

# Shah Returns in Triumph

## As Army Kicks Out Mossadegh

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**Date:** Aug. 18. **Place:** The home of Premier Mohammed Mossadegh in Teheran. Loy Henderson, the American Ambassador just returned from an eleven-week absence, was asking about Shah Mohammed Reza Pahlavi's seemingly abortive attempt of Aug. 16 to dismiss "Old Mossy" by decree in favor of Gen. Fazollah Zahedi.

"I have no official knowledge that the Shah has issued such a decree," the Premier, for once fully dressed, replied in effect. "If he had, it can have no effect, because the Shah is a figurehead who can wear all the pretty uniforms he wants, attend all the ceremonies and funerals, but he can do nothing else. I made a solemn agreement with him that he could keep his throne as long as he stayed out of politics. He has now broken the agreement and I've kicked him out.

"What is more, I discovered all the time the Shah was in the pay of the British. All my opponents have been bought by the British. Thirty opposition members of the Majlis have literally sold out to British agents... The National Movement is here to stay forever. It will never be removed except by British and American tanks."

**Date:** Aug. 20. **Place:** General Zahedi's third-floor office in the Teheran Officers Club. Dr. Mossadegh, in pink pajamas, hobbled in on a yellow malacca cane. The tall, elegant general hopped up from his swivel chair and stretched out his hand, saying: "Salaam aleykom [peace be with you]." Mossadegh smiled wanly, bowed stiffly, and answered almost in tears: "Aleykom salaam [and with you be peace]."

General Zahedi, who had disobeyed Mossadegh's order of Aug. 17 to surrender within 24 hours, now helped Mossadegh to an easy chair. Mossadegh, who was obeying Zahedi's order of that very day to surrender within 24 hours, sank down dejectedly. The old Premier heard the new Premier, with utmost politeness, inform him that he would be housed, in comfortable incarceration, on the top floor (he was later ordered transferred to jail). Old Mossy smiled and bowed in thanks.

**Behind the Revolt:** This rapid reversal of roles followed a royalist uprising on the Teheran streets on Aug. 19. It brought the Shah flying home in triumph only six days after he had fled his country. Washington and London were delighted—and dumfounded. What had happened? *From Teheran, Arnaud de*

*Borchgrave* NEWSWEEK correspondent, cables this account of the story behind the amazing upset:

The Shah-Mossadegh feud came to a head two weeks ago after the Premier faked a referendum to eliminate all parliamentary opposition. The Premier demanded that the Shah sign a decree dissolving Parliament. The Shah refused and hurried away to a Caspian Sea resort with Queen Soraya. Behind, he left three explosive decrees. One fired Gen. Taghi Riahi as chief of staff and appointed Gen. Nader Batmanghelitch in his place. The second dismissed "Old Mossy." The third named General Zahedi Premier. The decrees were dated Aug. 13. But the Shah didn't want them delivered until the 16th, when presumably he would be safely out of range.

The Shah's stand was sparked by his smart, tough-minded twin sister, Princess Ashraf. Late in July she arrived in Teheran from Europe. According to court cir-



The homecoming Shah shed a tear

cles, she "bawled out her brother like a fishmonger's wife." Ashraf's intention was to stick around until the Shah moved against Mossadegh or, if he didn't, to organize something herself. But though she came incognito under her married name of Mrs. Shafiq, she was recognized by an Air France employe, who let the cat out of the bag. Mossadegh gave her 24 hours to leave. But she squeezed in several hours with the Shah.

On the 16th, the Shah's emissaries went to deliver the three royal decrees. One Imperial Guard officer escorted by six soldiers called on General Riahi, but he was out. On the way back to the palace,

the houses of Foreign Minister Hossein Fatemi and the communications minister, and without authority arrested them both. Colonel Nasiri, the Guard commander, drove to Mossadegh's home accompanied by two truckloads of 60 soldiers. Nasiri handed Mossadegh his notice. The Premier, instead of initialing the colonel's visitor's pass, wrote on it: "Arrest this man." Nasiri's soldiers, leaderless, departed.

**False Allies:** The Premier, previously tipped off as to what was coming, now used the Shah's actions as an excuse to crack down on his enemies. Zahedi, with the Shah's decree in his pocket, took to the hills. The Shah heard the news on the radio and fled. He had agreed with Zahedi that if the move to oust Mossadegh failed and his life was in danger, he would leave and set up a government-in-exile while Zahedi organized an uprising.

Pro-Mossadegh mobs, fanned by the Tudeh Communist Party, swept through Teheran. Not one voice for the Shah was heard. But when royal statues were toppled from their pedestals, Mossadegh took fright. The Reds might turn the mobs against him. He ordered Chief of Staff Riahi to intervene. But there was no ammunition. By a previous order of Mossadegh the Teheran garrison had been issued only blank cartridges. "Club them, do anything—but stop them," retorted Mossadegh.

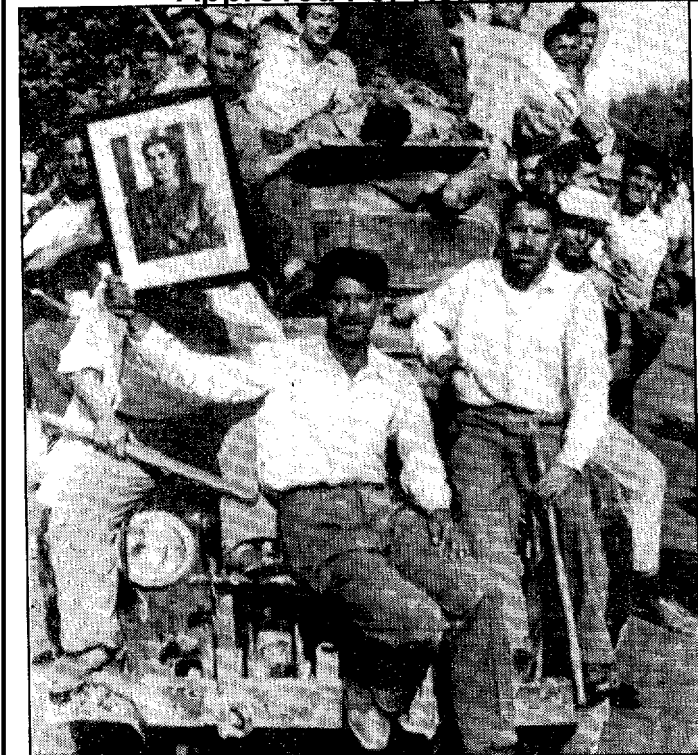
The army and police laid into the anti-Shah crowds with such vigor that the royalists took cheer. Word of the behavior of the army and police reached Zahedi in his mountain hideout. He gave orders to exploit a royalist rally secretly planned for the next morning.

**Counterattack:** At 8 a.m., Aug. 19, about 500 royalists gathered in front of a downtown railroad station. Shouting, "Long live the Shah," armed with wooden clubs and steel bars, they made their way to the center of town, smashing windows and beating up anybody who dared open his mouth for Mossadegh.

As the mob progressed, its numbers grew. It clashed with the police for the first time at 10:30. But when the police heard pro-Shah slogans, they clapped and joined the crowd. The movement swept up many officers and soldiers, disgruntled at the chief of staff's edict banning the use of the Shah's name in the armed forces. Pro-Mossadegh and Tudeh newspaper offices were fired.

So far, all shots heard were blanks, as the colonel in command of the Teheran arsenal still refused to release live ammunition. Both the radio and central police headquarters were taken without a bullet being fired. At 1 p.m., General Riahi ordered outlying garrisons to march into town and break up the demonstration by force. But no unit was ready—or willing—to move.

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Royalist demonstrators wave the Shah's portrait and parade their dead through the streets of Teheran

At 2 p.m., pro-Shah officers mustered three companies, five tanks, and five trucks and headed for Mossadegh's home (still without ammunition). They were greeted with a hail of small-arms fire from pro-Mossadegh soldiers commanded by a Colonel Montaz. After beating a hasty retreat, pro-Shah forces fanned out into neighboring houses—including U.S. Point Four headquarters. Trucks dashed back to the arsenal for ammunition. By then, General Batmanghelitch had taken over from Riahi as chief of staff. He ordered ammunition released and reinforcements rushed. Meanwhile, impatient civilians launched assault after assault and were mowed down by machine guns.

When the reinforcements arrived, a pitched battle ensued. All resistance ceased at 5 o'clock. The Premier made a last-minute, but only temporary, escape shortly after Colonel Montaz had surrendered. Crowds then ransacked the Premier's house. Of the 63 persons actually killed during the uprising (sensational but inaccurate stories had said 300 to 700), the bulk fell in front of Mossadegh's home.

Zahedi swiftly consolidated his position. While tanks clattered through the streets and soldiers guarded key buildings, nearly 2,000 Tudeh suspects were rounded up. Tudeh chieftains circulated secret orders, which the Zahedi regime intercepted, to lie low until further notice. Zahedi formed a transitory Cabinet to plan new elections within four weeks and, if victorious, he meant to install some

more pro-Western government leaders.

Unless a new uprising reversed the verdict of Aug. 19, the new regime proposed to bring Mossadegh to trial and condemn him to death, but to commute his sentence. But most of the officers who sided with Mossadegh after the Shah fired him would be tried and shot.

### Victory From Exile

The twin-engined silver Beechcraft glistened in the 105-degree noon sun as it taxied to a stop on the apron of Mahrabad Airport at Teheran on Aug. 22. A military band struck up the Iranian national anthem. Shah Mohammed Reza Pahlevi was home victorious from exile.

Gen. Fazollah Zahedi was first aboard the plane. He stooped to kiss the Shah's hand, but the 34-year-old ruler clasped the 54-year-old leader of the revolt against Mossadegh in an embrace. As the Shah, in a sky-blue air-force uniform, took the army's salute, his hand shook and he fought back tears welling in his bloodshot eyes. As he passed down the line of top-ranking officers who threw themselves in the dust to kiss his feet, a tear slowly rolled down his right cheek.

He had returned to royal honors and royal duties. He greeted U.S. Ambassador Henderson warmly, then gave an icy stare to Anatoli Lavrentiev, the Soviet emissary. Almost his first official act was a plea for quick and heavy foreign aid. Washington indicated that the United States might help.

Only four days before, the King of

Kings, Vice Regent of God, Shadow of the Almighty, and Center of the Universe had arrived in Rome with a two-day growth of beard and three clean shirts. His green-eyed, half-German wife, Queen Soraya, had only three dresses with her. No Italian official was on hand to welcome them at Ciampino Airport. They drove in a rented car to the Hotel Excelsior where they were given ordinary rooms. The royal party sat ignored at a small green table among the American tourists in the lobby.

Then came the first bulletins on the successful uprising against Mossadegh. "Can it be true?" the Shah stammered as newsmen gave them to him at lunch. "I knew it, I knew it. They love me."

The management proclaimed the Shah's room the Imperial Suite. An Alfa Romeo limousine, courtesy of the Italian Government, arrived, closely followed by jeeploads of police and swarms of plainclothesmen. Eventually, a crowd of 3,000 tourists stood in the 96-degree sun outside the hotel, photographing an empty, orchid Rolls-Royce convertible which someone said was the Shah's. It wasn't.

Amid the hubbub, Allen Dulles, director of the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency, arrived at the Excelsior. No one paid any attention to him.

From Switzerland, the Shah's strong-willed twin sister, Princess Ashraf, hastened to join him. When he departed for Teheran, he left Soraya in her care. The 20-year-old Queen had celebrated with a shopping spree, and then collapsed from nervous exhaustion.

August 31, 1953

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