



**Sediqe Dowlata □ ba □ di Papers  
1919-1962**

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## Sediqe Dowlatabadi Papers

**Period** 1919-1962

**Total size** 0.12 m.

**Consultation** Not restricted

### Biography

Born in Isfahan 1882, died 1962; one of the earliest feminists in Iran and publicist on Iranian women's emancipation; involved in the founding of girls' schools; participated in politics; editor of *Zaban-e zanan* (The Women's Voice) 1919-1921, 1942-1945.

### Content

Memoirs 1919-1945; private correspondence 1923-1958 and official correspondence 1921-1951; notes for lectures 1934-1951; documents relating to the editing of *Zaban-e zanan* 1919-1921, 1942-1945.

### Administrative information

#### Processing information

List made by Najmuddin Kawyani in 2005

### INTRODUCTION

Sédighé Dolatabadi, daughter of Haj Mirza Hadi Dolatabadi was one of the vanguards of the women's movement in Iran. She was born in 1882 in Isfahan. She began her education in Persian and Arabic under teachings of Sheikh Mohammad Rafi Attari in Tehran, and learned her intermediate classes from the then-teacher of the Daral-Fonoun (Polytechnic institute). At the age of 15 she married Dr. Etezadulhukama. In 1917 she returned to Isfahan, and opened the first school for girls in the city. One year later she established the Association of Isfahan Khawateen (Society of Isfahan Women). During these activities she opened a school for poor girls named 'Ummulmadares'. All of these activities had a positive impact on the education and training of women.

In the year 1919 Sédighé Dolatabadi published the first women's periodical in Isfahan called *Zaban-e Zanan* (*The Women's Voice*) which was faced with opposition from Mullahs in Isfahan.

After ending the publication of *Zaban-e Zanan* in Isfahan, Sédighé Dolatabadi went to Tehran and once again started publishing it in the form of a monthly magazine. During this time, in 1921, she also established an association called Anjuman-e Azmayeshe Banuwan (Society Testing Women).

Sédighé Dolatabadi went to Europe to complete her education. She succeeded in receiving her B.A. from the Sorbonne University, Paris. In the spring of 1926 she represented the Iranian women at the tenth congress of the International Alliance for Women's Suffrage. She returned to Iran at the end of 1927 or in early 1928, and started her cultural and educational activities without wearing a veil. Compulsory unveiling of women was introduced in 1935/1936. Sédighé Dolatabadi accepted her appointment to the post of Supervision of Women's Education within the Ministry of Education, Religious Education and Light Industries in 1928. The next year she was appointed as Director General of Women Schools Supervisory Office. And in the year 1936 she was appointed as president of the Kanoon-e Banuwan (Women's Association).

Sédighé Dolatabadi once again started the publication of *Zaban-e Zanan* 1942, and published it once a month in the form of a magazine. In 1947 she participated in the Congress of Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, where she delivered a speech about Iranian women.

Sédighé Dolatabadi died on 30 July 1962 at the age of 80. In her will she proclaimed 'I will never forgive women who visit my grave veiled'.

After the Islamic Revolution in August 1980 Islamic vigilantes demolished her tomb and the tombs of her father and brother, who, although men of religion, had supported her activities.

Although information about the women's movement in Iran can be traced before the constitutionalist period of 1905 - 1909, the declaration of constitutionalism provided mental and political changes for Iranian women. The women's movement gained strength and expansion under the shadow of this movement. Under such circumstances a number of trained Iranian women began action towards the literacy of women, establishment and expansion of women's schools, and establishment of women's associations. They started publishing newspapers and magazines for women. And they struggled to achieve their voting and political rights, active participation in cultural and political fields, and equal rights as men had. In such a way the great women's movement was founded.

Sédighé Dolatabadi was a vanguard of this movement. For alleviating illiteracy she established schools for girls. She started establishing women's associations, which played an important role in participation, strength, and views of literate women at that time.

Publishing of the newspaper *Zaban-e Zanan* was one of the valuable activities of Sédighé Dolatabadi. The magazine *Zaban-e Zanan* was the third specialized publication in Iran and the first publication abroad. Despite unfavorable conditions, Sédighé Dolatabadi was able to publish the publication for two years in Isfahan. The newspaper *Zaban-e Zanan* was the first experience in journalism for Iranian women. At the beginning this newspaper devoted its time more to affairs related to women. Gradually Sédighé Dolatabadi, who was one of the swift political activists for women's equality, dragged it to cover daily affairs, which was prohibited in those days. Because of its political and social stance and most of all because of its criticism of the famous Wusuqqudawla agreement (1919) the newspaper was stopped from publishing. Subsequent to its cessation and due to opposition and provocations, the activities of Sédighé Dolatabadi were even more restricted, and she left the city.

Choosing the name of *Zaban-e Zanan* for the newspaper was an obvious contradiction to its purpose, and its meaning was to demonstrate this to established attitudes. In the prevailing ideas, *Zaban-e Zanan* should be short. 'Long Voice' (or too much talking) had negative consequences for women. But by naming the newspaper *Zabane Zanan*, Sédighé Dolatabadi not only ignored the prevailing (ghaleb) design but also gave it a positive meaning. The newspaper *Zabane Zanan* was putting forward in its pages the modern theory issues like social democracy and socialism, which can be an indication for Sédighé Dolatabadi 's attempts for providing necessary theoretical columns for the women's movement in achieving their individual and social rights.

In the title of the newspaper was written: 'Only the writings of women and girls are accepted, and our office is free in reductions or additions...'. In this context the newspaper pages were the monopoly of women, because it was literally the Voice of women. The language of the newspaper is swift. However it avoids using obscene words, and obeys the respect of the words and the glory of the pen. The publication is in simple language and well understandable, and the newspaper tries to avoid using non-Persian words, reflecting them with equivalent Persian words.

Sédighé Dolatabadi, one of the vanguards of the women's movement has done valuable works in regards to education and awareness of women, in publishing the newspaper, in the struggle towards equality of the right of women. In this respect she suffered accusations and allegations.

The memories, notes, personal letters and official briefs to the government departments, articles by Sédighé Dolatabadi and the pages in the *Zaban-e Zanan* magazine are special and important documents in the new historical researches with regards to the works and the history of the women's movement during the first half of the twentieth century.

The papers of Sédighé Dolatabadi have been given to the International Institute of Social History by her honorable family.

## LIST

### Telegrams and official letters on the first trip of Sédighé Dolatabadi to Europe

- I.1 Two letters to the borderpolice giving permission to Mrs. S. Dolatabadi to leave the country. 10 and 12 April 1923.
- I.2 Letter (handwritten) to the military regime in Iran. 14 April 1923.
- I.3 Two letters from "Jamiat-e Nesvan Watankah" to Sédighé Dolatabadi (from Teheran to Paris). 28 December 1923 and 20 January 1924.
- I.4 Letter from Edward Bravne to Sédighé Dolatabadi. 1 October 1924.

## Personal correspondence

- II.1 Letters from Switzerland to Qamar Taj and Fakhar Taj. 31 May 1923.
- II.2 Letters from Berlin to Qamar Taj. 19 July 1923.
- II.3 Letters from Berlin to Qamar Taj. 29 July 1923.
- II.4 Letters from Berlin to Qamar Taj. July 1923.
- II.5 Letters from Berlin to Qamar Taj. 6 August 1923.
- II.6 Letters from Berlin to Qamar Taj. 19 August 1923.
- II.7 Letters from Berlin to Qamar Taj. 4 September 1923.
- II.8 Letters from Berlin to Qamar Taj. 3 October 1923.
- II.9 Letters from Berlin to Fakhari Taj. 6 October 1923.
- II.10 Letters from Paris to Qamar Taj. 10 October 1923.
- II.11 Letters from Paris to Qamar Taj. 6 November 1923.
- II.12 Letters from Paris to Qamar Taj. 13 November 1923.
- II.13 Letters from Paris to Qamar Taj and Fakhri Taj. December 1923.
- II.14 Letters from Paris to Qamar Taj. 18 July 1924.
- II.15 Letters from Paris to Fakhri Taj. 18 July 1924.
- II.16 Letters from Paris to Qamar Taj and Fakhri Taj. 14 February 1924.
- II.17 Letters from Paris to Qamar Taj. February 1924.
- II.18 Letters from Paris to Qamar Taj. 7 March 1924.
- II.19 Letters from Paris to Senàtizadah. 28 May 1924.
- II.20 Letters from Paris to Senàtizadah. Nd.
- II.21 Letters from Paris to Fakhri Taj. 30 August 1924.
- II.22 Letters from Paris to Senàtizadah. 25 October 1924.
- II.23 Letters from Paris to Qamar Taj. 7 March 1925.
- II.24 Letters from Paris to Senàtizadah. 19 May 1925.
- II.25 Letters from Paris to Qamar Taj. 22 May 1925.
- II.26 Letters from Paris to Qamar Taj. 15 December 1925.
- II.27 Letters from Paris to Senàtizadah. 17 December 1925.
- II.28 Letters from Paris to Qamar Taj. 7 June 1926.
- II.29 Letters from Paris to Qamar Taj. 12 December 1926.
- II.30 Letters from Paris to Senàtizadah. 15 February 1927.
- II.31 Letters from Paris to Qamar Taj. 11 March 1927.
- II.32 Letters from Paris to Qamar Taj. 26 March 1927.

- II.33 Letters from Paris to Qamar Taj. 8 June 1927.
- II.34 Letters from Paris to Qamar Taj. November 1928.
- II.35 Letters from Paris to Qamar Taj. 1928-1933.
- II.36 Letters from Paris to Qamar Taj. September 1935.
- II.37 Letters from Paris to Qamar Taj. October 1935.
- II.38 Letters from Paris to Qamar Taj. October 1935.
- II.39 Letters from Paris to Qamar Taj. October 1935.
- II.40 Letters from Paris to Qamar Taj. November 1935.
- II.41 Letters from Paris to Qamar Taj. December 1935.
- II.42 Letters from Paris to Qamar Taj. December 1935.
- II.43 Letters from Paris to Qamar Taj. January 1936.
- II.44 Letters from Paris to Qamar Taj. February 1936.
- II.45 Letters from Paris to Qamar Taj. February 1936.
- II.46 Letters from Paris to Qamar Taj. March 1936.
- II.47 Letters from Paris to Qamar Taj. April 1936.
- II.48 Letters from Teheran to London (Qamar Taj). 1960.
- II.49 Letters from Teheran to London (Qamar Taj). 1960.
- II.50 Letters from Teheran to London (Qamar Taj). 1961.
- II.51 Letters to Qamar Taj. 1939.
- II.52 Letters from Teheran to London (Qamar Taj). 1939.
- II.53 Letters from Teheran to London (Qamar Taj). 1959.
- II.54 Letters from Paris to (Qamar Taj). 21 February 1924.
- II.55 Letters from Paris to ...1925.
- II.56 Letters from Paris to Naser, Copy. 1940.

### **Administrative letters, order, letter of commendation and letter to prime minister dr. M. Mossadeq.**

- III.1 Letter from the Ministry of Education to Sédighé Dolatabadi. 1929.
- III.2 Letter from mrs. Sédighé Dolatabadi to the Ministry of Education (handwritten). 1931.
- III.3 Rules from secondary and highschool. 1932.
- III.4 Letter from the Ministry of Education to Sédighé Dolatabadi – inspector of women schools. 1934.
- III.5 Letter from the Ministry of Education to Sédighé Dolatabadi. 1936.
- III.6 Letter to Prime Minister dr. M. Mossadiq. C.1952.
- III.7 Letter to the head of the propaganda department on the purchase of national securities. 1952.
- III.8 Permission from the Ministry of Culture to Mrs. S. Dolatabadi to publish "Zaban-e Zanan". N.d.

### **Miscellaneous documents**

- IV.1 Invitation for a speech on 'Frاند' (Persian relations and the life of women in Persia). N.d.
- IV.2 Membership list of the "Foundation Banuwan". 1947.
- IV.3 Pamphlet "Jamaat-e Rah-ye Nav" (Women's Organization. 1962.
- IV.4 Speech of Mrs. Shaiesta Sadeq on the role of the women in Iran and Turkey in "Foundation Banuwan" (pamphlet - 1937). 1937.
- IV.5 Hotel bills and travel expenses.
- IV.6 Miscellaneous letters. 4 pieces

## Articles and speeches

- V.1 Women and literature (handwritten).
- V.2 17 year existence of the "Foundation Banuwan" en Programme of the 17-anniversary of the "Foundation Banuwan".
- V.3 Report of the end of the 13e academic year of the "Foundation Banuwan".
- V.4 Where is his resting place.
- V.5 Speech for the editorial offices of newspapers in Tehran.
- V.6 Ideas of Sédighé Dolatabadi in reply to dr. Shafaq.
- V.7 Speech on necessary points.
- V.8 Speech on the purchase of stocks and shares issued by the government .
- V.9 Reasons for a women to live carefully.
- V.10 In commemoration of dr. Etezzad Qazvine.
- V.11 Speech "Outright done is better than hundred times talking".
- V.12 Speech. 1938. 7 pp.
- V.13 Congratulations from Sédighé Dolatabadi for taking off the veil of Iranian women. 1956.
- V.14 Report of the "Foundation Banuwan". C.1950.
- V.15 Memoirs on Iran.
- V.16 Report of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom for the ministry of culture. 1947.

## Periodicals

- VI *Zaban-e Zanan (The Women's Voice)*, No. 1 (December 1942). 1942.
- VII *Zaban-e Zanan (The Women's Voice)*. No. 7 (November 1944), No. 8 (December 1944). 1944.
- VIII *Zaban-e Zanan (The Women's Voice)*, No. 1 (March 1945), No. 2 (May 1945), No. 3 (June 1945), No. 4 (July 1945). 1945.

## Various documents

- IX Handwritten and printed copy of the short story "Tragedy" and part of the play.
- X Statutes of the "Foundation Banuwan".
- XI.1-3 The press about mrs. Sédighé Dolatabadi.

- XI.1 Article and photo of Sédighé Dolatabadi on the cover of the magazine *Equal Rights*. 23 October 1926.
- XI.2 Newspaper clippings from Iranian newspapers at the death of Sédighé Dolatabadi. 1962.
- XI.3 In commemoration of Sédighé Dolatabadi, 40 days after her death. 1961.