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70 Revolution in Iran
Dictatorship and Pseudo-Modernism

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3) That merit rather than connections be recognized as the basis for he owed his prominence to his affiliation to Bahaism and informal promotion and responsibility. (JJ.S.E Documents, Vol. 7, Document contacts, rather than purely to his abilities and experience. However, No. 76-10017, p. 73)

while this may be true in part, it was mainly his close friendship with Hassan Ali Mansur and his membership of the same dowreh as Mansur Empress Farah's recommendations not only showed the extent of the which contributed to his success.

problem facing the Shah in 1976 but that those recommendations must

The word dowreh is widely used in Iran to describe an informal but have been ignored. The date of the CIA reports is also significant, for regular gathering of people who have a common purpose or interest at the time the Shah was still very much in charge.

The group's common factor may be anything - political, religious, professional, family or simply poker or bridge playing. What is significant about the dowreh is that its members may come from different social INDIVIDUALS AND INSTITUTIONS

backgrounds. The dowreh is a normal means of exchanging ideas and information in a society which is addicted to gossip because of lack of

It is often said that Iran is a 1000-family country. If the 1000 refers to public information and free media Some prominent dowrehs were the number of elite families, it is a great exaggeration. Below the Shah

known to be affiliated to foreign governments, and several dowrehs and his family, there were only 'a relatively small group of elite families were associated with Freemasonry. Some very prominent and influential which wielded power and influence not only in politics but also in

tial politicians were known to be Freemasons and members of dowrehs-, business, commerce and the professions' (US.E Documents, Vol. 7, these included Hossein Ala, Manouchehr Eqbal and Dr Jafar Sharif-

Documents No. 76-10017, p. 20). They held key positions within the government. It was also significant that when Egbal was prime minister in 1958, eleven members of his cabinet belonged to a dowreh associated with Freemasonry, the Hafez Club (U.S.E Documents, Vol. 20, Document No. A-351, pp. 16-17).

no more than 40, with an additional 15~0 provincial families whose influence was deep in a relatively limited area (Bill, quoted in U.S. E Documents, Vol. 1, Document No. 76-10017, p. 21).

One of the key players in the Shah's political system was his longest serving prime minister, Amir Abbas Hoveyda. Hoveyda was appointed to the post after the assassination of Hassan Ali Mansur in 1965. He had developed into the Iran-e Novin Party, which was later headed by Hoveyda who succeeded Mansur in 1965. The dowreh system shows the importance of such institutions in the formation of the political elite and the oeuvre among conflicting personal ambitions of other officials who were in at least covert competition for his job; to avoid any serious errors in interpreting and carrying out the Shah's wishes; and, perhaps more important; the ability to play second fiddle to the Shah' (U.S.E Documents, Vol. 7, Document No. 76-10017, p. 11).

Iranian political system. One dowreh was the 'French-doctorate group', which met weekly for 25 years. In a 'three-year period its eleven members included a prime minister, three cabinet ministers, three ambassadors, the director of the NIOC and the president of the Teheran Chamber of Commerce' (U.S.E Documents, Vol. 1, Document No. 76-10017, p. 20).

The Iran-e Novin Party (INP) remained the largest party in the country. Ostensibly, the Mardom Party was in opposition to the INP, but neither the Shah nor the prime minister tolerated the criticism of its party chief, Nasser Ameri. However, his religious background did much damage to the Shah's standing amongst

Despite its lack of influence over foreign policy, the INP wielded the ulama. Hoveyda's rise to power illustrated a rare case of upward 'If power throughout the country through its network of influential mem-

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mobility in the Iranian system. It was widely believed at the time that
bers in high places. According to the US embassy in Teheran,
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