



BAHĀR (NEWSPAPER)

BAHĀR, a newspaper founded by Shaikh Aḥmad Tehrāni, known as Aḥmad Bahār, in 1296 Š. /1917, in Mašhad. Aḥmad Bahār was a cousin to the famous poet and scholar **Moḥammad-Taqi Bahār**, whom he admired as a journalistic role model, and whose last name he later chose to adopt. (J. Bahār. p. 14). The son of Shaikh Kāzem Tehrāniān, Aḥmad Bahār completed his religious studies in Mašhad and Karbalā'. While engaged in business and trade, he also participated in literary, cultural and social activities, and was sympathetic to the Democratic Party of Khorasan. He also wrote editorials for the newspaper *Čaman* (Bayāt, vol. 1, p. 299), and was later appointed as its manager. In 1917 he acquired the Ṭus publishing house in Mašhad and applied for a permit to publish *Bahār*, which he was granted after several attempts and the eventual support of the superintendent (*towliyat*) of **Āstān-e Qods-e Rażavi** (Bayāt, vol. 1, p.300). The first issue of *Bahār* appeared in Farvardin 1296 Š./1917. The paper, originally intended to appear three times a week, was published weekly at first and later extended to twice a week. It was only from autumn 1932 that *Bahār* began appearing as a daily newspaper.

Aḥmad Bahār's editorials in this period reflected his critical approach toward British imperialism in Iran and his ardent support for Colonel Moḥammad Taqi Pesyān, a revolutionary leader in Khorasan. The articles, either in prose or versified in mašhadi dialect, were very popular and highly appraised by the patriotic intellectuals. The British consul in Mašhad had reported to the British ambassador in Iran about his deep concerns for one of his editorials, dated 20 September 1918, which he believed to be read and approved by Pesyān before



publication (Mirzā Šāleh, p.102).

Bahār's anti-British tendencies and his relentless denunciation of the [Anglo-Persian Agreement of 1919](#), led to the suspension of his journal in September 1918 and then again on May 24, 1919, by Aḥmad Qavām, the then governor of Khorasan. Aḥmad Bahār was subsequently exiled to the Caucasus and Turkey (Bahār, p. 22 & 193). His return to Iran in September 1921 coincided with Pesyān's uprising, which Bahār characterized as a revolutionary and liberating movement. The arrest and the subsequent execution of Pesyān in 1921 led again to the imprisonment of many reformists, including Bahār, and the suspension of his journal.

After a month Aḥmad Bahār was released from jail on a pledge to go to Tehran and never to publish his newspaper again. Nonetheless, only a few months later he returned to Mašhad, and resumed the publication of his newspaper at irregular intervals. The freedom of the press that was further curtailed upon Reza Shah's ascension to the throne affected *Bahār* and many other newspapers of the period. Although trying to keep a low profile, Bahār wrote an article on May 1, 1928 and harshly criticized Teymurtāš, the then powerful minister of the court. The issue, although confiscated just hours before distribution, exacerbated Bahār's predicament. Some people, however, did see the issue, and the article established some notoriety as the "Maqāla-ye Teymurtāšiya." *Bahār* eventually resumed publication due to the timely intervention of Amān-Allāh Jahānbāni, the then governor of Khorasan. In his petition to Reza Shah, Jahānbāni pleaded that the article was only directed at Teymurtāš, and not Reza Shah himself. (Bayātv. 1, p. 301-303). *Bahār* resumed publication again and, like many other journals of the period, chary of the repressive atmosphere published more official advertisements than socio-political articles. Bahār's editorial against the unveiling of women, proclaimed by Reza Shah on January 1936 at Tehran's Teachers College (See FEMMINIST MOVEMENTS), marked the final chapter of his newspaper and cost him another period of imprisonment. Upon his release in a few months, he left Khorasan for Tehran, and worked at a variety of jobs in the private sector until 1941; the year in which Reza Shah resigned and went into exile. Thereafter he began publishing a newspaper called *Ruznāma-ye Bahār*, albeit intermittently. The chief editor of the journal during this period was Mir 'Abd al-Bāqi Tehrānian, one of his relatives. Jahāngir and Maḥmud Tafzẓoli, [Javād Fāzel](#), and Ismā'īl Purvāli were among those who cooperated with *Bahār* of Tehran (Purvāli, pp.88-90). A year later, Bahār, plagued with financial

hardship, sold his publishing license to Kōsrow Eqbāl, who had founded a political party known as *Peykār* but had failed to procure a publishing license. Even though the paper became the de facto organ of the party, Bahār had retained for himself the right to edit the political articles. From the spring of 1942 *Bahār* was published according to this understanding, in eight pages (35.5 x 49 cm), with a limited circulation of 100-150 copies, one Rial each, many of which bought and presented to friends by Eqbāl himself. This troubled relationship came to an end two months later, when Eqbāl's license to publish a newspaper was granted. The logo of *Bahār* and the name of Aḥmad Bahār were removed from the front page and replaced by those of *Nabard* and Kōsrow Eqbāl, respectively (Purvāli, pp. 88-90).

Bahār was in charge of the prime minister's press office in 1942 Qavām's cabinet and worked as his special secretary from 1942 to 1951. He was appointed by Moḥammad Moṣaddeq as the chief of prime minister's office in 1951, a position he maintained until the fall of the Moṣaddeq's government in August 1953. Then Aḥmad Bahār was reassigned to the Ministry of Culture, where he continued to work until his death in 1957 in Tehran. Bahār's collected poems, under the pen name of *Dāš Golum* were published in Tehran in 1991.

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