



GANJA'Ī, REŽĀ

GANJA'Ī, REŽĀ (b. Tabrīz, 9 Ābān 1397 Š./31 November 1918; d. Geneva, 17 Šahrivar 1374 Š./8 Sept. 1995; [Figure 1](#)), journalist, cabinet member, and university professor. One of his ancestors, Jawād Khan Ziādlū, was the last Persian governor of Ganja and was killed with one of his sons when the Russians stormed the city in 1218/1804 (Hedāyat, *Rawzat al-ṣafā* IX, pp. 388-90; Atkin, pp. 40-41, 82-83); thereafter his family emigrated to Tabrīz and Rašt. His father, Hājj Mīrzā 'Alī-Naqī Ganja'ī (Tabrīz 1251-Tehran, Mehr 1308 Š./Sept.-Oct. 1929) was one of the leaders of the Constitutional Movement (q.v.) in Azarbaijan and actively participated in Shaikh Moḥammad Kīābānī's uprising. He was a member of the parliament from his native city when he died.

Režā Ganjā'ī received his elementary education in Tabrīz and then went to Tehran where he graduated from the Persian-German Technical School (Madrassa-ye ṣan'atī-e Īran o Ālmān) in 1928. Two years later the Ministry of Roads and Communication (Wezārat-e ṭoroq wa šawāre') sent him to Europe to continue his education. In 1936 he obtained the equivalent of a doctoral degree from the Zurich Polytechnic in mechanics. After an on-the-job training course in France, he returned to Persia and for four years worked for the state railway. In 1941, he joined the Faculty of Engineering (Dāneškada-ye fannī) of Tehran University, where he taught for twenty five years and also served as the dean for a while. At the same time, he accepted short engagements elsewhere: in 1942 he served as the engineer supervisor in National Bank of Iran (Bānk-e mellī-ye Īrān), but when he started publishing the popular satirical weekly *Bābā Šamal* (q.v.), his criticism of the financial operation of



the country led to his dismissal upon the written demand and insistence of Arthur Millspaugh, the American who was then director of the Ministry of Finance (Wezārat-e dārā'ī). From 1950-52 he served as the chairman of the boards of directors of the Iran Insurance Company (Šerkathā-ye bīma-ye Īrān), Iran Fisheries Company (Šerkat-e šilāt-e Īrān), and the Saving and Loan Bank (Bānk-e rahni). In 1954 he was appointed the deputy minister for administrative and financial affairs in the Ministry of Post and Telegraph (Wezārat-e post o telegrāf), and a year later the senior advisor in the Plan Organization (Sāzmān-e barnāma). In 1955 he was the minister of industries and mines (*wazīr-e šanāye' o ma'āden*) for about ten months. Thereafter, he did not accept any more executive appointments. In 1963 he became the dean of the Faculty of Engineering, from which he resigned a year later; he retired in 1967. In 1978 he went to Europe for medical treatment and stayed on in Geneva, where he died.

Ganja'ī owes his fame to his publication of the politico-satirical weekly *Bābā Šamal* in 1943-45 and 1947, which became one of the most popular satirical journals in the history of journalism in Persia. Thereafter, most of his colleagues, journalists, writers, and even public figures addressed him as “Bābā Šamal.” Ganja'ī not only determined *Bābā Šamal*'s line of approach and style and the articles appearing in it, but he also wrote the editorials and articles under the pen name of “Donb-al-mohandesīn.” He maintained friendly relations with most of the writers and poets of his time and traces of this friendship may be found in the works of such men of letters as Moḥammad-Taqī Bāhār (Malek-al-šo'arā) and Farroḡ Ḳorāsānī (qq.v.).

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