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From the Faculty Advisors

Since it's founding in 2016, *DĀNESH* has sought to provide a forum to showcase the original research produced by undergraduate students at the University of Oklahoma's Iranian Studies program. This fourth volume of the journal was produced through the able editorial leadership of **Corey Standley** (BA, 2019) and **Kayleigh Kuyon** (BA, 2019). As with their work on volume three, Corey and Kayleigh have ensured that *DĀNESH* has continued to thrive as a forum for the study of all aspects of the history, culture, society, and politics of Iran and the Persianate world.

The name of the journal, *DĀNESH,* comes from the Persian word meaning *knowledge, learning,* and *wisdom*. We believe this is a fitting name for a journal that seeks to foster deep and compassionate understanding of one of the world's most culturally rich and historically complex civilizations. It is with this in mind that we present this volume of *DĀNESH.*

Afshin Marashi
Farzaneh Family Chair in Modern Iranian History
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From the Editors-in-Chief

We are proud to present to you the fourth volume of the University of Oklahoma's Undergraduate Journal of Iranian Studies, *DĀNESH*. Through the past three editions of the journal we have seen wonderful presentations on varying regional topics, spanning the breadths of history and social strata. In the tradition of the meaning of *DĀNESH*, or knowledge, we present these articles as an offering to expand the collective dialogue on the understanding of the Iranian and Persian state. We are pleased to have worked on this edition with a group of driven authors to present an edition comprising of submissions focusing on both historical issues and events as well as contemporary issues that Iranians are currently facing.

This work is a collective effort among our undergraduate authors and editors. We would like to extend a humble thanks to our Associate Editors, without whom we would not be able to produce such a successful and professional journal. It would also be remiss of us to not extend a heartfelt thank you to the Farzaneh Family, for without their continued support of the Iranian Studies program none of this would be possible. The University of Oklahoma's Libraries and Printing Services are the unsung heroes of this endeavor, as without their support we would not have the ability to make *DĀNESH* so accessible, both our print and digital versions. Thank you to the tireless, diligent work of our authors, who have crafted these amazing works that we are proudly sharing with you.

And finally, we are wholly indebted to the continued and unwavering support of Dr. Afshin Marashi, whose guidance and advice was invaluable in this journal's creation and continuance. This work, and so much of the growth of the Iranian Studies program as a whole, would not be possible without your faith in us, and our institution. Your academic guidance, advice, and friendship have been invaluable to us.

Corey Standley (BA, 2019), Editor-in-Chief

Kayleigh Kuyon (BA, 2019), Editor-in-Chief

Clericalism, Constitutionalism, and Cautiousness: Iran's 1905 Revolution Through the Eyes of Sheikh Fazollah Nuri

Jake Waugh*

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The summer of 1909 was a summer of retribution. The first target was Mohammad Ali Shah, the Qajar king who had forcefully opposed constitutionalism and was responsible for the bombardment of the *Majlis* the year prior. After being replaced by his young son and forced to cede much of his property to the government, Mohammad Ali Shah was exiled to Russia in September. Another prominent target was Sheikh Fazollah Nuri, a senior cleric and the monarchy's chief ally among the *ulama*, whose shared opposition to constitutionalism earned him a swift execution in July of the same year. [1] Recounting the sequence of events that ultimately led to Nuri's death is particularly useful for understanding the complexities of how the *ulama* navigated Iran's Constitutional Revolution and its aftermath. Although Nuri always kept a baseline of ideological consistency, he was someone who saw—and advocated—both sides of the issue. Therefore, he serves as a model case study.

Broadly, the emergence of factions among clerics had a lasting impact not only on the constitutional movement, but also on how we view the historical relationship between religion and politics in Iran. The particular story of Sheikh Fazollah Nuri, however, is representative of a more specific truth about Iranian Shiism during the Revolution: the political opportunity presented by constitutionalism and, conversely, cautiousness toward political change, both drove clerics to defy the very real desire for clerical unity. Although the effort to compromise and reach internal consensus was evident, the *ulama* ultimately succumbed to the contemporaneous emergence of political factions because

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[1] Janet Afary, *The Iranian Constitutional Revolution, 1906-1911: Grassroots Democracy, Social Democracy, and the Origins of Feminism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), 259.

individual clerics opted to prioritize the consequences of political change over the consequences of disunity. The evidence to support this conclusion will be presented in three parts: the beginning of divisions among clerics on the issue of constitutionalism, how they attempted to reconcile differences, and their failure to unify.

Clericalism Meets Politics

Nuri was born in the village of Nur, Mazandaran, but left for Iraq at a young age to receive a Shiite clerical education. Although first studying in Najaf, the most consequential period of his education took place in Samarra where Nuri studied under Haji Mirza Hasan Shirazi, the *mujtahid* who later issued the famous *fatwa* in opposition to the Tobacco Concession of 1890.[2] It is clear that the ideological influence of Shirazi on his pupils foreshadowed Nuri's opposition to the Constitutional Revolution, an act that put Nuri in a special group of particularly influential clerics in the history of modern Iranian politics.[3]

Before becoming a notable political figure, however, Nuri was principally a *mujtahid* in Tehran who worked to settle cases for local men of the merchant and upper-classes.[4] In his early days in Tehran, his network of familial connections landed him a job in the Qajar royal court where he managed the registrar. In this capacity, he was given purview over contracts, including marriages, related to the business of the royal family. However, the scope of his job was much broader, and Nuri oversaw items such as tax collection and the wills of notable bazaaris as well.[5] These roles, in addition to his status as a *mujtahid*, solidified his position as a proverbial gatekeeper of affairs between the people and the government. For instance, when the *Chaleh-ye Meydan* district of Tehran suffered a water shortage amidst drought conditions, it became incumbent upon Nuri to relay the urgency of the crisis to Tehran's governor, acting as an essential intermediary.[6]

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[2]Abdul-Hadi Hairi, "Shaykh Fazl Allah Nuri's Refutation of the Idea of Constitutionalism," in *Religion and Politics in Modern Iran*, ed. Llyod Ridgeon (New York: I.B. Tauris & Co., 2005), 37.

[3] Yann Richard, "Ayatollah Kashani: Precursor of the Islamic Republic?" in *Religion and Politics in Iran*, ed. Nikki R. Keddie (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983), 102.

[4] Vanessa Martin, "NURI, FAŻL-ALLĀH," in *Encyclopædia Iranica*, online ed., 2009, http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/nuri-fazl-allah.

[5] Mateo Mohammad Farzaneh, *The Iranian Constitutional Revolution and the Clerical Leadership of Khurasani* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2015), 195.

[6] Martin, "NURI, FAŻL-ALLĀH."

As alluded to, Nuri's ultimate legacy centers largely on the issue of constitutionalism in Iran at the beginning of the twentieth century, including how he reacted to the growing movement and how he navigated the internal divides within the *ulama*. These two latter challenges perhaps deserve separate treatment, as Nuri's actions can only be explained by illustrating the distinct tensions each concern presented. However, there were many instances in which clerical unity and opposition to constitutionalism were pitted against each other, and Nuri's response to those events were revealing of his allegiances. Although the desire among the clergy to act cohesively gave Nuri pause to briefly support the constitutional movement, his actions before and after this moment of toleration, as I will refer to it, demonstrate just how ardently opposed he was to the idea.

Even as internal divisions among the *ulama* over the issue of constitutionalism began to emerge, one thing that united all the clerics was the desire to safeguard themselves, regardless of the outcome. This meant assuring both the preservation of power and the safety of individual clerics—or so they thought. At the beginning of the Revolution, in the city of Kerman, a cleric who supported the constitutionalist movement was tortured by a Qajar ruler, which at the time was not very common. In response to the event, Nuri was notably quiet or, as some have suggested, perhaps silently pleased with the incident. This story, which was recounted by the historian Nazim al-Islam, proved that Nuri was not always opposed to placing his disapproval of constitutionalism above his respect for the status of clerics within Iran.[7] Although this revelation about Nuri is not entirely indicative of his subsequent actions (i.e. his moment of toleration in the introduction of so-called "clerical constitutionalism"), it is rather consistent with his actions later down the road.

Nuri's political hand had been strengthened in 1903 with the ascension of Abd-al-Majid Mirza Ayn-al-Dawla to the role of grand vizier under Mozaffar al-Din Shah. Ayn-al-Dawla's predecessor, Amin-al-Soltan, preferred one of Nuri's contemporaries, Sayyed Abd Allah Bihbahani, who would soon become a leading supporter of the constitutionalist movement among the *ulama*. However, with the arrival of Ayn-al-Dawla, Bihbahani was passed over and a great deal of political influence was bestowed upon Nuri instead.[8] The transition enflamed a tension that would later resurface in the constitutionalism debate with Nuri and Bihbahani on opposing sides. Bihbahani, along with other clerics (most notably, Sayyed Mohammad Tabatabai), began to ramp up their opposition to the Qajars as a result of their decision to impose punishments, including torture, upon the

[7] Mohammad Farzaneh, *The Iranian Constitutional Revolution,* 195-196.
[8] Martin, "NURI, FAŻL-ALLĀH."

bazaaris in 1905.[9] In many ways, the *ulama* served as the protector of the merchant class. Consequently, many clerics felt greatly disgruntled by these events. It opened a window of opportunity for some, Bihbahani and Tabatabai chief among them, to voice their opposition more openly.[10] After subsequent protests, when the demand for a "house of justice" was laid down, Nuri reluctantly agreed to the idea. Even though he was more supportive of the monarchy by virtue of his appointments and ideology, and even though he would have preferred not to follow the lead of Bihbahani and Tabatabi, Nuri understood how weak the government had become and decided to abandon his relationships in order to save his own reputation. Nuri agreed to the establishment of a parliament if and only if it were designed to be an Islamic institution, designed to safeguard religious institutions above all else.[11]

A Brief Toleration of (Clerical) Constitutionalism

Even though debates over modernity were threatening to the power of the *ulama* in Iran, central to those debates were the obstacles in reconciling Islam with modernization which, as Monica Ringer has observed, worked in the *ulama's* favor in the 19th century and into the 20th century. Islam still dominated the language of the debate, keeping full European-style modernity off the table in most areas of life, especially politics and the issue of constitutionalism. Accordingly, any reform would require the legitimacy of support from the *ulama*.[12] However, the clerical response to the issue of constitutionalism was, as mentioned, far from uniform. Occasionally, for sake of simplification, the *ulama* are thrown into a categorically anti-modernization camp, but, as Ringer also notes, that is not a very fair assessment. The relationship each cleric held with an aspect of modernity differed from individual to individual, often shaped by that cleric's association with the religious hierarchy and the state, among other things.[13] It is also true that the idea of constitutionalism, and clerical support for it, was not as radical of a proposal in Iran as it had been in other instances around the world. This is because the vision of constitutionalism in Iran did not necessitate getting rid of the monarchy. The real issue was the handling of

[9] Ali Gheissari and Vali Nasr, *Democracy in Iran: History and the Quest for Liberty* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 29.
[10] Ibid.
[11] Martin, "NURI, FAŻL-ALLĀH."
[12] Monica M. Ringer, "Negotiating Modernity: Ulama and the Discourse of Modernity in Nineteenth-Century Iran," in *Iran: Between Tradition and Modernity*, ed. Ramin Jahanbegloo (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2004), 47-48.
[13] Ibid.

matters related to law and justice. More specifically, it was a concern over the absolute power to apply the law arbitrarily with few mediating forces (e.g. *fatwas*).[14] This line of thinking is distinct from republicanism, for example, where a truly anti-monarchist argument is employed. Consequently, while constitutionalists were opposed to absolutism, most were not altogether opposed to the institution of monarchy.[15]

One way the *ulama* helped to ensure their continued authority in the new constitutional era (as understood in the above context) was through ushering in the adoption of the Supplementary Constitutional Laws of 1907. Inspired by examples in the Western tradition, particularly the Bill of Rights in the United States Constitution, many constitutionalists thought it necessary to have a similar addition to the new Constitution of 1906. In some ways, these laws were reflective of the intent of a bill of rights as we have come to know it. For instance, they restricted the powers of the Shah—with two notable exceptions in the power over cabinet positions and the military, both of which were expanded—and codified national sovereignty.[16] Yet, the influence of the *ulama* kept another hallmark of modernity from making its way into these laws: the separation of church and state. Altogether, these laws consisted of 107 different articles, beginning with Article 1 which declared a state religion, Islam, and outlined the Shah's duties to promote it.[17] The next, Article 2, dictated that the *Majlis* would be prohibited from acting in a manner contrary to Islam. It also provided veto power to a group of five *mujtahids*, all of whom would be able to serve in the *Majlis* through appointment by the *ulama* and approval by democratically-elected members of the body.[18] In exchange for including the language of Article 2, which served to safeguard the *ulama*, Bihbahani and Tabatabai endorsed Article 8, which provided "equal rights before the law."[19] Many of the other articles that appear to be liberal in nature contain language that qualify certain rights and liberties to a great degree. For instance, Article 20, which granted the freedom of expression (including written works), was amended to prohibit

[14] Ali Gheissari, "Constitutional Rights and the Development of Civil Law in Iran," in *Iran's Constitutional Revolution: Popular Politics, Cultural Transformations, and Transnational Connections*, eds. H.E. Chehabi and Vanessa Martin (New York: I.B. Taurus & Co., 2010), 72.
[15] Ibid.
[16] Afary, *The Iranian Constitutional Revolution,* 109.
[17] Ibid., 89.
[18] F.R.C. Bagley, "New Light on the Iranian Constitutional Movement," in *Qajar Iran: Political, Social and Cultural Change 1800-1925*, eds. Edmund Bosworth and Carole Hillenbrand (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1983), 54.
[19] Afary, *The Iranian Constitutional Revolution,* 108-109.

materials "hurtful to the perspicuous religion."[20] However, the language of the article also dictated that those who stood accused of heretical works would be punished by public authorities and not religious leadership according to certain interpretations of *sharia* law.[21] Although the final set of Supplementary Constitutional Laws were a bit of a mixed bag, a set of compromises between the *ulama* and liberal reformers, it was nonetheless true that these laws, which were initially intended to serve as a more conventional bill of rights, had morphed into the codification of clerical power.

Nuri had been an integral part of the debate over particular articles contained within the Supplementary Constitutional Laws, especially the language of Article 2. Nuri was concerned by the concessions made in some of the other articles, particularly Article 8 and Article 20, but instead of abandoning the effort he worked to incorporate even more conservative language. His initial proposal for Article 2, for example, included the power of judicial review to be bestowed upon select *mujtahids*; however, it purposefully left out many specifics like how to determine which *mujtahids* would be endowed with such power.[22] The ultimate language that was adopted, as described above, was a result of bargaining between Nuri and secular constitutionalists. Sayyed Hasan Taqizadeh, a radical constitutionalist from Tabriz, helped to negotiate the compromise by debating Nuri, arguing that enhancing *mujtahid* power was unnecessary in light of the proposed Article 27 which stated that all laws must comply with *sharia*.[23] Despite the fact that a compromise was ultimately struck (i.e. the five *mujtahids* appointed by the *ulama* and approved by the *Majlis*), Nuri grew tired of dealing with secular proposals. After all, he had already entered these debates/negotiations with an extreme skepticism toward constitutionalism.

Why Nuri continued to tepidly endorse constitutionalism, and even briefly promote so-called clerical constitutionalism, is a question that some scholars have approached carefully. It seems as though much of his logic appears to have been a result of both political and personal implications in the emergence of factions. While it was a universal desire within the *ulama* to present a united front amidst the political changes, the particular fear of being a sole dissenter appears to have kept Nuri from being more outspoken in his criticism early on. Nuri was not the only critic, but he was by far the most notable.[24] However, his restraint began to fade as the process continued. Nuri's ally, Ayn-al-Dawla, had

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[20] Ibid.
[21] Bagley, "New Light on the Iranian Constitutional Movement," 55.
[22] Martin, "NURI, FAŻL-ALLĀH."
[23] Ibid.
[24] Mohammad Farzaneh, *The Iranian Constitutional Revolution,* 194-195.

left his post in July 1906 in the face of growing unpopularity. In the *Majlis*, Nuri was passed over for a spot on the council of *mujtahids* while his ideological rivals, Tabatabai and Bihbahani, were confirmed.[25] As Nuri's patience grew thin, he began to reevaluate his strategy, including his relationships with other clerics and the existing political order.

Reprioritizing: Placing Politics over Clerical Unity

Nuri's close relationship with Mohammad Ali Shah is speculated to have begun around the time just preceding the debates on the Supplementary Constitutional Laws. Although the extent of this relationship would not become apparent until later, some constitutionalists began to speculate its existence at that time because they felt as though they could detect the influence of conservative *ulama* on the Shah.[26] Mohammad Ali Shah was markedly more enthusiastic in his promotion of absolutism than his father and predecessor, Mozaffar al-Din Shah. Even though, at times, Mohammad Ali Shah would make pragmatic decisions, e.g. swearing loyalty to the constitution, it was often clear that his underlying intention was to destroy the constitution and the constitutionalist movement.[27] Although the *ulama* had a great deal to gain from controlling and executing the establishment of constitutionalism, the movement beyond the constitution itself was not easily contained.[28] For some like Nuri, the secular and Western elements were enough to make peace with a new realignment of interests, this time finding more in common with the Qajars.

Once fully realigned in opposition, Nuri wasted no time in denouncing the *Majlis*, calling it illegitimate, and beginning a wave of protests in favor of the restoration of full monarchy. In 1907, at the Shah Abdul Azim shrine in Rey, Nuri coordinated a *bast* where he not only slammed the overall constitutionalist movement for its attempts at subverting Islam, but also launched a series of more targeted attacks on ethnic minorities such as Jews and Zoroastrians for their part in trying to bring down traditional institutions. Simultaneously, Najaf was transmitting mixed signals. Some *mujtahids* signaled their support while others, most notably Muhammad Kazim Khurasani, furiously condemned Nuri. Khurasani even went as far as to call Nuri a non-Muslim.[29] The battle among the *ulama* in Tehran, which pitted Nuri against Tabatabai and Bihbahani, was not

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[25] Ibid.
[26] Martin, "NURI, FAŻL-ALLĀH."
[27] Michael Axworthy, *A History of Iran: Empire of the Mind* (New York: Basic Books, 2008), 206.
[28] Ibid.
[29] Ibid.

the only site of contention. In Najaf, the same debate played out, with Khurasani firmly in the pro-constitution camp. At times, Khurasani ceded some support to the more conservative faction in Najaf, led by Sayyed Mohammad Kazem Yazdi, while Nuri continued to grow support in Tehran. As Michael Axworthy has noted, a more empirical view of this trade off was observed at times of prayer where the number of followers behind Khurasani was dwarfed by thousands compared to Yazdi.[30] However, despite the ebbs and flows in support, Najaf still held considerable support for constitutionalism in the years leading up to and during the Revolution.[31] The pro-constitutionalist sentiment that existed in Najaf did not appear overnight, as the rocky relationship between the *ulama* and the Qajars would suggest. Long before the early days of the Revolution, the monarchy had been embattled with Najaf clerics who criticized the government from afar. Telegrams sent between Najaf and Tehran document this quite clearly. For instance, as early as 1902 there were clerical demands for a "chamber of representatives," which of course was an idea that would return four years later.[32] Another well-known incident included name-calling, where Ayatollah Sharabyani called Muzaffar al-Din Shah a "dog."[33]

During the Revolution, the aforementioned disagreement between Khurasani and Yazdi showed that Najaf, too, had succumbed to the emergence of political factionalism. Predictably, each side formed supporting alliances between Najaf and Tehran, e.g. Khurasasni supported Tabatabai and Bihbahani, Yazdi supported Nuri, etc. These alliances remained more or less intact until the bombardment of the *Majlis* in June of 1908. In cutting all that was left of his semi-conciliatory (public, not private) attitude toward the parliament, the Shah enlisted the help of Russian forces, including the Cossack Brigade, to not only bombard the *Majlis*, but to also arrest or execute several constitutionalist leaders.[34] Among the leaders were Tabatabai and Bihbahani, both of whom were expelled.[35] This revival of monarchal power, which began the so-called "period of Lesser Autocracy," led to conflict in Tehran and Tabriz.[36] Meanwhile, the involvement of a foreign state in the reclamation of absolute power forced some anti-constitutionalist clerics to revisit their allegiances. Although some clerics

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[30] Ibid., 207.
[31] Afary, *The Iranian Constitutional Revolution,* 5.
[32] Abdul-Hadi Hairi, "Why Did the ʿUlamā Participate in the Persian Constitutional Revolution of 1905-1909?" *Die Welt des Islams* 17, no. 1 (1976): 127-128.
[33] Ibid., 127.
[34] Gheissari and Nasr, *Democracy in Iran,* 32-33.
[35] Hairi, "Why Did the ʿUlamā Participate," 132.
[36] Gheissari and Nasr, *Democracy in Iran*, 32-33.

like Yazdi were sympathetic to Nuri and often agreed with his point of view, many of them disapproved of Mohammad Ali Shah's decision to turn to Russia. Other ayatollahs like Sayyid Ismail as-Sadr and Nuri's own mentor, Shirazi—both of whom had not necessarily supported the Shah but had appeased him—turned as well.[37] Nobody wanted to be associated with the propagation of non-Islamic forces in Iran, nor did they want to be associated with the prospect of a return to absolutism. Although the Summer of 1908 had this unifying effect among the *ulama*, their actions were still driven by the political implications of Russian involvement, not the desire to unify. After all, this new development did not change the considerable disagreement on the issue of constitutionalism, which very much remained a separate issue.

Conversely, the Russian bombardment of the *Majlis* forced Nuri to double down on his alliance with Mohammad Ali Shah.[38] For Nuri, the issue of foreign involvement and constitutionalism were not separate. As Vanessa Martin notes, Nuri was not enthused with the prospect of a return to absolutism per se, but he saw it as the only viable alternative to constitutionalism at the time, especially given the divide over support and condemnation of constitutionalism among the *ulama*. He supported Mohammad Ali Shah and his efforts to reclaim power from the *Majlis* because he saw the preservation of monarchy as paramount to maintaining religious influence on politics. Accordingly, his support was conditional. While he believed the monarchy should not be bound by the restraints of parliament, it would still have to conform to the rules and norms of *sharia*.[39]

In writing after the coup, Nuri outlined the reasons why constitutionalism was inconsistent with Islam.[40] In it, he contends that constitutionalism wrongly attributes sovereignty to an entity other than God and that God must make all laws, which can only be interpreted by senior clergymen.[41] This argument is quite forceful considering Nuri's evolution from skeptic of constitutionalism to tepid advocate to, finally, ardent opponent. That trajectory underscores the tension between undesired political outcomes (i.e. the erosion of religious influence) and the pressure from other clerics. More importantly, Nuri's final

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[37] Hairi, "Why Did the ʿUlamā Participate," 137.
[38] Martin, "NURI, FAŻL-ALLĀH."
[39] Ibid.
[40] The writing referenced here is the *Kitab Tadhkirat al-Ghafil va-Irshadal-Jahil*, translated as *Book of Admonition to the Misinformed and Guidance for the Ignorant* (referenced in n. 41).
[41] Nader Hashemi, "Religious Disputation and Democratic Constitutionalism: The Enduring Legacy of the Constitutional Revolution on the Struggle for Democracy in Iran," *Constellations* 17, no. 1 (2010): 53.

argument shows which of those forces ultimately won out. The decisiveness and disregard for opposing opinion within the *ulama* show clearly that, amidst the political turmoil, Nuri prioritized his own cautiousness.

In July of 1909, not long after articulating his forceful argument against constitutionalism and in defense of the coup, Nuri was placed on trial by the Directory. Until the Second *Majlis* could be established, the Directory, a group of a dozen leading constitutionalists, was tasked with carrying out Iran's affairs. Among other things, their agenda included expelling the Shah and putting influential anti-constitutionalists on trial.[42] Nuri was implicated in the killing of constitutionalists earlier that year and was forced to defend his political involvement including, presumably, his relationship with the Shah. Nuri's defense echoed his political argument and he justified his actions by claiming that as a senior cleric, it was his duty to defend Islam from those who sought to undermine it. Nuri was sentenced to death, a decision doubly-endorsed by virtue of a *fatwa* handed down by Nuri's ideological opponents within the *ulama*.[43]

Conclusion

The emergence of factions during the Constitutional Revolution unveiled certain truths about the relationship between Shiism and politics in Iran. As stated in the introduction, the story of Sheikh Fazollah Nuri is indicative of one truth in particular. Given the competing forces of politics and clerical unity, the *ulama* ultimately fell prey to political factionalism because individual clerics opted to prioritize the consequences of political change, whether viewed positively or negatively, over the consequences of disunity. In other words, the opportunity presented by constitutionalism or, in the case of Nuri, cautiousness toward political change, drove clerics to defy the pressure to act uniformly during the Revolution.

Although Nuri's story shows how political division ultimately overtook clerical unity, it should not be misinterpreted to suggest there was a lack of pressure to act in a unified manner. In fact, the reason why Nuri serves as excellent case study is because his actions—specifically, promoting constitutionalism before abandoning the idea—show just how much pressure the desire to act uniformly influenced individual clerics. Even though Nuri was skeptical of constitutionalism from the beginning, his brief toleration of would-be clerical constitutionalism was a direct result of internal pressure among the *ulama* to navigate the Revolution in a unified way that would allow Shiism to retain, and gain, influence over Iranian politics. In many ways, it was personal.

[42] Afary, *The Iranian Constitutional Revolution,* 258.
[43] Ibid., 258-59.

Nuri feared emerging as the major, lone dissenter to the plan devised by his contemporaries, who tried to keep him content by allowing him to negotiate concessions, e.g. the language of Supplementary Constitutional Laws.[44] Nuri's turn away from compromise should be appreciated with this added context. The pressure to compromise remained, but as evident by his later actions and writings, Nuri instead chose to reorganize his priorities, placing politics above unity.

[44] Martin, "NURI, FAŻL-ALLĀH."