



ARSANJĀNĪ, ḤASAN

ARSANJĀNĪ, ḤASAN, journalist and politician (1301-48 Š./1922-69). Born into a traditional rural family, he was educated at Tehran University, from where he eventually received a doctorate in law. While still a student he was employed by the Agricultural Bank during the reign of Reżā Shah, and was assigned the task of “preparing plans for the establishment of rural cooperatives” (A. K. S. Lambton, *Persian Land Reform*, Oxford, 1969, p. 61). This enabled him to gain first-hand experience of rural problems in Iran and convinced him of the need for a fundamental modification of the existing pattern of land tenure.

In the post-1941 period Arsanjānī became a journalist, writing articles under the pen-name of “Dr. Dāryā” for the papers *Nabard and Mard-e Emrūz*, and in 1944 he began the publication of his own newspaper *Dāryā*, in which his radical reformist ideas were forcefully and passionately expressed. Concomitantly he enlisted the patronage of the veteran politician Aḥmad Qawām (Qawām-al-saltāna) and helped with the formation of the “Democratic Party of Iran,” becoming a member of its propaganda committee in July, 1946. He also helped in the publication of the party newspaper *Demokrāt-e Īrān*. His association with Qawām won him the seat of Lāhījān in the 15th Majlis but his credentials were rejected and he was denied his seat. Subsequently Arsanjānī resorted to practicing law in addition to journalism; he supported Razmārā’s government (June, 1950-March, 1951) and became Qawām’s political under-secretary and director of propaganda in the abortive cabinet which ended with the uprising of 30 Tīr 1331 Š./21 July 1952. In the cabinet of ‘Alī Amīnī



(May, 1961-July, 1962), Arsanjānī assumed the portfolio of Agriculture and was entrusted with the task of drafting details for the implementation of the land reform plan which had been included in the cabinet's program. It was in this capacity that he proceeded with zeal and determination to implement a program of land reform for which he more than any other person was responsible. He retained his position in the cabinet of Asadallāh 'Alam, but resigned on 10 March 1963. His resignation was mainly due, according to M. Zonis, (*Political Elite of Iran*, Princeton, 1971, pp. 53-61) to his increased popularity with the peasantry, a development which proved distasteful to the Shah, who also caused the deceleration of the pace of land reform (Lambton, op. cit., p. 110). Arsanjānī was effectively removed from the mainstream of Iranian politics by his appointment as ambassador to Rome in June, 1963. He was recalled in late 1964 and returned to his law practice. He died of a heart attack in May, 1969 at the age of 47.

Arsanjānī has been described as “. . . a dynamic man of considerable personal energy, determination, vigour, and toughness...” (Lambton, p. 61). He was an ambitious politician, a skillful administrator, and a talented and literate writer who held left-wing reformist ideas, but had at one time written with alarm about the dangers of “pan-Arabism” and “pan-Turkism.” He wrote a number of books including *Ḥākemīyat-e dawlathā* (Tehran, 1342 Š./1963) and *Pān-Arabīsm*, published some memoirs of his association with Qawām and translated into Persian Montesquieu's *Lettres Persanes* (*Nāmāhā-ye Īrānī*, Tehran, 1320 Š./1941, see Ī. Afšār, in *Rāhnamā-ye Ketāb* 12/3-4, 1348 Š./1969, pp. 207-08).

BIBLIOGRAPHY

See also Bāmdād, *Rejāl* VI, pp. 77-78.

(F. Azimi)