat-e Faqih* was raised and the monarchy was declared illegitimate. The Pahlavi regime's legitimacy was undermined by the theory of *Velayat-e Faqih*. The increasing power of the Imam and the weakening of the Shah's authority prompted the regime to confront Imam Khomeini (Masoud Ansari, 2020 AD/1399 SH: 75; Fardoust, 2008 AD/1387 SH: 1, 575). Furthermore, it appears that after the martyrdom of Mostafa Khomeini and the holding of various ceremonies and 40<sup>th</sup> (fortieth-day mourning) events following his passing, the political speeches delivered at these gatherings caused Islamic groups, elites, and intellectuals to unite with the clergy and show a greater interest in struggling against the regime. This issue multiplied the regime's anger (Tolu'i, 1993 AD/1372 SH: 755). Some trace the root to the personal animosity of Dariush Homayoun, the Shah's Minister of Information at the time, who used this to expand unrest against the regime (Lewis, 1983 AD/1362 SH: 62; Keddie, 1999 AD/1378 SH: 265; Gharabaghi, 1986 AD/1365 SH: 14). Tolu'i also considers the motive for publishing the article to be Hoveyda's hostility towards Amouzegar, aiming to topple his government (Tolu'i, 1993 AD/1372 SH: 754; Milani, 2001 AD/1380 SH). Whatever the reasons for the article's creation, the reaction of the Iranian people reinforced their orientation toward religious values and the performance of their duty. The cause—the insult to sacred figures and religious leadership—led not only to the fall of the government but to the collapse of the entire regime in the near future.

Jalal al-Din Madani, in his book "Contemporary Political History of Iran," believes that the article was published in the context of American human rights discourse and aimed to spread false propaganda against the Islamic movement, demean its leadership, and destroy its standing. However, it had the opposite effect: "They plotted, and Allah plotted, and Allah is



the best of plotters." The regime wanted to use the opportunity of American human rights discourse to its advantage, to target and humiliate the leadership of the Islamic movement at an opportune moment, to make people doubt the Imam, and to create a rift between the Imam and other clerics (Madani, 1983 AD/1362 SH: 2, 245). The Islamic movement led by Imam Khomeini was an Islamic movement and a religious uprising oriented toward values and authentic Islamic culture. Immediately after the article's publication and distribution in the *Ettela'at* newspaper, it was met with a severe reaction in Qom and throughout the country, causing a vast wave of anger and hatred against the regime.

The most significant consequence of the January 7th article was the increased speed and violence of the protestors against the regime. Numerous 40<sup>th</sup> commemorations took shape in Qom, Tabriz, Yazd, and other cities. The most important outcome of this insult was the highlighting of the Imam's position as the religious and political leader of the movement. In Shi'a culture and tradition, holding a fortieth-day ceremony for the slain is of great importance and happens spontaneously and popularly without the need for political mobilization or leadership (Moadel, 2003 AD/1382 SH: 182). The roots of such religious behaviors are embedded in religious values, which constitute collective action and value-oriented social action. The author of "Inside the Iranian Revolution" noted that such events, which would be considered ordinary in the West, caused a revolutionary storm in Iran—a country based on traditional-religious values—and had severe consequences (Stempel, 1999 AD/1378 SH: 135). Some are of the opinion that the Shah did not imagine that the society's religious values had the capacity to confront and overthrow the regime; however, the most important result of this article was the awakening and revival of the society's religious values, causing the masses to stand against the regime (Foran, 2004 AD/1383 SH: 559) and act on their religious duty. Social events influenced by religious values led to a value-based transformation and revolutionary acceleration.

#### **4. Marches and 40<sup>th</sup> as Social Action**

From late 1977 and throughout 1978, demonstrations and marches across Iran were carried out as a value-oriented social action, ultimately leading to victory. On January 9, 1978, the bloody uprising of Qom began. On Monday morning, many clerics, based on coordination from the previous night, began demonstrating at the Khan School and Astaneh Square. With

the closure of the bazaar, a large crowd gathered, and the people of Qom's march continued until noon on Monday. Ayatollah Golpayegani praised the sense of responsibility among the clergy and called this action unifying. Ayatollah Shariatmadari deemed the defense of religious authority a sacred value. Near noon, the crowd moved towards the homes of Ayatollah Najafi Marashi and Haeri. After that, clashes with the regime's security apparatus and SAVAK began and continued until 9 p.m. It is reported that nearly 90 people were killed that night. Imam Khomeini and Ayatollah Khomeini issued declarations, and Islamic countries such as Syria, Lebanon, Afghanistan, and Pakistan declared solidarity with the Iranian people (Madani, 1983 AD/1362 SH: 2, 247).

Following the 40<sup>th</sup> for the martyrs of Qom, the people of Tabriz rose up, and the movement continued. On February 18 of that year, the people of Tabriz declared a day of public mourning. Ayatollah Qazi and Shariatmadari endorsed the closure of businesses on February 18 in Tabriz for a memorial service to commemorate the 40<sup>th</sup> of the Qom martyrs. On the morning of Thursday, February 18, various strata of people gathered at the mosque. The presence of police and the firing of warning shots provoked the people, leading to an attack on a police kiosk and chants of "Death to the Shah" and "Long live Khomeini." These protests and clashes continued until midnight (Madani, 1983 AD/1362 SH: 2, 249; Foran, 2004 AD/1383 SH: 563).

On March 29 and 30, 1978, the people of Yazd rose up to hold the 40<sup>th</sup> for the martyrs of Tabriz. This event caused the uprising to spread to other cities. They boycotted and canceled the Nowruz (Persian New Year) celebrations of 1978, an ancient festival rooted in historical-civilizational culture, and acted in accordance with their religious beliefs and values. On Wednesday, March 29, after a mourning sermon, the people of Yazd took to the streets, chanting "Allahu Akbar, La Ilaha Illa Allah," "Long live Khomeini," and "Death to the Shah." During their march, they smashed the kiosks of the *Ettela'at* and *Rastakhiz* newspapers. Ayatollah Sadoughi declared the following day, Thursday, a public holiday in Yazd. On this day, large-scale demonstrations were held, demanding the release of political prisoners, especially Montazeri and Taleghani (Madani, 1983 AD/1362 SH: 2, 248). After May 19, 1978, came the 40<sup>th</sup> of the martyrs. The 40<sup>th</sup> always evoked the martyrdom of Sayyid al-Shuhada (Imam Hussein), which not only recalled the greatness of the Hussein 40<sup>th</sup> but also empowered and expanded the popular demonstrations against the Pahlavi regime. In the march of May 19, the slogan "Independence, Freedom, Islamic Government" became a public

anthem. Although flyers and declarations mentioned issues like the abolition of class oppression, bread, housing, and freedom, the dominant theme was Islamic values.

In a new form of social action, people devised a novel way to oppose the regime: not leaving their homes. By staying indoors, they drew attention and showed their protest. This negative action by the people was effective, and with public silence, they further isolated the regime (Madani, 1983 AD/1362 SH: 2, 253). After that, on July 21 of the same year, on the occasion of the birth of the Imam of the Time (Imam Mahdi), and during Ramadan of 1398 AH/August 1978 AD, the Imam published his 8-point message. At this time, large-scale demonstrations occurred in most cities. In addition to the aforementioned cities, protests took place in Isfahan, Najafabad, and Shahreza. On August 17, the Imam once again emphasized the call to struggle and demanded a decisive fight against the regime until its overthrow (Madani, 1983 AD/1362 SH: 2, 256). The religious and monotheistic nature of the movement, oriented towards Islamic values, was constantly expressed in the Imam's statements, speeches, and declarations (Imam Khomeini, 2008 AD/1378 SH: 8, 76; 2, 153). The presence of an aware and awakened populace in the movement, the 40<sup>th</sup>, and the protests was a result of religious values (Imam Khomeini, 1999 AD/1378 SH: 2, 153).

### **Cinema Rex**

The regime had just weathered a domino-like series of unrest and was preparing for a new 40<sup>th</sup>. A very shocking and accelerating event occurred that overshadowed all previous developments. On August 19, coinciding with the 25th anniversary of the August 19, 1953 coup, the Cinema Rex in Abadan, located in a working-class area, was suspiciously set on fire, and more than four hundred men, women, and children were burned alive. Official sources announced the number of victims of the Cinema Rex tragedy as 377 (*Keyhan* newspaper, 1978 AD/1357 SH: No. 10551, p. 2). The Pahlavi regime, seeking to exploit the situation opportunistically, immediately recalled recent popular attacks on cinemas and blamed the opposition for the fire. On the other hand, the opposition accused the regime and SAVAK of orchestrating a Reichstag-style fire, locking the cinema doors, and obstructing the timely response of the local fire department. They also pointed out that demonstrators only attacked empty cinemas showing "Obscene" foreign films, whereas Cinema Rex was showing an Iranian film that was openly critical of the regime and contemporary Iranian society. Whatever the truth, the day after the fire, several thousand people from the victims' families

and relatives gathered for a large funeral procession, all holding SAVAK responsible for the incident. The mourners marched through the streets of Abadan, shouting slogans like "Death to the Shah, Down with the Pahlavi monarchy," "The army is our brother, Khomeini is our leader." In sum, the demonstrations after the cinema tragedy were similar to the protests and unrest of the previous nine months, with a nature oriented towards religious values and, in a word, that the Shah must go (Abrahamian, 1998 AD/1377 SH: 633). This demand indicated that the regime was the culprit, even though the definitive identity of the perpetrators was never established. The reality is that the local police and fire department were openly involved in the matter, preventing the large crowd present at the scene from opening the cinema doors. The fire was brought under control with a four-hour delay, or they arrived at the scene late. Throughout Iran, the regime and SAVAK were recognized as the main culprits. At this time, people were shouting, "Death to the Shah, we will set him on fire." The grieving crowd drove the police out of the cemetery. In the last ten days of the holy month of Ramadan, between 50 and 100 people were martyred in clashes with the police in 14 Iranian cities. After this event, Jafar Sharif Emami replaced Amouzegar (Foran, 2007 AD/1386 SH: 561). In 1978, the day of the martyrdom of Imam Ali coincided with the seventh day of mourning for the fire victims, and demonstrators organized a massive protest (*Keyhan* newspaper, 1978 AD/1357 SH: No. 10544, p. 2; Avery, 2011 AD/1390 SH: 561). A gathering of representatives from the workers' organization called the incident a major national tragedy (*Ettela'at* newspaper, 1978 AD/1357 SH: No. 15691, p. 3).

Some link the cinema fire incident to a speech by the Shah one day earlier, on August 18. They say that after the Shah praised his own services and spoke of Iran's future, claiming he would lead Iran to a "Great Civilization" and contrasting it with the "Great terror" of others—referring to Imam Khomeini's messages recommending continued struggle—hundreds were burned in the cinema the very next day. Details of the incident revealed several suspicious facts: "The cinema's exit doors were locked; the type of flammable materials was identified; there was a ten-minute delay in notifying the fire department and a four-hour delay in their arrival; the fire hydrants at the scene were dry, in a city that was home to the world's largest oil refinery; the cinema was located near the police headquarters; and officials prevented people from breaking down the cinema doors. The newspapers also reported that the cinema doors were locked from the inside during the fire. Afterward, the manager, guard, and janitor of the cinema were arrested and imprisoned (*Keyhan* newspaper, 1978 AD/1357 SH: No.

10544, p. 2). Following this, the people of Khuzestan province seriously joined the revolutionary current (*Keyhan* newspaper, 1978 AD/1357 SH: No. 10546, p. 1). On the 21st of Ramadan, coinciding with the martyrdom of Imam Ali (AS), the demonstrations peaked and became international headlines (Madani, 1983 AD/1362 SH: 2, 256). The Associated Press reported, "The syndicate of Iranian cinema owners announced that they will refrain from reopening cinemas until reliable protection for them is provided." (*Ettela'at* newspaper, 1978 AD/1357 SH: No. 15691, p. 2)

### **Conclusion (Conclusion and Applied/Strategic Results)**

The research findings show that the revolutionary situation in Iran during the final days of the Pahlavi era, specifically the "Premiership of Jamshid Amouzegar," was oriented toward religious values. The collective action of the people was the result of value-rational action and was inspired by the uprising of Sayyid al-Shuhada (Imam Hussein). Before the Islamic Revolution intensified and led to victory, Imam Khomeini, by re-articulating the ideals of the Islamic movement, provided the theoretical and value-based foundation for revolutionary action. Approximately three years after Reza Shah was deposed by the Allies and succeeded by his son, Imam Khomeini published his first writings that had a political and insurrectionary nature. The Imam cited this verse from the Quran: "Say, 'I only advise you of one thing: 'That you rise up for Allah, in pairs or individually' (Surah Saba: 46). This message from the Imam was revolutionary in nature. This statement was emphasized from the beginning of Mohammad Reza Shah's rule. The Imam explained that the Prophet (PBUH) himself, who was immersed in contemplation and thought, rose up for God and fought to change and reform the socio-political situation. As long as Muslims rise up for worldly material interests, it will not yield results.

On the 15th of Khordad, during Ashura, the Imam declared the Shah's government to be against Islam and religious values, highlighting its relationship with the Zionist regime and its enmity towards the Quran. Subsequently, demonstrations in 1964, 1970, and 1975 occurred with a similar orientation toward religious values. What gained more strength during the premiership of Jamshid Amouzegar and accelerated the revolution was the formation of groups based on religious values, such as the "Abuzar Revolutionary Group," "Mahdiyyoun," "Allahu Akbar Group," and other Islamic currents with a religious and ideological nature. This issue peaked when the Imam's son passed away under suspicious circumstances. After



that, the publication of the insulting article against the Imam in January 1978 was interpreted as a symbolic action against religious values and, according to Smelser's theory, played the role of a structural strain and emotional mobilization. Other events, such as the uprisings of January 9 in Qom and February 18 in Tabriz, and uprisings in at least 50 other large and small cities, led to the holding of 40th ceremonies for the martyrs. All these uprisings and mourning ceremonies were religious in nature and oriented toward the authentic values of the revolution. In August 1978, the people's anger reached its peak, heralding the end of Amouzegar's premiership.

The findings indicate that the domino-like fall of governments one after another as the regime neared its collapse made the victory of the Islamic Revolution inevitable. Consequently, the Islamic movement, Imam Khomeini's religious uprising, and the factors that led to the victory of the Islamic Revolution were oriented toward values and the performance of religious duty. As pointed out in the theories of Weber and Smelser, firstly, the Islamic-religious value nature ("Value-rational action") caused the revolutionary presence of the people. Secondly, as Smelser indicated, the existence of revolutionary conduciveness, strain, a generalized belief, popular mobilization, and the helplessness and desperation of the ruling regime led to action based on religious duty.

#### Applied and Strategic Results of the Research:

- ≠ An innovative explanation of the nature of the Islamic Revolution, the roots of the collapse, and the role of values and Imam Khomeini's religious education in society, which strengthened and matured policies and systems. Its continuation will ensure dynamism. Specifically, the research results indicate that adherence to religious values in the Islamic Revolution brings about dynamism.
- ≠ Presenting the experiences of the Islamic Revolution to Islamic movements and uprisings in the Islamic world and the resistance. Because it is Islamic and value-oriented, this experience serves as a strategy. The research results show the impact of religious values at the individual and social levels in creating movements, dynamism, and revolutionary mobilization. The diplomatic apparatus and bodies dealing with revolutionary movements can practically use the role of value-based action at the individual and social levels in Islamic countries.
- ≠ Presenting the distinguishing feature and unique characteristic of the revolution to other Islamic and transnational governments: that they will not succeed as long as they

are not value-oriented. The strategy of applying political Islam is practically usable for revolutionary institutions and the foreign policy apparatus.

- ≠ For Islamic and liberation movements disillusioned with Eastern and Western models: presenting the model of the Islamic Revolution based on the innate nature of justice-seeking and progressive values.
- ≠ It is recommended that future researchers meticulously investigate the role of innate and divine (religious) values in the events after 1963 in a detailed, case-study manner.

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