



FĀTEḤ, MOṢṬAFĀ

FĀTEḤ, MOṢṬAFĀ (b. Isfahan, 7 Ramazān 1313/20 February 1896; d. London, 8 Šahrivar 1357/30 August 1978), a deputy director-general of the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company (q.v.) and banker. He was born to Hājj Aḥmad Khan Fāteḥ-al-Molk, a land-owner, army officer, and member of the Majles. He went to elementary school in Isfahan; then he went to Tehran to the American College for five years. In 1915 he continued his higher education in the United States where he first entered Johns Hopkins University to study medicine, but later he changed his mind, going to Columbia University to study economics. He obtained his B.A. degree in 1920 with an honors thesis entitled “The Economic Position of Persia” (Fāteḥ, pp. 2-3; Malekzāda, I, p. 251).

Upon his return to Persia, Fāteḥ thought of joining the Ministry of Finance but did not find the state bureaucracy to his taste. Finally, in 1921 he was employed by the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company (q.v.) and was appointed deputy-director to its first representative in Tehran. His department was in charge of the liaison between the Company and the Persian government, and he made the acquaintance of most of the public figures and statesmen of his time. He also persuaded the Company to send two students to England annually to study oil economics (Fāteḥ, pp. 4-5). In 1929-30 the Company set up the Department for Distribution of Oil Products (Edāra-ye paḵš-e mawādd-e naftī) and appointed Fāteḥ as its director. From 1930-46 he made a great effort to develop a large distribution network throughout Persia, and as a result people came to know the new oil products and their various uses. Gradually, the country became self-sufficient in this respect (Fāteḥ, p. 8).



The invasion of Persia by the Allies and resignation of Reżā Shah in September 1941 led to both freedom and anarchy. In January 1942, FāteḤ organized the Iranian Anti-Fascist Society (Jam'iyat-e žedd-e Fāšīst-e Īrān), which had been set up by the British and Russians. It published a newspaper called *Mardom* (People) as its organ; some of the members of the pro-Soviet communist party (Ḥezb-e Tūda [Tudeh party]) who had been jailed under Reżā Shah worked on its editorial staff (Kāma'ī, II, pp. 35-39). With FāteḤ's recommendation two well-known figures among them, Bozorg 'Alawī and Eḥsān Ṭabarī, found well-paid jobs in Victory House (the British cultural center) and the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company respectively. Although "FāteḤ left the society when the extremist element began to get upper hand, □ its newspaper *Mardom* subsequently became a Tudeh organ" (Elwell-Sutton, p. 48). The Anglo-Russian cooperation during World War II and the role played by FāteḤ on behalf of the British led to the construction of a major conspiracy theory about British-led communists in the Tudeh party known as "Tūda-Naftī," i.e., those party leaders who had a connection with the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company. Both Moḥammad-Reżā Shah and Moḥammad Moşaddeq, former prime minister and the leader of National Front (Jabha-ye mellī), subscribed to the theory (Moşaddeq, p. 133). The Shah said in a television interview on 5 Bahman 1343 Š./25 January 1965: "After the events of September 1941 the British had the communist party set up by a man called Moştafā FāteḤ" (personal note of the event; see also the Shah's comment on 'Alawī, as "another of those men the British indoctrinated with communism," 'Alam, p. 320; see also Ashraf, p. 66).

By 1942 FāteḤ had set up a new political party called Hamrāhān (Comrades), and became its leader. This new party adhered to a socialistic ideology. Its progressive programs included nationalization of the means of production, social insurance, free medical services, free education, and family subsidies (Elwell-Sutton, p. 49). The newspaper *Emrūz o fardā* (Today and tomorrow) was the official organ of the Hamrāhān Party, but *Šam'* (Candle) also propagated its ideas.

Having left politics, in 1947 FāteḤ was appointed deputy director-general of the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company and went to Kūzestān. In this position, which he occupied for three and a half years, he was responsible for the implementation of the company's housing project and creation of a number of educational and welfare facilities. Finally, in 1951 when the Nationalization of the Oil Industry Act was passed and the British officers of the company left Persia, FāteḤ was retired (FāteḤ, p. 9). In December 1953, on the day Vice-



President Richard Nixon arrived in Tehran for talks, he was arrested under martial law and remained in prison for some time (*Eṭṭelā'āt*, 18 Āḍar 1332 Š./9 December 1953, p. 8).

Following the oil nationalization and his retirement, Fāteḥ together with Mehdī Lāla and 'Abbās Narāqī, two former communist party members, established a bank, called Tehran Bank (Bānk-e Tehrān) in 1952. Fāteḥ became chairman of its board of directors, Lāla was appointed Managing Director and Narāqī a member of the board. Later on, several foreign banks participated in Tehran Bank with 30 percent of the shares in 1976; its activities were expanded and the shareholders made enormous profits (*Echo of Iran*, p. 169; personal interview with Narāqī; see also BANKING IN IRAN i, Table 28).

Fāteḥ published several books and articles on economics and the Persian oil industry, including *Pūl o bānkḍārī* (Tehran, 1301 Š./1922) and *Panjāh sāl naftĀ-e Īrān* (Tehran, 1335 Š./1956). Analytical and well documented, the latter book presented important information on Persian oil industry from its beginning in the early 20th century until the 1951-53 oil nationalization. The second volume of the book on the 1954 agreement with the Oil Consortium was finished and ready to be published in 1958 when in September security agents raided his house, seized the manuscript and his documents, and arrested Fāteḥ (personal interview; see also Ebtehāj, I, p. 450 relating the Shah's comment on arresting Fāteḥ as a British agent)á.

In April 1978 Fāteḥ left for London and died there in September of that year. Fāteḥ was a capable politician and competent manager, a fine writer, a cultivated and enlightened man who was well acquainted with Persian poetry and music; he gathered a valuable collection of works by master singers and performers of the period 1921-77.

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