



## RA'D

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**RA'D** (Thunder), the name of a newspaper published by Sayyed Żiyā'-al-Din Ṭabāṭabā'i in Tehran, from 5 Āḍar 1292 to 28 Bahman 1299/27 November 1913 to 18 February 1921, with interruptions. *Ra'd* was preceded by *Šarq* (east) and *Barq* (lightning), also published by Seyyed Żiyā'. The publishing life of *Ra'd* was divided into two periods. During the first period, which ended in 1916 when Sayyed Żiyā' departed for Russia, *Ra'd* was issued four times a week in the first year and three times a week after that. During its second period, it appeared daily.

*The first period.* The government banned the newspaper *Barq* on 2 Āḍar 1292 /23 November 1913. A month before this, Sayyed Żiyā', in anticipation of the ban, had applied for a license to publish *Ra'd* but when the first issue appeared four days after the ban, the official permission to publish was still not in hand (*Asnād-e maṭbu'āt*, p. 561). During its first period, in contrast with *Šarq* and *Barq*, *Ra'd* had no logo (*še'ār*) and was more concerned with news than with propaganda. With the increased tension in Europe, which led eventually to World War I, the newspaper gradually revealed its partiality toward the Allies, especially Great Britain and, by publishing extras, it responded to the public's desire for the latest news. At the same time, it supported the policies of the Sepahsālār government and was accepted as a semi-official organ of the regime, receiving substantial financial aid from it (*Asnād-e maṭbu'āt*, pp. 561-62). *Ra'd* in this period was less bold and biting than *Šarq* and *Barq* had been (Kātuziān Ṭehrāni, p. 970). At one point Mirzā Ḥasan Khan sued the newspaper but the court ruled in its favor. An observer at that time wrote,



“today public opinion is ruled by Sayyed Żiyā’-al-Din (Neżām-al-Salṭana, p. 155). Nevertheless, with the advance of the Ottoman army into Persian territory and the probability of a victory by the Central Powers, Sayyed Żiyā’, an open supporter of the Allies, suspended the newspaper in Ābān 1295/1916 and departed for Russia. Volume 8 of *Ra’d* was not published.

*The second period.* Sayyed Żiyā’ returned to Tehran in 1917 and in Dey 1296/late December 1917 or early January 1918, began the second period of *Ra’d*’s publishing history. For the final two years of its publication, Sayyed Żiyā’’s title was “Director and Chief Political Editor,” or “Proprietor and Founder” and the actual operation of the newspaper was in the hands of Mirzā ‘Ali Qomi “Ḥaqqnevis” (1871-1956). Later Mirzā ‘Ali Qomi became Vice-Minister and Acting Minister of justice in the cabinet following the coup-d’etat of 3 Esfand 1299 Š./22 Feb. 1921, and then a representative to the parliament (*majles*) and a senator. An important regular contributor to *Ra’d* was Gāspār Epekiyān, the mayor of Tehran (Bahār, I, p. 100; ‘Ayn-al-Salṭana, p. 5073), who followed Sayyed Żiyā’ abroad when the latter was exiled from Persia (Bahār, *op. cit.*). Other regular contributors were Ḥosayn Khan ‘Adl-al-Molk and Solṭān Moḥammad ‘Āmeri. As many as twelve reporters were said to have worked for the paper during this period (Etteḥādiya, p. 164), but of these we know the name of only Šokr-Allāh Şafavi, who later founded the newspaper *Kušeš* and went on to become a senator.

This period included the most important years of the newspaper’s publication, and it enjoyed great fame and influence. For example, the secretary of the German Embassy described it as “the most important newspaper of the capital” (Sepehr, pp. 186, 212), and the *Revue du monde musulman* called it “the leading Persian newspaper” (Bouvat, p. 296). Fewer editorials were published during this period and the paper favored short news items, particularly national news, and serialized stories. Examples of the latter include “The Story of Port Sa’id,” describing Sayyed Żiyā’’s journey to Egypt, and Sir Henry Mortimer Durand’s historical novel *Nader Shah*. Politically the paper was more pro-Britain than before, and, during the premiership of Voṭuq-al-Dawla, Sayyed Żiyā’ strongly supported him and the treaty of 1919 in spite of old differences between them and his own later abrogation of the treaty. In turn, Voṭuq-al-Dawla chose him to head a commission for the conclusion of commercial treaties with the newly-established states in the Caucasus.

Early in *Ra’d*’s second period of publication, it and all other political papers were suspended for a week in December-January 1917-18 by order of the

government of Mostawfi-al-Mamālek (*Asnād-e matbu'āt*, pp. 563-64). It ceased publication for good in Esfand 1299/Feb.-Mar. 1921 after Sayyed Žiyā' became Prime Minister following the coup of that year.

*Ra'd* was first printed at the Tehran printing house and later at the Rowšanā'i printers. Sayyed Žiyā' had established the latter press after importing a printing press and other equipment from Germany. The paper's numbering continued that of *Šarq* and *Barq*; thus *Ra'd* began with vol. 5. Its format was four to six pages of five columns each and measured 41 x 56 cm. (A. Ṭabāṭabā'i, p. 223). The usual print run was said to be 1,500 copies (Şadr-e Hāşemi, no. 580; Neẓām-al-Salṭana, p. 155; Mehrad, p. 72). Aḥmad Ṭabāṭabā'i wrote that the press run reached 12,000 copies per day, of which 8,000 were sold in Tehran (A. Ṭabāṭabā'i, *op. cit.*). As mentioned above, sometimes the paper would print one-page extras selling for one *šāhi*, which might explain Ṭabāṭabā'i's claim of a high print run.

The price of a single copy of *Ra'd* varied greatly, as did the price of subscriptions. In the first year, the price was fifty-five *qerāns* for Tehran, sixty for the rest of the country, and eighty for other countries (when one *qerān* = one *riyāl* or 1/10 of a *tomān*), and in its last year it was eighty *qerāns* for Persia and one hundred abroad.

*Ra'd* carried a significant amount of advertising. During its first period, the price per line of advertising on page 1 was three *qerāns* and two *qerāns* for p. 2. The paper did not publish the price for advertising during its second period.

With regard to the paper's finances, in addition to revenue from sales of copies and advertising, *Ra'd* received a subsidy from the government and did not shun both direct and indirect aid from foreign sources (*Asnād-e matbu'āt*, p. 562; *Rāporthā-ye polis-e makfī*, p. 192). A report to the State Department by the American ambassador refers explicitly to the regular support of the British for the paper (Ġani, p. 205). During World War I, the German Embassy gave financial assistance to a number of Persian papers and proposed the same arrangement to the director of *Ra'd*. He, however, refused such aid, apparently because of his connections with Germany's enemy Great Britain. The German Embassy resolved the matter by taking out ninety-one subscriptions to the paper (Sepehr, p. 186).

Incomplete sets of *Ra'd* are held by major libraries within and without Persia, such as the Academy of Sciences of Baku, Cambridge University, the Library of



Congress in Washington, and Princeton University.

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