



JAM, MAḤMUD

JAM, MAḤMUD, titled Modir-al-Molk (b. Tabriz, 1258/1885; d. Tehran, 1348 Š./1969), prime minister under Reżā Shah. He maintained that his family had originally come from Kermān, while he also claimed to be descended from Shaikh Maḥmud Šabestari, the 13th-century mystic and poet from Azarbaijan. Jam received his elementary education in the Rošdiya and Kamāliya schools in Tabriz and studied French on his own. He began work as a schoolteacher of French and was hired as a translator to work with Henry Renar, the French teacher of the crown prince Moḥammad-‘Ali Mirzā in Tabriz, and subsequently with his personal physician Dr. Coppin (Taqizāda, pp. 139, 141). Later he moved to Tehran, where he entered the civil service as a translator at the Customs Office in 1909 and before long moved up to more senior positions. He, however, left the Custom Office shortly before World War I in order to become the translator to the Attaché at the French Embassy, and during the war he acted as the translator in the negotiations that took place between the French Embassy and the Persian government. In 1919, he went to the Ministry of Finance as the head of the state-owned grain storage and distribution. It was at this time that, on the suggestion of Mirzā Ḥasan Khan Woṭuq-al-Dawla, then the prime minister, and the agreement of Aḥmad Shah Qājār, he received the title of Modir-al-Molk. He served as the head of the treasury department (*kazāna-dāri*) in the cabinets of Mošir-al-Dawla Ḥasan Pirniā and Maṣṣar Sepahdār Rašti.

In 1921, during the short-lived government of Sayyed Žiā’-al-Din Ṭabāṭabā’i, Jam served as foreign minister, which led many to believe that he was a close



political ally of the prime minister. Among the political elite of the time, many of whom were arrested by Sayyed Żiā'-al-Dīn, feelings against Jam ran high. Despite this, he was appointed deputy minister of finance in the cabinet of Mošīr-al-Dawla (in January 1922), and minister of finance in the cabinet of Reza (Reżā) Khan Sardār-e Sepah, the future Reza Shah, when he became prime minister (November 1923). Jam remained loyal to Reza Shah throughout the latter's reign and served for four years (1929-33) as the governor of Khorasan, minister of interior (1933), and as prime minister between December 1935 and October 1939. His period in office as prime minister coincided with perhaps the darkest hour in Reza Shah's reign after a number of distinguished politicians and notables such as 'Abd-al-Ḥosayn Teymurtāš, Noşrat-al-Dawla Firuz Mirzā, Sayyed Ḥasan Modarres, and 'Ali-Akbar Dāvar had been eliminated in various ways, while others, like Moḥammad-'Ali Foruġi (qq.v.), were forced to leave the political stage. It was during this period that he traveled to Egypt with a number of other politicians to make arrangements for the marriage between Princess Fawzia, King Fāruq's sister, and Moḥammad-Reżā, the crown prince. Two more significant events of his tenure as prime minister were the universal removal of veils (enforced January 1936, see ČĀDOR) and the signing in Tehran of the Sa'dābād Pact between Persia, Turkey, Iraq, and Afghanistan (8 July 1937). His removal from office in 1939 was interpreted by some as a move by Reza Shah to draw closer to Nazi Germany by appointing a more pro-German prime minister. Jam acted as minister of court from 1939 to September 1941. Under Mohammad Reza Shah, Jam served as ambassador to Egypt, minister of court, minister of war, ambassador to Italy, and finally as a senator in 1956. Except for a few casual articles in the daily *Eṭṭelā'āt* and the annual journal *Sāl-nāma-e donyā*, Jam never published any writings.

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