



AMIR-ṬAHMĀSEBI, 'ABD-ALLĀH

AMIR-ṬAHMĀSEBI, 'Abd-Allāh (b. Tehran 1260 Š./1881, d. Borujerd, 1307Š./1928), Major General, Army Commander and Governor of Azarbaijan, Minister of War, Minister of Public Utilities and Commerce ([FIGURE 1](#)). His father, an army officer with the [Cossack Brigade](#), came from a Persian family who had migrated to Tehran after Azarbaijan north of the Araxes was annexed by Russia during Fath-'Ali Shah's reign. Following his elementary education, 'Abd-Allāh joined the Cossack Staff School in Tehran, graduated as an officer after six years of training, and began his career in the Cossack Division. Showing utmost competence and bravery, he rapidly rose through the ranks. In 1298 Š./1919, the rank of lieutenant general (*amir tumān*) was conferred on him and he was appointed Commander of Aḥmad Shah's personal guard (K̄vāja-Nuri, p. 162). After the [coup d'état of 1299/1921](#), he dissuaded Aḥmad Shah from fleeing from the capital (Bahār, I, p. 69).

The following year, Reza Khan, Sardār-e Sepah, who by then was Minister of War, embarked on a radical reform of the army, downgrading many of the ranks bestowed in the past. Amir-Ṭahmāsebi was demoted to brigadier general (*sartip*) and appointed Commander of the Cavalry Brigade. However, his assiduity and professionalism soon attracted Sardār-e Sepah's attention (K̄vāja-Nuri, p. 172) and he was promoted to the rank of major general (*amir lašgar*), the highest military rank at the time, and sent as Army Commander and Governor General to Azarbaijan. Through his able management and



persuasive tactics, the new government's rule was extended to the farthest points in the west and northwest of the country (Bahār, I, p. 137). He embarked on a series of development projects and, relying on local goodwill, drastically improved the conditions in towns and villages, building schools, hospitals, improving arterial roads, libraries, orphanages, as well as barracks in different localities.

Amir-Ṭahmāsebi also disarmed the tribes in Azarbaijan and restored security particularly in areas around Ardebil, Ahar and Mešgin-šahr, where the Šāhsavan tribes had exercised their arbitrary and oppressive rule unchecked for years. These measures, as well as his attractive personality, won him popularity throughout Azarbaijan, to the extent that an alarmed Sardār-e Sepah considered recalling him to the capital. Amir-Ṭahmāsebi's last mission in Azarbaijan was to curb the local dominance of Eqbāl-al-Salṭana of Māku, a man of formidable local power. Eqbāl-al-Salṭana's forefathers had been vested with the responsibility of controlling the frontier with Russia and Turkey as early as the Safavid period, and maintained their privileged position under the Qājārs. Amir-Ṭahmāsebi managed to win Eqbāl-al-Salṭana's friendship and confidence, and succeeded in luring him away from the safety of his own domain to the provincial capital, Tabriz, where the local magnate was arrested and died shortly afterwards from a heart attack in prison. His considerable wealth and property were confiscated and the proceeds sent to Sardār-e Sepah in Tehran (Makki, p. 416; Hedāyat, p. 361).

Early in 1304 Š./1925, Sardār-e Sepah, by then Prime Minister and Minister of War, decided to visit Azarbaijan, supposedly to inspect and commend the improvements made by the governor, but in reality to insure his removal from office. Thus, on leaving Azarbaijan, Sardār-e Sepah brought Amir-Ṭahmāsebi back to Tehran, appointing him as Parliamentary Under-Secretary, in the Ministry of War. Meanwhile, the initial plans to oust Aḥmad Shah from the throne were afoot and Amir-Ṭahmāsebi was appointed Military Governor of Tehran to oversee the preparatory arrangements. On 9 Ābān 1304 Š./1 November 1925, the Majles voted to end the rule of the Qajar dynasty and to transfer power to the provisional government headed by Reza Khan, Sardār-e Sepah. The following evening Ṭahmāsebi was entrusted with the responsibility of escorting the Crown Prince Moḥammad-Ḥasan Mirzā from the Golestān Palace to the border with Iraq (Hedāyat, p. 469).

In the first cabinet under the new dynasty, which was formed on 28 Āḍar 1304Š./19 December 1925 and lasted only six months, [Moḥammad-Ali](#)



Foruḡi became Prime Minister and Amir-Ṭahmāsebi Minister of War. In 1306Š./1927, a few months after Mehdi-Qoli Hedāyat (Mok̄ber-al-Salṭana) had formed a new cabinet, Amir-Ṭahmāsebi was appointed Minister of Public Utilities and Commerce. He soon embarked on a series of development projects which he carried out with his usual vigor. Early in 1307Š./1928, during an inspection tour of the roads under construction in Lorestān, he was shot at and wounded by a band of highwaymen. He was transferred to a hospital in Borujerd where, in spite of the efforts of several surgeons flown in from Tehran, he died of his wounds, aged 47 (*Sālnāma-ye Pārs*, year 1307Š., p. 23). The shah himself immediately traveled to Borujerd and attended his funeral and a day of official mourning was observed (*Eṭṭelā’āt dar rob’-e qarn*, p. 32). Amir-Ṭahmāsebi was also the author of a historical work, narrating the transfer of sovereignty to Rezā Shah, which included the text of the cables from provincial towns requesting the change (*Tāriḡ-e Šāhanšāhi-ye Alāḡazrat Rezā Šāh Pahlavi*, Tehran, 1926, repr. 1976.)

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