



KASMĀ'I, MIRZĀ ḤOSAYN

KASMĀ'I, MIRZĀ ḤOSAYN (b. Kasmā, 1862; d. Kasmā, 1921), a constitutionalist active in the revolutionary movement in Gilan (1915-20), led by Mirzā Kuček Khan Jangali (see [JANGALI MOVEMENT](#)). His father, Āqā Moḥammad- Ebrāhim, a merchant active in Rasht, was born in the village of Kasmā. As a youngster, Mirzā Ḥosayn studied theology in Rasht and later went to [Karbala](#) to complete his religious education. After two years he returned to Gilān, where he became known as Shaikh Ḥosayn (Eldrid to Percy Cox).

After the death of his father, he went to Tehran and soon traveled to Vienna and Paris (Eldrid to Percy Cox). He was reportedly in contact with revolutionaries in Baku and Tbilisi (Faḵrā'i, 1972, p. 264) and apparently contributed to the political Azeri weekly *Molla Nasreddin* (Gilak, p. 11). He returned to Gilan in the company of Transcaucasian revolutionaries (Faḵrā'i, 1972, p. 264) sometime during the years 1908-09, which coincided with the period called Estebdād-e Şaġir, when the constitutional movement had been temporarily suppressed by Moḥammad- 'Ali Shah (r. 1907-09).

In Rasht, Ḥosayn Kasmā'i was hired to run the newly reorganized school called Madrasa-ye Waṭan (Ḳomāmizāda, III, p. 480). He distinguished himself as a brilliant orator (Rasulzāda, pp. 123-24) and was chosen as a member of the secret committee, Sattār, which was to orchestrate the revolution in Gilan (Kasravi, p. 8; Malekzāda, V, p. 148; Rowšan, pp. 117, 120). The committee set out to win back the revolution in two essential steps: first capturing Rasht by force and establishing there a revolutionary government, and then organizing a revolutionary army that would eventually march on Tehran and depose



Moḥammad- 'Ali Shah with the help of the Baḳtiāri tribe.

On 17 Moḥarram 1327/8 February 1909, Kasmā'i, together with another staunch constitutionalist, Mirzā 'Ali Tarbiat, led an attack on the governor's quarters (*dār-al- ḥokuma*) and subdued the guards after some clashes (Navā'i, pp. 49-51). Kasmā'i was also responsible for the execution-type murder of Ḥājj Shaikh 'Ali Fumani, an anti-constitutionalist cleric of Rasht, in his home (April 1909). In the summer of 1919, the British political officer at Rasht reported to Tehran, "It was he [i.e., Kasmā'i] who some 13 years ago, with other Mojahids visited the house of Aga Shaikh Ali Mujtahed and shot him in the presence of his family. On returning to his house he heard that the Shaikh was not dead and that a doctor had been summoned. So again went to the house and knocking at the door stated that "doctor mauser" had arrived. Having gained entrance and finding the shaikh still alive he fired several more shots into his body and head" (Eldrid to Percy Cox; see also, Navā'i, pp. 54-55).

After the capture of Rasht, the revolutionaries marched to Tehran and after a few months fighting re-established the constitution. Kasmā'i had accompanied the force and in Tehran once again distinguished himself as a capable journalist. He published the newspaper *Waqt* (Eldrid, to Percy Cox; Faḳrā'i, 1972, p. 264; Ṣadr Hāṣemi, IV, pp. 334-35).

Kasmā'i left for Europe when the Tsarist forces took Rasht and suppressed the local associations (*anjoman*) in late 1911. He returned to Rasht after the outbreak of World War I, when the Jangali revolutionary movement had been already under way since the autumn of 1915 (Faḳrā'i, 1972, p. 264). The Jangalis had established a pan-Islamic board, called Hay'at-e etteḥād-e Eslām, as their political arm. Kasmā'i reportedly snubbed the Jangalis and laughed at the title of their organization. Eventually the word *hay'at* (board) was replaced by the word committee before he joined the Jangali movement ('Aḳimi Dobakṣri, p. 12) and went on to edit a few issues of the Jangalis' newspaper, *Jangal* (Gilak, p. 51; Faḳrā'i, 1972, p. 264). Here he had conflicts with the reactionary Hāji Aḥmad Kasmā'i, leader of the right wing of the movement (Eldrid, to Percy Cox). He nevertheless remained with Mirzā Kuček Khan (q.v.), who at the time led the left wing of the Jangalis. This collaboration lasted until the attack of the British in early 1919. Then he obtained a pardon and retired from political activities (Eldrid, to Percy Cox).

The name of Ḥosayn Kasmā'i has gone down in history as a constitutionalist landlord. He had, in fact, bourgeois sentiments that were later radicalized as



he joined the Jangali movement. It also appears that at some stage during his political career he abandoned his religious activities. This probably took place in 1908, just as a comrade of his, Mirzā Kuček Jangali, had done in the wake of the bombardment of the Majles. Eldrid once reported, “He smokes Hashish and consequently is not regarded as being reliable. He is also unwisely fond of Arak” (Eldrid, to Percy Cox).

Ḥosayn Kasmā’i was also a poet, composing in both Persian and Gilaki. A selection of his poetry has been published in an anthology edited by Ebrāhim Faḵrā’i in 1979. Kasmā’i died in 1921 as a result of kidney problems and was buried in Solaymān Dārāb, a village near Rašt (Gorgin, pp. 521-22).

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