



ḤAKIMI, EBRĀHIM

ḤAKIMI (Ḥakim-al-Molk), **EBRĀHIM** (b. Tabriz, 1288/1871 [1286 in 'Āqeli, p. 589, is incorrect]; d. Tehran, 27 Mehr 1338 Š./19 October 1959, Şadiq, II, p. 210 [28 Oct. acc. to Hakimi, 2000]; [Figure 1](#)), Persian statesman. He was three times prime minister (*naḳost wazir*), four times minister of finance (*wazir-e mālia/dārā'i*), eight times minister of education (*wazir-e 'olum wa awqāf wa şanāye'-e mostazrafa*), twice minister of court (*wazir-e darbār*), minister of justice (*wazir-e dād-gostari*), minister of foreign affairs (*wazir-e omur-e kāreja*), minister without portfolio (*wazir-e moşāwer*), court physician, and a member of the Banking High Council (Şurā-ye 'āli-e bānk). He was elected deputy in the first, second, third, and fourth House of Parliament (Majles), served two terms as an appointed member of the Senate (*senātor-e enteşābi*) and a year as its president, and was a member of the constitutional assembly of 1949 that revised the Constitution of 1906. He was a Grand Master of Persia's Freemasonry Lodge (q.v.) and one of the leading advocates of the Constitutional Movement (q.v.; Bāmdād, *Rejāl* I, p. 79; Taqizāda, p. 102; Rā'in, III, p. 52).

Ḥakimi was born into an old and prominent family of court physicians. The members of the family had been court physicians since the 17th century, starting with the eponym of the family, Moḥammad-Dāwud Khan Ḥakim, a physician at the courts of the Safavid Shah Şafi and Shah 'Abbās II and the founder of the Ḥakim Mosque in Isfahan (Ḥakimi, 2002; Honarfar, pp. 612-14; Mehrābādi, p. 406). Ḥakimi's father, Mirzā Ḥasan Ḥakim-bāši, as well as his brother Noşrat-al-Ḥokamā' and uncle Mirzā Maḥmud Khan Ḥakim-al-Molk



were all court physicians. Ḥakimi received his elementary and high-school education in Tabriz and was then sent to Tehran to enroll at Dār al-Fonun (q.v.), where he studied French and natural sciences in the years 1889-92. Through his uncle's influence, who was the private physician of Crown Prince Moẓaffar-al-Din Mirzā, he obtained permission to travel abroad and set out for Paris in 1894 to study medicine. He stayed there for about nine years and married a French girl. He was introduced to Moẓaffar-al-Din Shah by his uncle during the king's European tour. He joined the royal entourage and returned with it to Persia in 1902 as the court physician. His wife refused to leave France, and Ḥakimi married his own cousin Belqays Ḥakimi. After the death of his uncle, he inherited his title, Ḥakim-al-Molk, and became the king's private physician (Bāmdād, *Rejāl* I, p. 9; Şadiq, II, pp. 208-9; 'Āqeli, 2001, p. 590).

According to Ebrāhim Şafā'i (n.d., p. 93), who fails to mention his source, Ḥakimi fell short of getting his doctoral degree, though he was known in Tehran as Dr. Ebrāhim Khan. This is, however, doubtful, since he continued to function as the court physician and, besides, according to a French document responding to an inquiry from Tehran, Ḥakimi successfully finished his medical studies and was awarded the doctoral degree (apud Nāṭeq, p. 257). The suggestion that he failed to complete his course of studies seems to be due to his general lack of interest in the profession and in particular the error that he once made in his treatment of the king (Bāmdād, *Rejāl* I, p. 9; Şafā'i, n.d., pp. 93-94). As the early tremors of the Constitutional Movement began, Ḥakimi entered the fray as an advocate of change and reform, and thus began his direct involvement in the world of politics. For much of the first half of the 20th century, he was somehow at the center of a large number of pivotal historic moments. His political life can roughly be divided into four periods.

The first period. This period began with the advent of the Constitutional Revolution and ended with Ḥakimi's arrest in the aftermath of the 1921 coup d'état (q.v.) by Sayyed Zīā'-al-Din Ṭabāṭabā'i and Reżā Khan (the future Reżā Shah). This was a period of social and political activism for Ḥakimi. He was elected to the first Majles (q.v.) and soon emerged as one of the leaders of its democratic faction. During the same period, he was also instrumental in reorganizing and expanding the ranks of the Persian Freemasonry. He was eventually named Grand Master for life.

When Moḥammad-'Ali Shah began his move against the Constitutionalists, Ḥakimi joined luminaries such as 'Ali-Akbar Dehḵodā (q.v.), Sayyed Ḥasan



Taqizāda, and Mirzā Jahāngir Khan Şur-e Esrāfil to form the “Committee of the National Revolution” (Komita-ye enqelāb-e melli-e Irān). The committee’s mandate was to defend the revolution and its accomplishments from the reactionary onslaught. The clandestine meetings of the Committee were usually held at Ḥakimi’s house (Şafā’i, 1984, I, pp. 351-52). The king finally staged his infamous coup d’état against the Majles in June 1908 and began a bloody rampage against its leaders, but Ḥakimi escaped to the safety of the French Embassy compounds in Tehran (Malekzāda, V, p. 762). According to Esmā’il Rā’in, who fails to mention his sources, the leaders of Freemasonry had learned of the attack the night before, and, using Ḥakimi as the emissary, had already taken sensitive documents pertaining to the Freemasonry lodges, specifically the Francophile Bidāri Lodge (Lož-e bidāri), to the French embassy for safe keeping (Rā’in, II, p. 146; see also [FREEMASONRY I](#); this information needs to be supported by primary sources, Rā’in’s statement is hardly reliable since Zahir-al-Dawla was in Gilan at the time).

With the capture of Tehran by the constitutionalist forces in July 1909 and the escape of Moḥammad-‘Ali Shah to the Russian legation, Ḥakimi was one of the members of the Supreme Majles (Majles-e ‘āli) that was formed with more than 300 members by the Majles to oversee the affairs of the state for the time being. It was the same committee that officially deposed Moḥammad-‘Ali Shah and put his underage son, Aḥmad Shah (q.v.), on the throne. Ḥakimi was also a member of the smaller sub-committee of directors (Hay’at-e modira) that successfully negotiated with the deposed king for the safe return of the crown jewels he had heisted (Taqizāda, 1979, pp. 145-48; Şaji’i, III, pp. 70-71). The Supreme Majles also had to deal with the fact that the young king had received little education and was inexperienced in statecraft, and, furthermore, his court had rapidly turned corrupt, sycophantic, and chaotic. The established pomp and formality of the past had given place to a laxity bordering on insolence. Ḥakimi was appointed by the Majles as royal chief of staff (*riāsat-e kalwat*) with the task of having the king educated properly and reinstating order and dignity to the court (Ḥakimi’s letter, in Ğani, IX, p. 804; Şafā’i, 1984, I, p. 418). For the court, he implemented a series of rules and regulations, and for the king, he dismissed both of his Persian and Russian tutors, Ḥāji Ākund and Captain Smirnov, and replaced them with a number of prominent Persian scholars, including Doka’-al-Molk Moḥammad-‘Ali Foruġi (q.v.), and the painter-artist Kamāl-al-Molk Moḥammad Ğaffāri, to tutor the young monarch (Taqizāda, 1979, pp. 140-41; Sepehr, pp. 32-33; Ḥakimi’s letter, in Ğani, IX, pp. 804-5).



Ḥakimi's first cabinet appointment came about in Mordād 1289/August 1910, when Ḥasan Khan Mostawfi-al-Mamālek appointed him as Minister of Finance. Mostawfi-al-Mamālek faced a variety of serious problems due to the intensifying discord between the two major factions of the parliament, the Democrats and the E'tedāliyun, both of which had members in the cabinet, and the unrest and breakdown of security on Tehran streets, not to mention the British ultimatum that threatened to deploy military forces in the south. Among other things, he reshuffled his cabinet after three months and Ḥakimi, who had lost his post, returned to the Majles (Šaji'i, pp. 75, 79-80; Sarmad, p. 295; Ṭolu'i, 1994, p. 272; Šafā'i, n.d., p. 96). In 1911, as the minister of education, pious endowments, and public welfare (*wazir-e 'olum o awqāf o fawāyed-e 'amma*), Ḥakimi introduced the bill that authorized the government to send each year thirty students to universities abroad to study a variety of subjects for five years (Ḥakimi's letter, in Ġani, IX, pp. 804-5; Maḥbubi Ardakāni, *Mo'assasāt* I, pp. 355-66; Šadiq, I, pp. 34 ff.; E'zām Qodsi, p. 1337; Sarmad, p. 295 [incorrectly 20 students]). It was also in this capacity that Ḥakimi, at the suggestion of Moḥammad-'Ali Foruḡi, submitted the bill to the Majles requesting a budget for the construction of a School of Fine Arts (*Madrasa-ye šanāye'-e mostazrafa*). He also requested authority from the Majles for the establishment of a public library, which did not pass due to the lack of funds. The building of the school of Fine Arts had to wait for a few months, until Ḥakimi became the Minister of Finance for the second time and, supported by the prime minister's brother 'Aliqoli Khan Sardār As'ad Baḳtiāri, allocated the necessary funds. The school was built in consultation with his old friend Kamāl-al-Molk, who became its first director (Foruḡi's letter, in Ġani, IX, pp. 786-89; Ḥakimi's letter, in Ġani, IX, pp. 804-5; Ġani, V, pp. 13, 55; Maḥbubi Ardakāni, *Mo'assasāt* I, pp. 415-16; Šaji'i, p. 89; Sarmad, p. 295). In 1942, in a letter to Taqizāda, he suggested the establishment of a center of Persian students (*mo'assasa-ye moḥaššelin-e Irān*) in both Tehran and Berlin to monitor the progress of Persian students studying abroad (in Afšār, ed., pp. 78-81).

The 1921 coup d'état changed Ḥakimi's political fortunes for a while. A number of politicians, including Ḥakimi, were arrested by the order of the new prime minister, Sayyed Žiā'-al-Din Ṭabāṭabā'i. Ḥakimi spent one hundred days in prison, and no sooner was Sayyed Žiā' himself thrown out of power after three months that Ḥakimi was, albeit temporarily, back in political favor. In Mirzā Ḥasan Khan Mošir-al-Dawla's first cabinet, installed on the 22 January 1922, Ḥakimi was the foreign minister, and in his second cabinet,



formed on 13 June 1923, he served as minister of education (Šajī'i, pp. 137, 145-46).

The second period. When Reżā Khan ascended the throne in 1925, Ḥakimi went into virtual self-exile. Throughout Reżā Shah's rule, though he never accepted a post, he did not forswear politics altogether. During those years, he and his other party comrades, in what they called Ḥezb-e taraqqi (Party for Progress), continued to meet and have "our party meetings" (the letter of Bāqer Kāzemi to Taqī-zāda, in Afšār, ed., p. 413). At the same time, he devoted much of his spare time to compiling a hitherto unpublished Persian medical lexicon (Āqeli, 2001, p. 592).

The third period. This period begins with the fall of Reżā Shah and the Allied occupation of Persia. In this new phase, Ḥakimi engaged himself in the politics of reconciliation. He tried to persuade the new prime minister, his old friend Foruḡi, to include him in his cabinet as minister without portfolio (*wazir-e mošāwer*), but Foruḡi kept ignoring him (the letter of Bāqer Kāzemi to Taqī-zāda, in Afšār, ed., p. 410). When a group of Majles deputies accused the dethroned king of absconding with much of the crown jewels, the government, on 18 Šahrivar 1320 Š./9 September 1941, appointed a committee of trusted public figures, including Ḥakimi, to inspect the jewels along with a delegation of Majles deputies (Golšā'īān, pp. 622-28).

On 18 Mordād 1321/9 August of 1942, the new prime minister, Aḥmad Qawām (Qāwām-al-Salṭāna), invited Ḥakimi to join the cabinet as minister without portfolio. The inclusion of Ḥakimi, known for his gentle manners and impeccable honesty, was intended to "deflect criticism" about Qawām's "despotic manner" (Azimi, p. 66). Qawām's government, facing street riots and increasing criticism by the Majles deputies, resigned in less than eight months. The next three prime ministers did not fare much better and every one fell within a year. Eventually, on 3 Ordibehešt 1324/23 April 1945, Ḥakimi himself emerged as the "compromise candidate" to become the new prime minister (Azimi, p. 120; Šajī'i, pp. 192-210). The British ambassador at the time, Sir Reader Bullard, whose disdain for Persia and Persians was only matched by his much inflated sense of self-importance, writes of Ḥakimi as a "non-entity," whose tenure as a premier was made possible only because none of the factions in the Majles were able to "impose a candidate of their own," and thus resigned themselves to bloc the "election of any candidate of ability and character by their opponents" (Azimi, p. 120; Millspaugh, p. 153). Others have suggested less sinister scenarios. Moḥammad Moṣaddeq, for example,



informed the Majles that he had voted for Ḥakimi because he “was one of those less active and unusually honest statesmen who put the interests of the nation above their own private concern” (Azimi, 122). Moḥammad-Reza Shah Pahlavi echoed the same sentiment about Ḥakimi and wrote of him as “an old man of integrity, and strongly pro-British sentiments, but always patriotic” (Pahlavi, p. 75; cf. Loraine’s comment on Ḥakimi, in Ghani, p. 251).

Ḥakimi’s cabinet, whatever its genesis, fell on June 6, when, following the rejection of the government’s agenda by the Majles, he failed to muster a vote of confidence. The next government lasted only a few months, and in November of the same year Ḥakimi was again nominated to head the government. His tenure this time coincided with the rise of Communist movements across the country and the height of the Azarbaijan crisis that was triggered when the Soviet Union refused to withdraw its forces from Persia in defiance of the Tehran Declaration by the Allied heads of state (1 December 1943), which stipulated “the maintenance, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Iran,” and in total disregard of the Tripartite Treaty of Alliance (29 January 1942), which required the withdrawal of all Allied forces from Persia within six months after the armistice between the Allied and the Axis powers (Alexander and Nanes, p. 143; Millspaugh, pp. 278, 280). Ḥakimi’s effort did not improve the situation, though he even made some dismissals and new appointments to appease the Russians (Millspaugh, p. 153). His critics (e.g., see Şafā’i, n.d., p. 105) sometimes malign him for what they allege was his lackadaisical pursuit of Persia’s complaint to the United Nations, but recently declassified documents present a different picture. He repeatedly offered to visit the Soviet Union and tried to find an amicable and equitable diplomatic solution to the problem. The British Foreign Office, for unfounded reasons of its own, was in fact “horrified” at the idea that Ḥakimi might visit Moscow. The Soviets, distrustful of Ḥakimi as a “hostile” element, refused to meet him (United States Department of State, p. 291). From the same sources, we learn that it was the British who had insisted that Persia should withdraw its complaint from the United Nations. The American ambassador in Tehran reported at the time: “I have learned that Ambassador Bullard insisted on having a telegram [ordering the Iranian delegation to the UN to withdraw its complaint] drafted in his presence and himself sent it over British Military Radio” (Department of State, p. 294). But in spite of British wishes, Ḥakimi soon sent another telegraph, this time authorizing the Persian delegation to submit the Persian dispute to the United Nations (Bayāni, pp. 241-48 and passim; Şaji’i, pp. 215-17; Tolu’i, I, pp. 271-76; Kuniholm, pp. 150-55, 166-67,



280-82; Abrahamian, pp. 388-415; see also [Azarbaijan V](#)).

The Soviet Union's refusal to negotiate with Ḥakimi, combined with his failure to solve a variety of political and economic problems the country was facing, eventually sealed the fate of his government. His cabinet fell on 30 Day 1324 Š./20 January 1946. Aḥmad Qawām, the new prime minister, successfully negotiated the withdrawal of the Soviet forces from Azarbaijan. Qawām's government fell on 18 Āḍar 1326 Š./9 December 1947 and, when the speaker of the Majles, Sardār Fāḡer Ḥekmat (q.v.), declined the offer to form a new government, the deputies consulted with the shah, who favored Ḥakimi. In the vote taken on 21 December, both Ḥakimi and Moṣaddeq received exactly the same number of votes. Ḥekmat broke the impasse by voting for Ḥakimi, who thus began his third term as premier (Šaji'i, p. 232; 'Āqeli, 1990, p. 292; idem, 1991, pp. 638-39, 642-43). It too was rather short-lived. He had set himself an ambitious program of social reform, fiscal responsibility, and economic austerity, not to mention the move to disgrace Qawām, who still had staunch supporters both on the streets and in the Majles. Ḥakimi failed in nearly all his projects, and with the fall of his last cabinet the dusk of his political life commenced (Šaji'i, pp. 232-35; 'Āqeli, 1991, pp. 643-45).

In this period, he was a close confidante of the shah, particularly in the latter's attempt to call a new constitutional assembly in order to amend the constitution. Ḥakimi represented Tehran in this assembly that convened in 1949 and increased the powers of the king, allowing him, among other things, to dissolve the parliament (see CONSTITUTION). Qawām, who had at the time only recently been forced to resign as prime minister, wrote a harshly worded letter to the shah, opposing the amendment, and predicting, presciently, that increasing the shah's power would in the long run lead to the fall of the monarchy. The letter in response, signed by Ḥakimi as minister of court, was harsh and unforgiving, accusing Qawām of nothing short of high treason. Qawām, in his own response, doubted that the letter could have come from Ḥakimi's pen (Ṭolu'i, 1994, I, pp. 344-61; 'Āqeli, 1990, pp. 449-58).

The fourth period. In the last decade of his life, Ḥakimi was twice a royal appointed senator. For a short while he was even elected president of the newly convened senate. In the tumultuous days of the Moṣaddeq era, Ḥakimi was always waiting in the wings, as a possible alternative to Moṣaddeq. He was distinguished for his honesty and the staunch quality of his royalist sentiments. As it had been observed earlier, his "devotion to the throne," and to the person of Moḥammad-Rezā Shah was one of the defining elements of his



political character (Azimi, p. 122; Taqizāda, 1979, p. 291). His final sinecure was his appointment as the chair of Persia's chapter of the Red Cross (Šir o k̄voršid-e sork-e Irān). Although no athlete himself, Ḥakimi belonged to the group that arranged for the founding of Persia's Physical Training Society (Anjoman-e tarbiat-e badani) in 1934 (Komisiun-e melli-e Yunesko, p. 1212). He was also a founding member of the National Monuments Council of Iran (Anjoman-e ātār-e melli, q.v.), established in 1922, and served as the chairman of the committee that was to raise funds for the millenary celebration (q.v.; *jašn-e hazāra*) of Ferdowsi in 1934 (Šadiq, II, pp. 203-4). Ḥakimi was also a member of the council of military and civil leaders that was brought together by Moḥammad-Rezā Shah to help determine the fate of his marriage to the childless Queen Ṭorayyā Esfandiāri. In the interests of the nation and the urgent need for an heir to the throne, the group recommended a royal divorce (Ṭolu'i, 1995, p. 677).

Character traits. As a man, Ḥakimi was altogether bereft of charisma; he was said to be “intellectually uninspiring” (Azimi, p. 122). He had a keen interest in literature and fine arts, particularly painting and music, though he was no artist himself (Taqizāda, 1971, pp. 103-4). He suffered from a “touch of amnesia” and had grown hard of hearing. As a politician, Ḥakimi was known for his financial probity and strict moral principles. Late in his life, he had become more and more conservative. Though a staunch royalist, he was averse to sycophancy and servile obedience. He was frugal and lived a simple life. Sayyed Ḥasan Taqizāda has characterized him as a man of exceptional integrity and honesty, with a passion for justice and freedom. He was a perceptive judge of people who never harbored any grudges against anybody. Steadfastly patriotic, he entertained strong feelings for his hometown Tabriz and its people (Taqizāda, 1971; Šadiq, II, p. 205). In 1959, in response to the intensified radio attacks of the Soviets on the Persian government after the formation of the Central Treaty Organization (q.v.), Ḥakimi and a number of his friends formed the Society for National Defense (Jam'iyat-e defā'-e melli), which elected Ḥakimi as its president (Šadiq, II, pp. 209-10).

Rare books and manuscripts were his one indulgence. He had a collection of nearly five thousand valuable manuscripts and a handful of original paintings by Kamāl-al-Molk. He also took extensive notes on his Masonic activities. In his youth, he had married a French woman and his son Joseph, or Yusof, was the only child of that marriage. Upon the death of Ḥakimi, the son who had lived all his life in Paris and was working there as a professor of dentistry, went



back to Persia, sold his book collection to a dealer (‘Āqeli, 2001, p. 593), and the Masonic journals to Esmā’il Rā’in, who used them, along with the documents concerning the Pahlavi (Homāyun) Lodge supplied to him by Sāzmān-e eṭṭelā’āt o amniyat-e kešvar (SAVAK) in preparing his three-volume *Farāmuš-kāna wa ferāmāsuneri dar Irān* (Rā’in, II, p. 46, n. 1; see also [FREEMASONRY III](#)).

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See also Ḥakimi, “A Brief History of the Ḥakimi Family,” in [/hhakimi/history.htm](http://hhakimi/history.htm) at breathemail.net.