



BĀBĀ ŠAMAL

BĀBĀ ŠAMAL, weekly satirical periodical founded by Reżā Ganja'ī (b. 1918 in Tabrīz) in Farvardīn, 1322 Š./April, 1943. It was published regularly until Mehr, 1324 Š./October, 1945, when Ganja'ī left for Europe. A further fifty issues were published until Esfand, 1326 Š./March, 1947, after his return. The magazine, which was printed on eight 21 x 31 cm pages, had a wide circulation (a print order of 17,000 was claimed for it), and dealt with the political issues of the day in a racy colloquial style spiced with cartoons and caricatures, sometimes in color. An issue cost 2.5 rials; a yearly subscription was 150 rials. On the whole, its stance was independent, nationalistic, and middle of the road. It was impartially opposed to all foreign intervention and influence in Iran, and was particularly hostile to Sayyed Żīā'-al-Dīn Ṭabāṭabā'ī (q.v.) because of his reputation for being linked with Britain. At the same time it strongly opposed the Russian request in 1323 Š./1944 for an oil concession, and so incurred the hostility of the pro-Soviet Tūda (Tudeh) Party. The leader of the pro-Soviet separatist movement of Azarbaijan, Ja'far Pišavarī (q.v.), was also highly distrustful of *Bābā Šamal*, whose founder he considered partly responsible for the campaign leading to the invalidation of his electoral mandate in the fourteenth Majles. *Bābā Šamal*'s strongly satirical methods earned it many enemies, especially in government circles, and the increasing pressure of censorship forced its closure in 1327 Š./1948. Reżā Ganja'ī, an engineer by training, held important posts in the Ministries of Posts and Telegraphs and of Industry and Mines, in the railways, insurance, etc., but resigned from all his posts in 1341 Š./1962.



In publishing *Bābā Šamal*, Ganja'ī was assisted by a talented staff of satirists, poets, and writers. Highly popular cartoons were rendered by Dāvarī and among Ganja'ī's other collaborators were Rahī Mo'ayerī (pen-name Zāgča), Eqtešād (pen name Shaikh Pašm-al-Dīn), Fozūnī (pen-name Mohandes-al-Šo'arā'), and Šahbā (pen-name Shaikh Somā).

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