



ESFANDĪĀRĪ, ḤĀJJ MOḤTAŠAM-AL-SALTĀNA ḤASAN

ESFANDĪĀRĪ, ḤĀJJ MOḤTAŠAM-AL-SALTĀNA ḤASAN (b. 18 Du'l-ḥejja 1283/23 April 1867; d. 5 Esfand 1323 Š./24 February 1945), politician, governor, and speaker of the Majles. His grandfather, Mīrzā 'Abd-Allāh Nūrī, was the private secretary of 'Abbās Mīrzā and his father, Mīrzā Moḥammad Ṣadiq-al-Molk, was a ranking officer at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs under Nāṣer-al-Dīn Shah. After receiving traditional education, Esfandīārī attended the Dār-al-fonūn (q.v.), where he first studied medicine and later mathematics and humanities (Ġanī, p. 75). He started his career in 1302/1885 at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, where his father was actually in charge and his brother Mīrzā 'Abd-Allāh Mostašār was the head of a department. During the next fourteen years he was posted at Persian embassies in Berlin and Bombay (Ġanī, pp. 76-77; Momtaḥen-al-Dawla, p. 153; Ṣadiq-al-Mamālek, pp. 276-77, 292). He subsequently served as personal interpreter to Moẓaffar-al-Dīn Shah and director-general of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Qāsemī, p. 77). With the adoption of the Constitution in 1324/1906, he was invited to help draft the by-laws (*nezām-nāma*) of the Majles and served as Premier Mošīr-al-Dawla's parliamentary deputy (Navā'ī, p. 7). In the years between the two coup d'états of 1908 and 1921 (qq.v.), Esfandīārī served as the head of the border commission with the Ottomans, then as governor of Urmia, governor of



Azerbaijan, minister of justice, minister of foreign affairs, minister of interior, and minister of finance in various cabinets. In 1919 he opposed the Anglo-Persian Agreement of 1919 (q.v.), which resulted in his banishment, with some other opponents of the Agreement, to Kāšān (Hedāyat, p. 202; *Eṭṭelā'āt-e sālāna*, 1341 Š./1962, pp. 30-31; *Bāstānī Pārīzī*, p. 258)ṛ. He was arrested on the morrow of the coup d'état of 1921 and spent three months in prison (Moḵtārī, p. 167). Under Premier Aḥmad Qawām and those succeeding him Esfandiārī again served as the minister of foreign affairs, education, and finance (Makkī, II, p. 227). He was also elected from Tehran to the 3rd and the 8th through the 13th Majles, where he served as the speaker from the 10th through the 13th sessions (Taḡīzāda, p. 76; Šajī'ī, p. 295).

Esfandiārī was also a man of letters. He was well versed in Persian literature and Islamic sciences and left several works, of which a Persian translation of Ḥelli's *Qawā'ed al-aḥkām* as *Ketāb-e tejārat wa qazā wa šahādāt* (Tehran, 1338/1920) and *Aḳlāq-e moḥtašamī* (Tehran, 1314 Š./1935) have been published. As an elder scholar, he was unanimously elected in October 1934 president of the International Ferdowsī Congress held in Tehran and Mašhad. In 1935 he was made a permanent member of the Academy of Persian Language (Farhangestān-e Īrān, q.v.; Šadīq, II, p. 212, 242) and was elected in 1937 chairman of the Persian Society for the League of Nations (Jam'iyat-e ṭarafdār-e Jāme'a-ye mellal; 'Āqelī, p. 65); in the same year he participated in the crowning ceremony of King George VI in London, and also met Adolph Hitler during an official visit to the German Reich. He traveled to Cairo to arrange the marriage between Princess Fawziya and the then crown prince Moḥammad-Rezā Pahlavī (Ġanī, pp. 78-79). When the Allies occupied Persia in September 1941, as the speaker of the Majles, Esfandiārī played an important role in drafting the tripartite agreement which guaranteed Persia's independence (Šafā'ī, p. 531).

Esfandiārī married a grand-daughter of the 19th-century grand vizier Mīrzā Āqā Khan Nūrī. He had several children. His sons all studied at universities abroad and attained important professional and political positions.



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