



ĀQĀ BĀLĀ KHAN SARDĀR

ĀQĀ BĀLĀ KHAN SARDĀR, MOḤAMMAD-‘ALĪ KHAN, Qajar official in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Of an obscure family, he joined the military at an early age. He rose rapidly after attracting the attention of Nāṣer-al-dīn Shah’s son, Kāmrān Mīrzā, minister of war and supreme commander of the armies. In 1304/1887, Āqā Bālā Khan received the title “Mo‘īn(-e) Neẓām” (M. H. E‘temād-al-salṭana, *Rūz-nāma-ye kāṭerāt*, ed. Ī. Afšār, Tehran, 1345 Š./1966, p. 550) and the command of Kāmrān’s special regiment. In 1308/1891 he became commander of a division of 10,000 men (*amīr-e tūmān*) and chief of the arsenal; the next year he received the title Wakīl-al-dawla and succeeded the recently deceased Jahāngīr Khan as minister of industries (*wazīr-e ṣanāye‘*, *ibid.*, p. 550). On 3 Jomādā II 1309/4 January 1892, a large demonstration against the foreign tobacco monopoly took place in front of the palace in Tehran. After Kāmrān Mīrzā’s attempt to confront the demonstrators ended ignominiously, Āqā Bālā Khan directed the royal guards to fire on them. Some 30 people were killed or wounded (*ibid.*, p. 889; ‘A. Mostawfī, *Šarḥ-e zendagānī-e man*, Tehran, 1343 Š./1964, pp. 470-72; see the report of the incident in Mīrzā ‘Alī Khan Amīn-al-dawla, *Kāṭerāt-e sīāsī*, ed. Ḥ. Farmān-farma‘īān, Tehran, 1341 Š./1972, pp. 159-62 and F. Kazemzadeh, *Russia and Britain in Persia, 1864-1914*, New Haven, 1968, pp. 263-64). Āqā Bālā Khan’s career continued to advance with his assiduous application to police work, and he was named Sardār-e Afḵam in 1313/1895-96. Under Moḥammad-‘Alī Shah (1324-27/1906-09), he was appointed governor of Gīlān, but on 16 Moḥarram 1327/7 February 1909, he was assassinated in Rašt.



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