



ANJOMAN-E MA'ĀREF

ANJOMAN-E MA'ĀREF (the Society or Council of Education), a society founded in Šawwāl, 1315/February-March, 1898 under the patronage of the then prime minister Ḥājj Mīrzā 'Alī Khan Amīn-al-dawla (q.v.) in order to promote the cause of Western-type education in Iran. Also called Anjoman-e Ta'sīs-e Makāteb-e Mellīya-ye Īrān (Society for Founding National Elementary Schools in Iran), it served as a nucleus from which developed a number of scientific and educational institutions.

The society's aims are not stated in any historical records or official documents but can be inferred from its activities as: to found and develop new schools after the European models for training an educated class of administrative personnel; to promote research and publication, and sponsor translations of useful European books; to create public libraries on Western lines; and to organize classes for adults.

The need for modern schools and an organized system of universal education had been felt in Iran for some time, even among some of the Shi'ite clergy. The appointment of Amīn-al-dawla, an active supporter of "modern" education, to the premiership encouraged the reformist-minded intellectuals. Amīn-al-dawla's patronage was responsible for the establishment of the Rošdīya school in Tehran by Ḥājj Mīrzā Ḥasan Rošdīya (Ramāzān, 1315/January-February, 1899), the management of which with the help of a board of trustees provided a model. At the same time Mīrzā Karīm Khan Savādkūhī Montāzem-al-dawla (later Sardār-e Mokarram), after obtaining the prime minister's permission to establish a home and school for orphans (*dār al-aytām*) proceeded in Raġab,



1315/November, 1897 to set up an orphanages council with an education-minded membership. A dispute between Rošdīya, the principal, and the board that worked with him prompted Amīn-al-dawla to order the formation of an *anjoman*. A list of candidates was prepared by Eḥtešām-al-salṭana and presented to Amīn-al-dawla for confirmation, and thus the Anjoman-e Ma'āref was born with seven original members: the chairman MahĀmūd Khan Eḥtešām-al-salṭana, a son of a former minister of the royal court and a graduate of the Dār al-Fonūn (he was later elected speaker of the first parliament); Sayyed Yaḥyā Dawlatābādī (who later became well-known as a reformist and advocate of modern education); Ja'far-qolī Khan Nayyer-al-molk, then Minister of Science (*'olūm*) and principal of Dār al-Fonūn; Maḥmūd Khan Meftāḥ-al-molk; 'Alī Khan Nāẓem-al-'olūm; Maḥdī Khan Momtaḥen-al-dawla, a Paris graduate in architecture then employed as a Foreign Ministry official and 'Abbās Khan Mohandes-bāšī. According to Dawlatābādī (*Ḥayāt-e Yaḥyā I*, p. 188), Eḥtešām-al-salṭana, desiring to keep the Anjoman outside the direct control of the government, had deliberately excluded the name of Nayyer-al-molk from the original list of candidates, but it was added by Amīn-al-dawla when the list was shown to him. Later the membership rose to thirty, including Mīrzā 'Alī-Akbar Nāẓem-al-aṭebbā', the author of *Farhang-e Nafīsī*; Mīrzā Gīāt-al-dīn Adīb Kāšānī, Sayyed Ḥosayn Khan Neẓām-al-ḥokāmā'; 'Alī-Moḥammad Khan Moǰīr-al-dawla Kāšānī, the editor of the paper *Īrān*; Moḥammad-Ḥosayn Khan Adīb-al-dawla, the assistant principal of Dār al-Fonūn; Sardār Firūz, then commandant of the arsenal; Moḥammad-Bāqer Khan E'temād al-salṭana, the Minister of the Press (*Wazīr-e enṭebā'āt*); Ḥāǰ Mīrzā Ḥasan Amīn-al-ẓarb and his son Ḥāǰ Mīrzā Ḥosayn (qq.v.); Mīrzā Esmā'īl Khan Aǰūdān-bāšī; Shaikh Maḥdī Moẓaffarī Kāšānī; Dr. 'Enāyatallāh Khan; Shaikh Maḥdī Šams-al-'olamā'; Mo'tamen-al-aṭebbā'; Mīrzā Ebrāhīm Sa'īd-al-'olamā'.

Donations were received from Moẓaffar-al-dīn Shah (2,000 tomans) and Amīn-al-dawla (12,000 tomans) and the Anjoman held its first session in Šawwāl, 1315/February-March, 1898. Sessions were held weekly at the school of Rošdīya until a dispute over the indiscriminate spending of school funds by Rošdīya, which had started almost immediately and kept worsening, made the Anjoman hold its fifth meeting elsewhere at the home of Nayyer-al-molk (Dawlatābādī, *Ḥayāt-e Yaḥyā I*, pp. 188-93). In order to curtail the funds available to Rošdīya who, relying on the patronage of Amīn-al-dawla, resented the supervision of his school by the Anjoman (*ibid.*), the Anjoman decided to found another school. This new school, called 'Elmīya, was officially dedicated



in *Ḍu'l-ḥejja*, 1315/May, 1898, and soon led to the opening of other schools (Dawlatābādī, op. cit., pp. 193-98).

The first period of the Anjoman-e Ma'āref's existence lasted less than three years but was marked by the following achievements: 1. foundation of schools named 'Elmīya, Eftetāḥīya, Dāneš (a completely free school funded by Reżā Khan Arfa'-al-dawla and run by Meftāḥ-al-molk), Šaraf (Rabī' II, 1316/August-September, 1898), and Moẓaffariya (Jomādā II, 1316/September-October, 1898); 2. foundation of a Western-type public library (*ketāb-kāna-ye mellī*) which in a short period collected more than 1,000 volumes and was put under the directorship of Esmā'īl Khan Ājūdān-bāšī (ibid., pp. 222, 239). Later this library was renamed *Ketāb-kāna-ye Ma'āref*, while some of its books were transferred to the National Library (*Ketāb-kāna-ye Mellī*); 3. organization of adult classes on the Anjoman's premises under the direction of Mīrzā Ġiāt-al-dīn Adīb Kāšānī. These could only be kept going for a few months; 4. establishment of a publication and translation firm named *Šerkat-e Ṭab'-e Ketāb* (Book Printing Company) with a capital of 10,000 tomans. The firm, independent of the Anjoman from the outset, employed Mīrzā Moḥammad-Ḥosayn Forūḡī *Ḍokā'-al-molk*, his son Moḥammad-'Alī Forūḡī (later an eminent writer and statesman), and Mīrzā Moḥammad Qazvīnī (later an eminent scholar) for the compilation, translation, and publication of useful books. It successfully brought out a number of history books and school textbooks; 5. publication of a fortnightly journal named *Rūz-nāma-ye ma'āref*, which provided news relating to modern education. The first issue came out in Ša'bān, 1316/December, 1898.

After the dismissal of Amīn-al-dawla in Šafar, 1316/June, 1898, the premiership reverted to Mīrzā 'Alī-Ašḡar Khan Amīn-al-solṭān, who was not so well-disposed to new thinking and social awakening. At the same time frictions arose within the Anjoman-e Ma'āref. Meftāḥ-al-molk and Momtaḥen-al-dawla, because of grudges unrelated to the affairs of the Anjoman, were conspiring to remove the chairman Eḥtešām-al-salṭana, who was hot-tempered and not always respectful of the dignity of other members. Meftāḥ-al-molk, who was the Anjoman's secretary (*daftardār o mohrdār*), spent part of its funds on the Eftetāḥīya school which he had founded, and the matter leaked out. Eḥtešām-al-salṭana had also antagonized Nayyer-al-molk by suggesting that *Dār al-Fonūn* should be placed under Anjoman's control (ibid., p. 224). Taking advantage of this discord, Meftāḥ-al-molk got Eḥtešām-al-salṭana's opponents to sign a letter accusing their chairman of disloyalty to the monarchy, and



managed with Amīn-al-soltān's help to bring the letter to Moẓaffar-al-dīn Shah's notice. The Shah then issued a decree whereby all state educational institutions were to be placed under the supervision of the Minister of Science, and on the strength of this decree Nayyer-al-molk indicated that the Anjoman-e Ma'āref would have to close (ibid., pp. 228-35); but when Ehtešām-al-saltāna resigned, Meftāḥ-al-molk was made chairman of the Anjoman with Amīn-al-soltān's backing. Before long, however, reports in Tehran newspapers about the spending of the Anjoman's funds on the Eftetāḥīya school led to the Meftāḥ-al-molk's resignation. This took place in 1318/1900 and in effect meant the end of the society and its work.

A new Anjoman-e Ma'āref was formed on 12 Moḥarram 1319/1 May 1901, the members being Nayyer-al-molk and his son Reżā-qolī Khan, Mokber-al-saltāna Hedāyat, Mīrzā Ḥasan Mošīr-al-molk, and Ḥājj Mīrzā Yaḥyā Dawlatābādī. It did not enjoy the favor of Amīn-al-soltān and was unable to accomplish anything useful.

When this second Anjoman broke up, Amīn-al-soltān appointed a High Council of Education (Šūrā-ye 'Ālī-e Ma'āref), composed of a number of his protégés, including foreigners in the service of the government, and designed to make it appear that he was not averse to educational progress and popular awakening; but no practical help for education ensued.

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