



EḤSĀN-ALLĀH KHAN DŪSTDĀR

EḤSĀN-ALLĀH KHAN DŪSTDĀR (‘Alī-ābādī; b. Sārī, Māzandarān, 1262/1883, d. Baku, ca. 1938), second most prominent figure in the the Soviet Socialist Republic of Iran (Ḥokūmat-e jomhūrī-e šūrawī-e Īrān), the radicalized second phase of the Jangalī movement in the years 1920-21 (see COMMUNISM i). Eḥsān-Allāh was born into a Bahai family and educated at Dār-al-fonūn (q.v.) in Tehran, where he learned French. Radical European political literature thus became accessible to him. He was a *mojāhed* (militant) in the Constitutional Revolution (q.v. ii) and participated in the seizure of Tehran in July 1909. During World War I he joined the pro-German “national government” (*dawlat-e mellī*) at Kermānšāh and fought on the side of Turkish and German forces (Chaqueri, 1995, p. 461).

Contrary to the common belief based on his own claim, Eḥsān-Allāh was not among the founders of the Jangalī movement but joined it in 1917 (Chaqueri, 1995, pp. 52, 461, 497 n. 58). After leaving the “national government” he was active in the clandestine Komīta-ye mojāzāt, which punished by assassination those it considered guilty of treason to Persian interests (Sepehr, pp. 224-25; Chaqueri, 1995, chap. 4). He was persecuted in Tehran and fled to Gīlān, where he joined the Jangalī movement under Mīrzā Kūček Khan on the eve of the October revolution in Russia.



After the arrival of Soviet forces at Anzalī on 29 Šaʿbān 1338/18 May 1920 and the formation of the Soviet Republic in Persia on 23 Ramaẓān/5 June, Eḥsān-Allāh drew close to the Persian communist party (Ferqa-ye komūnist-e Īrān) but was not allowed to join it (Chaqueri, 1995, pp. 415-16). In late July 1920 he associated himself with the coup d'état directed against Kūček Khan and became head of the new soviet government dominated by the Communist party (Chaqueri, 1995, chaps. 10-11). In that capacity he carried out extremist policies, including confiscation of property, that seriously undermined the new republic. They were disavowed by the Communist party, which left the coalition in September 1920. The Azarbaijan Soviet Socialist Republic under Nariman Narimanov and the second central committee of the Communist party under Ḥaydar Khan ʿAm(ū)og̃lī pressured Eḥsān-Allāh to reestablish relations with Kūček Khan. He finally did so in April 1921 through the intervention and participation of the “moderate” communist leader Ḥaydar Khan (Chaqueri, 1995, chap. 15, epilogue). While he was in charge of operations in Māzandarān in the summer of 1921 Eḥsān-Allāh strove to sabotage the treaty of friendship between Tehran and Moscow, which had been signed in February, by creating a new revolutionary committee in the province and proceeding with land reform (*Izvestiya*, 13 July 1921; *Daily Herald* [London], 30 July 1921; Chaqueri, 1995, chap. 15).

Under pressure from the Soviet minister in Tehran, Theodor Rothstein, Eḥsān-Allāh and his colleagues finally abandoned their enterprise and in early October left for Baku, where he lived as the guest of the Azarbaijan Soviet government until his death.

In 1927, encouraged by revolts against the newly established Pahlavi dynasty in Gīlān, Khorasan, and Azarbaijan in 1926, Eḥsān-Allāh sought Soviet help in returning to Persia and relaunching revolutionary activity for the overthrow of the new monarchy. Help was refused, and his appeals to Josef Stalin and Nikolai Bukharin went unheeded. He complained that the fate of the revolution in Persia had to depend upon diplomatic considerations and expressed the certainty that the revolutionary movement would eventually succeed against the Pahlavi regime; the responsibility for delay would have to be shouldered by the Soviets (Chaqueri, 1995, p. 449).

According to his youngest son, Kāva, Eḥsān-Allāh and his eldest son, Bahman, were arrested in 1937 and killed during the Soviet purges; the exact dates of their deaths have not been made public. Eḥsān-Allāh was survived by his wife and two sons. Kāva, born in Baku, became a Soviet citizen, lost his eyesight



fighting in World War II, and later studied and composed music. The other son, Farāmarz, and his mother returned to Persia after the abdication of Reżā Shah in 1941 (Šamīda, pp. 353, 355; Chaqueri, 1995, p. 461).

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