



# ČERĀĠ-‘ALĪ KHAN SERĀJ-AL-MOLK ZANGANA

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**ČERĀĠ-‘ALĪ KHAN SERĀJ-AL-MOLK ZANGANA** (d. after 1281/1864-65), a leading government official during the early reign of Nāṣer-al-Dīn Shah. Originally a prominent member of the Zangana tribe, Čerāġ-‘Alī began his government career as a secretary (*monšī*) in the provincial administration of Azarbaijan. He was a member of the Persian delegation at the Erzurum conference of 1259/1843 and on Nāṣer-al-Dīn’s accession came to Tehran in the entourage of Mīrzā Taqī Khan Amīr-e Kabīr, the [Amīr-e Neẓām](#), and became one of the group of officials supporting his administrative reforms.

He received his first important commission in 1264/1848, when he was appointed arbitrator in a dispute between the *wazīr* of Isfahan and a rival for the post. In the following year he was selected by Mīrzā Taqī Khan to travel to Mašhad as the shah’s emissary to the rebel leader Moḥammad-Ḥasan Khan Sālār in an attempt to persuade the latter to back down. Although received by Sālār, Čerāġ-‘Alī was unable to effect a reconciliation or to persuade him to accept an offer to retire to Mecca for a year in order to defuse the situation. His own life threatened by a mob, Čerāġ-‘Alī succeeded in escaping from Mašhad and rejoining the army of Solṭān-Morād Mīrzā Ḥosām-al-Salṭana. At the end of the siege of Mašhad he was personally responsible for persuading Sālār and his relatives to leave the precincts of the shrine, where they had taken sanctuary.



On his return to Tehran, Čerāġ-‘Alī Khan was elevated to the rank of *sarhang* and appointed *qollar-āqāsī-bāšī*, the official responsible for the *ġolāmān-e kāšša-ye šarīfa* troops. Two years later, in 1267/1851, he was appointed governor of Isfahan, replacing Ġolām-Ĥosayn Khan Sepahdār, who had become unpopular. Under his governorship, which lasted four years, he dealt effectively with the problem of brigandage in the region and was responsible for substantial improvements in cultivation around Isfahan itself.

In 1271/1855 he was entrusted with the arrest and transfer to Tehran of those responsible for the murder of ‘Abbāsqolī Khan Pesyān, the governor of Beštām. Following this, he was made governor of Kamsa and Zanjān, a post which he held until 1276/1859-60, when he was given the title of Serāj-al-Molk. In later years he held the post of *beglerbeg* and *raʿīs-e dīvān-kāna* of Isfahan (1279-81/1862-63 to 1864-65), and finally *raʿīs-e eḥtešāb* of Tehran.

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