



ERĀDA-YE MELLĪ

ERĀDA-YEMELLĪ (lit. national will), a pro-British political party founded on 23 Bahman 1322 Š./19 January 1944 by Sayyed Żīā' al-Dīn Ṭabāṭabā'ī (1891-1969), a devout anglophile politician and journalist, who had supported the aborted 1919 Anglo-Persian Treaty (q.v.) and coengineered with Brigadier Reżā Khan (later Reżā Shah) the British-supported coup d'état of 1921 (q.v.). After serving 100 days as prime minister and spending over 22 years in exile in Palestine he returned home in September 1943 to mobilize the rightist factions against the pro-Soviet Tūda party. As a result, for about two years, the Persian political scene became the battleground of fierce rivalry and clashes between pro-Russian and pro-British parties (see COMMUNISM iii; Avery, pp. 362,370; Azimi, p. 51; Bāmdād, V, pp. 122, 126; Dawqī, pp. 92, 97; Elwell-Sutton, pp. 51-52).

Reżā Şarrāfzāda and a number of his fellow landowners and prosperous merchants, including Kāzem Kūros, Mahdī Lārī, Ġolām-Ḥosayn Kāşef, Jawād Ḥarīrī, Qodrat-Allāh Raşīdīān, and Arbāb Mahdī Yazdī supported the party financially. A number of notables also joined the party, among them Ġolām-Ḥosayn Ebtehāj, Możaffar Fīrūz, Nayyer-al-Molk Hedāyat, Esmā'īl Marzbān, Ḥasan Şradr, and Colonel Kāzem Sayyāḥ. Some of the affiliated traders (e.g., Kūros and Raşīdīān) used their political connections to acquire highly profitable permits for importing scarce wartime commodities such as textile, paper, and paint, and they donated a large share of the profit to the party (Şafā'ī, pp. 89-90; Nīkbīn, p. 181). The anti-Soviet, anti-Tūda newspaper, *Ra'd-e emrūz*, with Możaffar Fīrūz as its editor-in-chief, became the party's press



organ (it commanded the highest circulation after the daily *Eṭṭelā'āt*). Furthermore, the following journalists announced their affiliation to Sayyed Żīā' and the party: Sayyed Bāqer Hejāzī, editor of *Wazīfa*, 'Alī Jawāher Kalām, editor of *Māhūr*, Şādeq Sarmad, editor of *Şadā-ye Īrān*, 'Alī Beşarat, editor of *Şadā-ye waṭan*, Moḥsen Sā'ī, editor of *Nasīm-e šemāl*, Ḥosayn Moṭī'ī, editor of *Kānūn*, Moḥammad Janābzāda, editor of *Nedā-ye āsmānī*, and 'Abd-Allāh Kāvārī, editor of *Erāda-ye Fārs* (Dawqī, p. 97; Zehtāb Fard, p. 107).

Originally called Hezb-e Waṭan (Fatherland party) and then Hezb-e Ḥalqa (lit. ring, circle, link) the party consisted of a hierarchy of *ḥalqas* or cells of nine members. A member enrolling eight newcomers could form a new cell with himself as the *sar-ḥalqa* (leader) and party liaison. "This had the attractive aspect of a secret society: members were grouped in circles of nine, responsible only to their circle leader, who in turn was one of a group of nine responsible to a group leader. Each member was addressed by his rank and number only" (Elwell-Sutton, p. 55-56).

Backed by the British support, Sayyed Żīā's charisma and religio-traditionist views and tactics, his unrelenting zeal in fighting leftist elements and Communist propaganda, and his appeal to propertied classes, guilds men and traders as well as to opportunistic elements, the Erāda-ye Mellī party grew rapidly. Over fifty liaisons of the Tehran branch soon formed an assembly (23 Bahman 1322 Š./19 February 1944), which approved the party's rules and regulations with its new name, Hezb-e Erāda-ye Mellī. The same meeting elected Sayyed Żīā' as *rahbar-e koll* (supreme leader) but he refused to accept the title, choosing instead *monšī-e koll* (secretary-general). Also elected were Nayyer-al-Molk Hedāyat as chairman of the Tehran assembly, Ğolām-Ḥosayn Kāşef and 'Alī-Aşğar Forūzān as vice-chairman, Şādeq Sarmad, Bahā'-al-Dīn Pāzārgādī and Şamad 'Īsābeglū as secretaries; and Mahdī Mawlawī, a Supreme Court judge, as director of the party secretariat (Şafā'ī, pp. 89-90; Ārāmeş, p. 47; Zehtāb Fard, p. 111). There were numerous clashes between the Tūda and the Erāda-ye Mellī parties resulting in fatalities. Sayyed Żīā' organized a special guard (*gorūh-e peykār*), led by the well known hoodlums Moştafā Zāğī, Şanī' Kātām, and Ḥasan 'Arab, to fight the Tūda forces (Azimi, pp. 128, 137; Pārsā Tūsarkānī, p. 540; Şafā'ī, pp. 50-51; Kīānūrī, pp. 91-92).

However, the indecisive policy of British diplomatic and military forces residing in Persia and the victory of the Labor Government in Britain's elections, combined with the coming of the United States to the scene and an old public distrust toward the British policies, seem to have demoralized the



British-sponsored rightist groups and hence the party's existence became untenable. Toward the end of Esfand 1324 Š./February 1946, when Prime Minister Aḥmad Qawām was seeking rapprochement with the Soviet Union, he had Sayyed Żiā' and his lieutenants arrested and the party shut down. Immediately, some of the affiliated newspapers and journals broke their ties with the party, and editors who had been constant companions of the secretary general abandoned him. Premier Qawām's action against the Erāda-ye Mellī party made the Soviets see him as an anti-British statesman, thereby bolstering his efforts to negotiate their withdrawal from Azarbaijan (Avery, p. 391; Azimi, p. 149; Arsanjānī, pp. 208-66; Elwell-Sutton, pp. 52, 56; Kīānūrī, pp. 98-100).

In September 1951 Sayyed Żiā', prompted by the British, revived the Erāda-ye Mellī party to bolster his bid for the premiership and the opposition to the popular government of Dr. Moḥammad Moṣaddeq and the oil nationalization movement. His opposition, however, could make no headway and the party collapsed after two month (Avery, p. 424; Şafā'ī, p. 91).

See also [ra'd](#); ra'd-e emrūz; żiā'-al-dīn ṭabāṭabā'ī.

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