



ḤAIM, ŠEMU'EL

ḤAIM, Šemu'el, generally known as Monsieur Ḥaim or Mister Ḥaim, journalist and Majles deputy (b. Ker-mānšāh, 1891; executed Tehran, Dec. 15, 1931). He studied at the Protestant missionary school in Kermānšāh until 1904, when he moved to the Alliance school founded in that year (see [ALLIANCE](#)). He acquired a thorough command of English and French, although he apparently did not complete high school.

In 1914 Ḥaim began to work in the customs offices in Kermānšāh, and later in the cities of Moḥammara and Sanandaj. It would appear that his contacts with British circles developed during the First World War; he him-self confirmed several times that he had been an official in the political office of the British embassy. While in this position he became particularly friendly with G. T. Howard, one of the most influential figures in the embassy, with close ties to the authorities in Tehran (Public Records Office, Kew, U.K., F.O. 371/11484 for 1926; and report of the Soviet Press Agency TASS, September 29, 1926 in F.O. 371/11490). After the First World War, Ḥaim worked in Qazvin, still apparently in the service of the British embassy (Report of the Central Committee of the Zionist Organization in Tehran, dated August 31, 1922, in File Z4/2004). But his relations with the British became more tenuous, for reasons that remain unclear, while at the same time he developed closer ties with Persian circles, particularly in the field of journalism. About a year before the [coup d'état of 1299/1921](#), he moved to Tehran.

Ḥaim wrote articles for the newspaper *Etteḥād*, whose publisher, Sayyed Kāžem Sarkešikzāda, he had met earlier in Qazvin. He also began canvassing



to become the representative of Iranian Jewry in the Majles. As part of his election strategy he established a weekly newspaper in June 1922, *he-Ḥaim*, using it as a platform to launch strong attacks against the Jewish representative in the Majles, Dr. Loqmān Nehorāy and most of the Jewish leaders in Tehran as well as the leaders of the local Zionist organization founded in 1918. Ḥaim was elected to the Fifth Majles (1923-26) with a large majority and began to develop ties with the opposition in the Majles, including Sarkešikzāda and Modarres, thereby antagonizing Rezā Khan, as prime minister and later as the Shah.

Ḥaim defended the Jewish minority openly and vociferously, as if he were operating in a parliamentary democracy. Angered by his sharp criticisms, Colonel [Moḥammed Dargāhi](#), the chief of police in Tehran, became his mortal enemy. Meanwhile, Ḥaim managed to disband the Zionist organization in Tehran, which he then reconvened with himself as the president. Together with his Jewish friend 'Enāyat-Allāh Sapir, he sought to develop ties with Zionist organizations abroad, particularly in London. Confident of the support of the majority of Jews in Persia and encouraged by his close ties with prominent figures in Tehran as well as international Jewish organizations around the world, Ḥaim was emboldened to complain to the League of Nations in Geneva about the oppression of the Jewish minority in Persia. This move further darkened his relations with the Iranian authorities.

Shortly before the elections to the Sixth Majles, which he was sure to win, Ḥaim was arrested for 17 days and released on June 8, 1926, just as the polls had been counted. Most surprisingly, Dr. Loqmān Nehorāy was elected as the representative of Iranian Jewry in the Majles. Ḥaim was furious with the leaders of the Jewish community. The authorities claimed that he had engaged in illegal acts and published illicit pamphlets attacking the Shah. He was arrested again at the beginning of September 1926, released briefly, but then re-arrested on 6 October, 1926, together with Colonel Maḥmud Pulādin and a number of others, accused of conspiring to assassinate the Shah and plotting to establish a republican regime. At a hastily-arranged court martial, both Pulādin and Ḥaim were sentenced to death and the former was executed forthwith by firing squad. The other officers were sentenced to varying terms of imprisonment. Ḥaim objected to a military court martial and asked to be tried by a civil court. In spite of insufficient evidence, the charges were upheld and he was executed by firing squad on 15 December 1931 (further details and references can be found in a series of 92 articles by Amnon Netzer in the



monthly journal *Shofār*, June 1989-May 1997, published in Persian by Iranian Jews in New York).