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ATĀBAK-E AʿẒAM, AMĪN-AL-SOLṬĀN

ATĀBAK-E **AʿẒAM,** MĪRZĀ ʿALĪ-AṢḠAR KHAN **AMĪN**-AL-**SOLṬĀN,** grand vizier under the last three Qajar kings. The Qajar title Atābak-e Aʿẓam, reminiscent of Saljuq titulatures, was conferred on two prominent statesmen: Mīrzā Taqī Khan Amīr(-e) Neẓām Amīr(-e) Kabīr (q.v.) and Mīrzā ʿAlī-Aṣḡar Khan Amīn-al-solṭān. It was also conferred upon the unpopular Solṭān ʿAbd-al-Maǰīd Mīrzā ʿAyn-al-dawla who, however, is not known by this title. While Amīr-e Kabīr's short tenure as chief minister (1848-51) is generally reckoned by Iranians as a major achievement towards reform and progress interrupted by his untimely death, Amīn-al-solṭān's long career has been generally considered as the main cause of the evils befalling Iran in late Qajar period. Controversies remain regarding his family origins, his political career, and circumstances surrounding his assassination.

Mīrzā ʿAlī-Aṣḡār Khan Amīn-al-solṭān, the second son of Āqā Moḥammad-Ebrāhīm Amīn-al-solṭān and known as Āqā ʿAlī-Aṣḡar before his rise to power, was born in Tehran on 20 Jomādā 1274/6 January 1858. He began his elementary studies at the age of six and at the age of fifteen joined his father's staff, who had just received the title Amīn-al-solṭān. The next year (1287/1871), father and son were among Nāṣer-al-dīn Shah's retinue in his pilgrimage to the *ʿatabāt*. Upon his return to Tehran, Mīrzā ʿAlī-Aṣḡar was granted the rank of *sarhang* and commander of the royal escort cavalry. In 1290/1873-74, he inherited his father's title and function of *ṣāḥeb(-e) ǰamʿ* (head of the royal

transport). In 1295/1878, while his father accompanied the shah to Europe, he filled his functions at court. In 1298/1880-81, he became treasurer of the army. After Mīrzā ʿAlī Khan Amīn-al-molk, the chairman of the council of state (Dār al-Šūrā-ye Kobrā), received the title of Amīn-al-dawla (1299/1881-82), he was given the title Amīn-al-molk (which he kept only fourteen months) together with other functions, such as assistant to court, customs, and treasury affairs. Upon his father's death (1300/1883), he inherited his *laqab* Amīn-al-solṭān and most of his functions while his own titles and functions were transmitted to his younger brothers Moḥammad Qāsem Khan (entitled *ṣāḥeb-e jamʿ* in 1299/1881-82) and Shaikh (or Mīrzā) Esmāʿīl Khan Amīn-al-molk (q.v.). The eldest brother, Āqā Moḥammad-ʿAlī Amīn-e Ḥażrat had already received his father's office of *ābdār-bāšī*. The most important functions retained by Mīrzā ʿAlī-Aṣḡar Khan Amīn-al-solṭān were the ministries of court and interior, the offices of treasury, customs and royal granaries (see Amīn-al-dawla, *Ḵāṭerāt*, pp. 91, 101-02; Amīrī, *Atābak-e Aʿẓam*, p. 26; Ṣafāʾī, *Rahbarān* II, pp. 54f.; Bāmdād, *Reǰāl* II, pp. 387f.). His further political career may be summarized as follows:

First tenure (1885-1896): 1. The English-dominated period. Upon Āqā Ebrāhīm's death, ʿAlī Khan Amīn al-dawla and Moḥammad-Ḥasan Eʿtemād-al-salṭana expected to succeed him, but, to their disappointment, the shah's choice fell on Mīrzā ʿAlī-Aṣḡar Khan, who was then barely twenty-five (see Eʿtemād-al-salṭana, *Rūznāma*, pp. 181, 255, 293, 403; on youth in office, see also Šayḵ-al-eslāmī, "Asnād," pp. 238f.; Bakhash, *Iran*, p. 262). Although Mīrzā Yūsof Khan Mostawfī al-mamālek was the official *raʾīs al-wozarāʾ* (1882) and *ṣadr-e aʿẓam* (1884-86), the young Amīn-al-solṭān was the *de facto* grand vizier from September, 1883 (Eʿtemād al-salṭana, op. cit., p. 255). Upon Mīrzā Yusofʾs death (Raǰab, 1303/April, 1886), he paved the way to his ascendancy by putting into office men related or devoted to him. His younger brothers Esmāʿīl Khan and Moḥammad-Qāsem Khan held respectively the Ministry of Treasury and the *ṣāḥeb-e ǰamʿī*. The customs were entrusted to his uncle Moḥammad-Taqī Khan Moʿezz-al-molk; the royal granaries to his father-in-law, the mint to Hāǰǰī Moḥammad-Ḥasan Amīn al-żarb, the *ṣandūq-ḵāna* to his brother-in-law Moḥammad-ʿAlī Khan Amīn-al-salṭana (Mostawfī, *Zendagānī* I, pp. 374f.). He actually held all these functions under close supervision and he also controlled the finances through Mīrzā Moḥammad Ḥosayn Wazīr-e Daftar (Amīrī, op. cit., p. 27). From the outset of Amīn-al solṭān's tenure three factions, headed by Amīn-al solṭān, Prince Masʿūd Mīrzā Ẓell-al-solṭān, and Prince Kāmrān Mīrzā Nāyeb-al-salṭana, were competing for power. Amīn-al-solṭān had more

influential supporters than the two princes and enjoyed the shah's confidence. Both Amīn-al-solṭāns had enjoyed the support of the shah's uncle Farhād Mīrzā Moʿtamed-al-dawla (1818-88) and his son ʿAbd-al-ʿAlī Mīrzā Eḥtešām-al-dawla. ʿAbd-al-Ḥosayn Mīrzā Farmānfarmā, supported Amīn-al-solṭān as did courtiers like Golām-Ḥosayn Khan Amīn-e Ḵalwat, Waǰīh Mīrzā Sayf-al-molk and Āṣaf-al-dawla (Sheikholeslami, *The Central Structure*, pp. 270f.); he further strengthened his position by attracting influential local dignitaries and by forming a long-lasting alliance with the Baḵtīārī ruling family. This eventually enabled him to weaken Ẓell-al-solṭān's influence, who from his capital Isfahan, had extended his power over almost all the southern and western provinces (see Mostawfī, op. cit., I, pp. 375ff.; M. Qazvīnī, in *Yādgār* 5, 1327-28 Š./1958, p. 88; Curzon, I, p. 438; Ṣafāʾī, *Asnād-e bargozīda*, pp. 39ff.). Ẓell-al solṭān's supporters ranged from the conservative Mīrzā Yūsof Mostawfī-al-mamālek to the reformist Malkom Khan and included job seekers such as Solṭān ʿAbd-al-Ḥamīd Mīrzā (Sheikholeslami, op. cit., pp. 271f.). Kāmrān Mīrzā held the Ministry of War and multiple governorates and other functions. Enjoying less support, he depended more on the shah's trust. His power, like Ẓell-al-solṭān's, was checked through Amīn-al-solṭān's maneuvering at court (Mostawfī, op. cit., I, pp. 376f.). Enmity between the two men was eventually damaging to the government, their rivalry extending itself into the harem (Bakhash, op. cit., pp. 282f.; on Amīn-al-solṭān and Kāmrān Mīrzā's relations, see further Amīrī, op. cit., pp. 58-76). Although barred from the succession and dismissed from most of his functions (army disbanded, power limited to Isfahan, January, 1888), Ẓell-al-solṭān regained the shah's favor and nearly succeeded to unseat Amīn-al-solṭān (early 1893). This time, Kāmrān Mīrzā helped to foil the shah's plan (see below). Both Kāmrān Mīrzā and Amīn-al-solṭān enjoyed the support of influential *ʿolamāʾ* (Amīn-al-dawla, op. cit., p. 168). Other "free-floating" officials depended mostly on the shah's support and could influence leading parties. Such were Mīrzā Yaḥyā Khan Mošīr-al-dawla Moʿtamed-al-molk (1822-92), Moḥammad-Ḥasan Khan Eʿtemād-al-salṭana (1840-96), and Mīrzā ʿAlī Khan Amīn-al-dawla (1844-1904). The first two had contacts with the Russians, while Amīn-al-dawla had British support and was a serious rival for Amīn-al-solṭān. He entertained friendly relations with Malkom Khan (1833-1908); both enjoyed Ẓell-al-solṭān's protection (Sheikholeslami, op. cit., pp. 272f.; Bakhash, op. cit., p. 223).

Under such conflicting circumstances and intrigues, the shah could confer official titles on Amīn-al-solṭān at a relatively slow pace. He accompanied him on his third European trip (1306/1889) with the title of *wazīr-e aʿẓam* and full

governmental powers (Bāmdād, op. cit., II, p. 396). After having nearly been dismissed, in favor of Ẓell-al-solṭān who had been summoned from Isfahan, he was officially named *ṣadr-e aʿẓam* on 7 Raǰab 1310/25 January 1893, apparently as a result of the intervention of the Russian Legation in Tehran (Eʿtemād-al-salṭana, op. cit., pp. 847, 850; Amīn-al-dawla, op. cit., pp. 175-79).

Amīn-al-solṭān's tenure coincides with the apex of Russo-British rivalry in Iran. His pro-British policy curbed the renewal of Russian influence which followed the repeal of the Reuter concession (1873). In 1884, he collaborated with the British Envoy Nicholson against Russian policy. He also obtained from the shah that Persian officials should be forbidden to deal directly with foreign diplomats (Amīrī, op. cit., p. 28). His first major political step was to have Mīrzā Yaḥyā Mošīr-al-dawla dismissed from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (through British objections, Ḏu'l-qaʿda, 1304/August, 1887). Through his successor ʿAbbās Khan Qawām-al-dawla he could control diplomacy and then had both foreign and internal affairs under his sway (Eʿtemād-al-salṭana, op. cit., pp. 505, 513). From 1888, British diplomats in Iran promoted the efforts of their nationals to seek concessions. This policy was favored by Sir Henry Drummond Wolff who attracted Amīn-al-solṭān's friendship. Under Wolff's ministry at Tehran (1887-90), in close cooperation with Amīn-al-solṭān, important concessions were granted: the opening of the Kārūn river to navigation (1306/1888-89; see Kazemzadeh, *Russia and Britain*, p. 195; Amīrī, op. cit., pp. 138-60); the launching, in September, 1889, of the British-owned Imperial Bank of Persia (which took over in 1890 the New Oriental Banking Corporation opened up in 1888); this last concern was part of a concession which granted Reuter exclusive banking and mining rights for sixty years (see Wright, *The English*, pp. 103ff.; Amīrī, op. cit., pp. 124-37). Concession hunting in Iran attracted speculators and adventurers while the shah and high officials—out of greed for royalties and bribes—signed away important resources to mostly British concessionaires for relatively small sums (Keddie, *Tobacco Protest*, pp. 6-7; Eʿtemad-al-salṭana's writings, particularly *Ḵalsa*, are filled with details on this subject). This further alarmed the Russian government and its representatives in Iran who raged in opposition to Amīn-al-solṭān. To curb the British influence they had already replaced their minister Melikoff by the energetic but arrogant Prince Dolgoruky (November, 1886). The shah and Amīn-al-solṭān had violently protested against Dolgoruky's arrogance and—together with Mīrzā Maḥmūd Khan ʿAlāʾ-al-molk's efforts—obtained his replacement by Bützow (November, 1889; see Ṣafāʾī, *Gozārešhā*, p. 10; idem, *Rahbarān* II, pp. 57f.). But new difficulties arose after

Mīrzā Malkom Khan Nāẓem-al-dawla, the Iranian ambassador in London (1873-89), was revoked for his dealings in the business of a lottery concession and shadowy corporations. Objections to this concession had been formulated by Wolff and the Russian charge d'affaires. Amīn-al-solṭān obtained its condemnation from the *ʿolamāʾ*. Malkom refused to accept this cancellation and, for financial and other reasons, the shah preferred to dismiss him (December, 1889). This dismissal occurred after a long period of strained relations between Amīn-al-solṭān and Malkom (see Algar, *Malkum Khān*, pp. 164ff.). Although it has been argued that the case of the lottery concession was for Amīn-al-solṭān a mere pretext to this dismissal (ibid., p. 65), Malkom's attitude toward him before and after this event ranged from full admiration to hostility and execration (on relations between the two men, see further Algar, op. cit., index; Amīrī, op. cit., pp. 88-105; Nūrāʾī, "Rawābeṭ," pp. 53-70).

The most important of these concessions was the granting of a fifty year monopoly of the production, sale, and export of Iran's entire tobacco crop to Major G. F. Talbot (March, 1890). Generally known as the "Tobacco Régie," this concession—obtained through Wolff's policy and Amīn-al-solṭān's support—resulted in the first successful uprising against Qajar rule. Before the concession became known opposition concentrated against Amīn-al-żarb's issuing of improperly alloyed coins and the rise in prices. While the Russians continued their plots to unseat him, he was threatened internally by Kāmrān Mīrzā (in contact with Russians; Wolff believed he led the opposition to Amīn-al-solṭān) and abroad by Malkom's *Qānūn* (July-August, 1890). In September, 1890, Bützow strongly protested against the Régie and all concessions given to the English and others. The Régie together with other concessions and Amīn-al-solṭān's policy soon became the main target of Persian newspapers published abroad, *Aḵtar* (Istanbul) and *Qānūn* (London). First signs of an anti-governmental campaign appeared in January, 1891 . In the same month, Jamāl-al-dīn Asadābādī "al-Afḡānī" who, from July, 1890, preached opposition from his *bast* in the shrine of Shah ʿAbd-al-ʿaẓīm, was forcibly expelled and sent out of the country. The letter he sent from Baṣra to the *marǰaʿ-e taqlīd* Mīrzā Ḥasan Šīrāzī at Samarra probably influenced the latter's intervention over the tobacco monopoly (see main references in Bakhash, *Iran*, p. 242 n. 105). For his disciples, Afḡānī remains the main protagonist in the cancellation of the Régie and the shah's murder. Although he harshly attacked Amīn-al-solṭān in his articles and correspondence, relations between the two men remain unclear. In his two sojourns in Tehran (1886-87, 1889-90), Afḡānī stayed at the house of Amīn-al-żarb, (one of Amīn-al-solṭān's best friends). In

Russia, he acted as Amīn-al-solṭān's representative and tried to improve the officials' unfavorable attitude towards him (September-November, 1889; Amīn-al-solṭān denied having entrusted him with any mission; see Pakdaman, *Djamal-ed-Din*, pp. 132f.; Keddie, op. cit., pp. 22ff.; Amīrī, op. cit., pp. 169ff.; Ṣafāʾī, *Rahbarān* II, p. 59; on relations between the two men, sea further Moḥīṭ Ṭabāṭabāʾī, "Mard-ī," pp. 5-8).

The anti-concession movement gathered a large following among merchants, *ʿolamāʾ*, and various officials. Protests and revolts spread to all major cities from the spring of 1891. With the *fatwā* prohibiting smoking, attributed to Mīrzā Ḥasan Šīrāzī (December, 1891), opposition further developed within the government and even in the shah's *andarūn*. Russian officials used all their influence, notably in Tabrīz and Tehran where the movement reached revolutionary proportions (Ṣafāʾī, op. cit., p. 63). Undermining action at the top level (notably from Kāmrān Mīrzā) and popular discontent were also detrimental (see Lambton, "Tobacco Régie," II, pp. 88ff.). Only the shah and Amīn-al-solṭān seemed to believe in the beneficial aspect of the Régie and endeavored to save whatever could be saved at every step: cancellation of the monopoly in Azarbaijan (September, 1891); cancellation of the monopoly over domestic markets (December, 1891); total cancellation (January, 1892). Amīn-al-solṭān also struggled over the Régie's compensation with M. Ornstein (director of the company in Iran), The British envoy Sir Frank Lascelles (1891-94), and Lord Salisbury. This was finally settled for 500,000 pounds which had to be borrowed from the Imperial Bank (Bānk-e Šāhanšāhī-e Īrān). This first foreign debt rendered Iran more dependent on great powers. Favors bestowed by Amīn-al-solṭān to keep the anti-concession movement from going even further enriched and strengthened the *ʿolamāʾ*, notably Mīrzā Ḥasan Āštīānī who had a milder position than Šīrāzī (Keddie, op. cit., pp. 114ff.). Opponents among the *ʿolamāʾ* went so far as to declare Amīn-al-solṭān an unbeliever at Afḡānī's instigation, but this time the alleged *fatwā* was never published (Bāmbād, pp. 405-407).

2. The Russian-dominated period. Although his opponents had tried by every means to unseat him, Amīn-al-solṭān still enjoyed the shah's confidence (Ṣafāʾī, *Rahbarān* II, p. 69; Amīrī, op. cit., pp. 234ff.). However, his position as well as that of the British had been shaken. While negotiations for compensation were in progress, in February, 1892, after he had given Bützow assurances of his change of attitude, the latter promised him Russia's support (Feuvrier cited by Lambton, op. cit., II, p. 72; Keddie, op. cit., pp. 120ff.; Amīrī, op. cit., pp. 233,

309). When he subsequently wanted to resign (which the shah did not accept), Bützow advised the shah to be reconciled with him (Lambton, ibid.). Russians continued attacking the Imperial Bank and promoting the Russian Loan Bank (Bānk-e Esteqrāżī-e Īrān). Amīn-al-solṭān was, however, shrewd enough to persuade both the British and Russians that it was in their interest to maintain him in office. British diplomats such as Sir Mortimer Durand (minister at Tehran, 1894-1900) generally had a favorable opinion of him (Keddie, op. cit., pp. 122f.). Even after the settlement for compensation, opposition to government policies continued. The arrests of various opponents in the early months of 1891 had portentous consequences on political intrigues and subversive activities encouraged by the newspaper *Qānūn* (Bakhash, *Iran*, pp. 316ff.). Opposition expressed itself in other newspapers such as *Aḵtar* and in books such as Ṭaleboff's *Ketāb-e Aḥmad* and Marāḡaʾī's *Sīāḥat-nāma-ye Ebrāhīm Beg*.

While political intrigues and court extravagances continued to undermine Iran's resources, the shah progressively sunk into indifference towards government and reform. After his return from Europe, Amīn-al-solṭān began to drink openly, and gambling and drinking became common in the shah's camp. There were also rumors about Amīn-al-solṭān's affair with one of the shah's wives (Amīn-al-dawla, op. cit., pp. 189-90; Dawlatābādī, *Ḥayāt-e Yaḥyā* I, pp. 142-43). The shah spent most of his time in the harem, at hunting, or putting in order his museum, library, and crown jewels. He gradually left the state affairs to Amīn-al-solṭān who, having finally obtained the title of *ṣadr-e aʿẓam* (January, 1893), had built a "bureaucratic empire" which enabled him to eliminate or render ineffective most of his rivals and to exert control of internal and foreign policy. This concentration of power, combined with a re-emergence of virtually independent bureaucratic domains was detrimental to the financial situation, already afflicted by an unfavorable balance of trade and by the drop in the world price of silver which devaluated Iranian currency (Bakhash, op. cit., pp. 268ff.; see also Avery and Simmons, "Persia," pp. 1-37). Outbidding on the farming of the mint almost led to Amīn-al-solṭān's resignation in 1893. Dissatisfaction with the currency disrupted business in the bazaar in 1894 (see Amīn-al-żarb). To meet expenses, he had to draw on the shah's private treasury and to sell *ḵāleṣa* (state) lands, many of them being bought by his brother Amīn-al-molk and other personages at undervalued rates (ibid., pp. 279f.). Amīn-al-solṭān and Kāmrān Mīrzā's rivalry even found its way into the harem, paralyzing government work and finances. Lacking a strong financial base, Amīn-al-solṭān spent most of his energies in discrediting

his enemies and trying to appear as the only man able to hold Iran together. He openly criticized the shah and dissociated himself from him and from prevailing conditions, notably among the *ʿolamāʾ*. These frictions nearly led to his dismissal in favor of Ẓell-al-solṭān (early 1893), but warned by Kāmrān Mīrzā, he could revert to the Russians. Other crises between the shah and Amīn-al-solṭān occurred in 1893 and late 1894 (ibid., pp. 283ff.).

Weakening of central authority enabled provincial governors to act arbitrarily and to avoid remitting taxes. Moreover, such events as the reduction of Ẓell-al-solṭān's power (1883), who held sway over central and southern Iran, resulted over the years in a breakdown of order which spread to all major towns. This was aggravated by economic conditions and practices such as grain hoarding and cornering (by both officials and *ʿolomāʾ*). The Iranian army was inefficient to ensure security outside of Tehran. Amīn-al-solṭān was however, able to maintain a certain degree of order. This can best be seen in the dramatic circumstances of Nāṣer-al-dīn Shah's assassination at Shah ʿAbd-al-ʿAẓīm by Mīrzā Reżā Kermānī (an Afḡānī devotee) at the beginning of a week's jublee celebration of his reign (1 May 1896), when Amīn-al-solṭān remained in full control of the situation. He prevented the assassin from being killed by the mob (for further investigation) and hid the shah's death until he could reach Tehran and telegraph to Moẓaffar-al-dīn Mīrzā at Tabrīz. He thus prevented such rivals as Kāmrān Mīrzā from interfering in the succession. He entrusted military power at Tehran to the head of the *qazāq-ḵāna*, Colonel Kosogovskiĭ, and assured a soft transfer of power with the support of British and Russian ministers. Financial means for Moẓaffar-al-dīn's journey to Tehran were obtained through a loan from the Imperial Bank which he negotiated with Sir Mortimer Durand. He also secretly arranged a safe entry for Moẓaffar-al-dīn in Tehran (7 June 1896) where a provisional coronation was organized. Due to Moẓaffar-al-dīn's superstition (these events took place in 1313/1896), Mīrzā Reżā's execution and official coronation were postponed (Rabīʿ I, 1314/August, 1896; Amīn-al-dawla, pp. 208ff., 212 n. 1; Dawlatābādī, I, pp. 142ff.; Molkārā, pp. 126ff.; Farīd-al-molk, pp. 137ff.; Mostawfī, I, pp. 533f., II, pp. 1ff.; Amīrī, pp. 321ff.).

While still at Tabrīz Moẓaffar-al-dīn had confirmed Amīn-al-solṭān in his position of *ṣadr-e aʿẓam* and bestowed on him the title *ašraf* (he was then *ǰanāb-e ašraf*). Kāmrān Mīrzā, once a powerful rival to both Amīn-al-solṭān and Moẓaffar-al-dīn, had kept most of the time in hiding; he was deprived of his positions as Minister of War and governor of Tehran. Another powerful rival,

Amīn-al-dawla, was sent to Tabrīz to the *pīškārī* of the crown prince Moḥammad-ʿAlī Mīrzā. Solṭān ʿAbd-al-Maǰīd Mīrzā ʿAyn-al-dawla, a close confident of the shah, was sent as governor to Māzandarān. Although Amīn-al-solṭān's position seemed unshaken at the beginning, a move to unseat him quickly took shape. Some accounts—which may reflect the situation at the time—even accuse him to have arranged Mīrzā Reżā's return to Tehran and the shah's assassination to prevent a possible dismissal (see Amīn-al-dawla, pp. 217ff.; Dawlatābādī, I, pp. 142ff.; Khan Malek, II, pp. 305f.).

Whereas Amīn-al-solṭān had been serving a powerful and intelligent monarch, he was then to collaborate with a weaker and ailing ruler (although only 43!) who had been for years a virtual prisoner of court officials at Tabrīz. This "Turk" or Tabrizi faction which joined the new shah introduced a new element in the competing factions at Tehran. Danger was temporarily averted by giving concessions to the new-comers, some of which being taken from Amīn-al-solṭān's former opponents (see Mostawfī, II, p. 10). But the so-called Tabrizi faction remained unsatisfied and a movement gathered around ʿAbd-al-Ḥosayn Mīrzā Farmānfarmā who had been made governor of Tehran and wanted to become *ṣardār-e akram*. Farmānfarmā formed a disparate coalition uniting members of the Tabrīz party, Amīn-al-solṭān's former enemies (such as Kāmrān Mīrzā, Amīn-al-dawla), and influential bureaucrats (like ʿAlī-qolī Khan Moḵber-al-dawla). He was also supported in the harem by his sister Ḥażrat ʿOlyā, Moẓaffar-al-dīn's favorite. Financial difficulties following the change of ruler, corruption of Amīn-al-solṭān's brother Amīn-al-molk at the treasury, Amīn-al-solṭān's intemperance, and British preference for Farmānfarmā and Amīn-al-dawla were among the factors which brought about Amīn-al-solṭān's dismissal (17 Jomādā II 1314/23 November 1896). In the loose cabinet headed by Farmānfarmā (Minister of War), one could find most of the members of the above coalition (Moḵber-al-dawla and his son Mortażā-qolī Khan Ṣanīʿ-al-dawla, Ḥājǰ Moḥsen Khan Mošīr-al-dawla, Mīrzā Maḥmūd Khan Ḥakīm-al-molk). No *ṣadr-e aʿẓam* was appointed (see Mostawfī, loc. cit.; Amīrī, pp. 330ff.; Bakhash, "The Failure of Reform," pp. 15ff.).

Second tenure (1898-1903). Amīn-al-solṭān was allowed to spend his exile at Qom in a house he had built there. Ten cossacks and a Russian officer were in charge of his protection. He was refused treatment by a French dentist. His mail was censured by Farmānfarmā who also tried to have him murdered (Amīrī, pp. 341ff.; Ṣafāʾī, *Rahbarān* II, pp. 75f.; Bakhash, pp. 18f.; see also Chirol, p. 106).

In Tehran the so-called Tabrizi faction reportedly plundered what remained in the treasury as well as Nāṣer-al-dīn Shah's collections and apparently intended selling some of the crown jewels. They obtained pensions from the shah and *ḵāleṣa* lands at ridiculously low prices. Farmānfarmā, who had British support, was the most avaricious of the new ministers. He made profit from all sources, even from the heavy fine taken from Amīn-al-molk, the former Customs and Treasury Minister (Amīrī, pp. 343ff.; Bakhash, ibid.). Amīn-al-żarb and his son were also fined for having issued debased coins. Farmānfarmā's intrigues, including against his cabinet colleagues, resulted in a coalition against him. In March, 1897, Amīn-al-dawla (q.v.) was recalled from Azarbaijan to head a new cabinet and was soon raised to the rank of chief minister. He undertook a range of reforms (finances, revenue system, customs, currency, public education), set up a gendarmerie and consultative committees on reforms. But movements of opposition led by rivals like Amīn-al-solṭān and Farmānfarmā and supported by individuals threatened by proposed reforms soon gathered to unseat him. As in the tobacco protest movement, there was a provisory coalition of contradictory elements, including officials enjoying Russian support as well as *ʿolamāʾ* and merchants who stirred up public dissatisfaction. His failure to obtain a foreign loan, even from his British supporters, was decisive in his dismissal (Moḥarram, 1316/mid-June, 1898; see Bakhash, pp. 19ff.; Algar, *Religion and State*, p. 225; Amīrī, pp. 345ff.).

The shah then recalled from Qom Amīn-al-solṭān who made a triumphal entry in Tehran (22 Ṣafar 1316/12 July 1898). He was soon reinstated as *ṣadr-e aʿẓam* (11 Rabīʿ II 1316/29 August 1898). In the meantime the Tabrizi faction had been very active in making arrangements with him (Mostawfī, II, p. 31). Whereas the economy was disrupted (treasury empty, officials' salaries in arrear, public buildings non-maintained, etc.) the shah still urgently needed money to go to Europe for medical treatment. Amīn-al-solṭān first applied to the British but found their terms unacceptable, notably regarding a reinforcement of their control on southern customs (which begun under Amīn-al-dawla's tenure: see Destrée, p. 34). He then in vain turned to Germany, France, and Belgium, and finally applied to Russia. Through the medium of Arfaʿ-al-dawla, Iranian minister in Russia, and Mīrzā Naṣrallāh Khan Mošīr-al-dawla, foreign minister, the first Russian loan was concluded on 20 January 1900 (25.5 million rubles, 2.4 million pounds). This loan liberated Iran from her debts to the Russian and Imperial Banks, including the remainder of the Imperial Bank loan of 1892. Repayment was to be assured by the incomes of all Iranian

customs except Fārs and Persian Gulf area. There were also conditions regarding customs control and tariffs. Iran was forbidden to repay before ten years and to contract other loans before this one was paid off (see Mostawfī, II, pp. 47ff., Ṣafāʾī, op. cit., pp. 77ff.; Amīrī, pp. 356ff.; Keddie, "Iranian Politics," 1, p. 5).

The British strongly protested against the Russian loan and there was a considerable religious and popular discontent. The *ʿolamāʾ* 's opposition was encouraged by Farmānfarmā (and Amīn-al-dawla? see Ṣafāʾī, p. 81) while government officials accused Amīn-al-solṭān of keeping the shah ignorant of British offers (Keddie, op. cit., pp. 51f.; Algar, *Religion and State*, p. 225). But there were other reasons of unrest. Although the idea of entrusting ministerial departments to foreign experts had been introduced by Amīn-al-dawla, a number of Belgian bureaucrats had come to Iran to reorganize the customs and other administrations. These soon became a living symbol of foreign domination. Among them was Joseph Naus who negotiated the Russian loan and soon acquired high responsibilities in various governmental offices. Like Amīn-al-solṭān, he was considered a supporter of Russian policy towards Iran (Destrée, pp. 33ff.; Algar, op. cit., p. 226). While Belgian experts continued to arrive in Iran there were further protests against customs regulations and rumors began to circulate about Naus's projects to raise customs tariffs (Destrée, pp. 57f.). Grain cornering during the shah's absence also provoked discontent in Tehran. Further agitation was caused by Amīn-al-solṭān's hostility to the "modern" schools (see Anǰoman-e Maʿaref) founded under the aegis of Amīn-al-dawla.

Soon after returning from Europe, the shah conferred on Amīn-al-solṭān the *laqab* of Atābak-e Aʿẓam (Šaʿbān, 1318/December, 1900: see Amīrī, p. 364). The granting of this high and unusual title—or just "Atābak"—belied rumors of the shah's loss of confidence in him (Keddie, loc. cit.). The Atābak's enemies continued however to undermine his position. He was compelled to dismiss his supporter Āṣaf-al-dawla, governor of Tehran and leader of the grain ring, to the benefit of an enemy and rival ʿAyn-al-dawla (Keddie, op. cit., p. 10). Although he complained about his helplessness, Atābak managed to strengthen temporarily his position against his enemies at court and the *ʿolamāʾ*. At this moment Sir Mortimer Durand was replaced by Sir Arthur Hardinge as British minister at Tehran (1900-1905). To counteract Russian influence, Hardinge developed new policies which included the use of the opposition of some *ʿolamāʾ* whom he visited personally. His first major

achievement was to support W. d'Arcy's efforts to get an oil concession (see Anglo-Persian Oil Company). He obtained the collaboration of Atābak who succeeded to foil the Russian minister's vigilance. D'Arcy acquired a sixty year oil concession in Ṣafar, 1319/May, 1901 (see Hardinge, pp. 278ff.; Amīrī, pp. 365ff.; Wright, pp. 108f.; Keddie, op. cit., pp. 11f.).

A bitter struggle over Atābak's policies and position, led by Ḥakīm-al-molk and Neẓām-al-salṭana, continued in 1901. Opposition was mainly centered on customs control entrusted to Belgian officials. In Azarbaijan, the crown prince Moḥammad-ʿAlī Mīrzā intrigued to take the de facto power and compelled the nominal governor, Neẓām-al-salṭana, to resign. Moḥammad-ʿAlī Mīrzā's visit to Tehran in May, 1901 resulted in the strengthening of his position and helped stave off the Atābak's downfall (Keddie, op. cit., pp. 13f.). The establishment of Russian ascendancy provoked a recrudescence of antagonism to the Babis and Bahaʾis (ibid.; Algar, op. cit., pp. 229f.). While Russo-Persian negotiations about a new customs agreements continued in summer 1901 a new loan was under consideration. Secret societies concentrated their efforts to strengthened the anti-Atābak movement. Various opponents (including active Azalī Babis) expressed their ideas in Persian newspapers published abroad and in leaflets known as *šab-nāma* ("night letters" published in Iran with the recently introduced jelly-graph process). These sheets contained violent threats against the shah, Atābak, and his pro-Russian policy, notably about loans. However, Hardinge assured the shah he was perfectly satisfied with Atābak as premier. In September, many opponents were arrested and there were planned riots for the Atābak's overthrow (Keddie, pp. op. cit., 14f.). Negotiations for a second loan and the conditions attached to it provoked again the *ʿolamāʾ*'s opposition. Atābak bribed the leading *ʿolamāʾ* while Hardinge also tried to use them against the Persian government's pro-Russian policy. A Russo-Persian convention for customs and commerce signed in November, 1901 favored Russian trade (see Destrée, p. 73). On November 29, Naus was named minister of state and Hardinge approved this promotion (ibid., pp. 77, 344). Despite British offers for a loan and pressure regarding Russian conditions, the second large Russian loan was signed in April, 1902 (10 million rubles). Although the loan was not officially announced, there were *ʿolamā*"s protests which continued when the shah and Atābak left for Europe in the same month and during their absence (Algar, pp. 232ff.; Keddie, pp. 25ff.). Their official visit to England had been especially prepared by Hardinge who returned home on this occasion (Amīrī, pp. 378ff.).

In summer 1902, the anti-Atābak movement grew, partly supported by the British. Apart from leading *ʿolamāʾ*, Azalī Babis, and other radicals, it included powerful relatives of the shah (ʿAyn-al-dawla, Šoʿāʿ-al-salṭana, Farmānfarmā). The Emām-e Jomʿa of Tehran negotiated for a reconciliation between the *ʿolamāʾ* and Atābak, who was, however, reported to have offered his resignation on the basis of a petition from *mojtahed*s and other opponents. After their return in November, the shah clearly confirmed his full support to him (Keddie, "Iranian Politics," 2, pp. 151ff.; Algar, loc. cit.).

Among the consequences of this second European tour was the fact that practically all the Russian loan had been spent. Although the Atābak was determined to avoid a third loan, Naus had already been sent to Saint Petersburg to negotiate further Russian control over Iranian policies (Destrée, pp. 77ff.). Despite British protests, a tariff agreement with Russia signed in December, 1902 added to the popular and other opponents' excitement (Keddie, op. cit., p. 154). In addition to other functions, Naus was then charged to undertake financial reforms (Destrée, pp. 79ff.). Although opposition continued, the Atābak's position remained strong. Hardinge also kept pressing his policy. Having obtained an Anglo-Iranian commercial agreement (9 February 1902), he now succeeded in negotiating a loan, an advance of 200,000 pounds at five per cent per annum, which the Atābak concluded before the Russians could prevent it (9 April 1903; see Destrée, pp. 90f.; Keddie, op. cit., pp. 154f.). Large-scale protests followed the publication of the new customs tariff resulting from the Irano-Russian Commercial Treaty of February 1903 (see Entner, pp. 48ff.; Destrée, pp. 92ff.). While Naus was the de facto minister of finance, measures to reduce expenditures on high officials positions and salaries provoked further opposition from the court. This included the Tehran governor ʿAyn-al-dawla who had put arbitrary taxes on the bakeries and slaughter houses. There were bread riots in Tehran and Mašhad. Anglo-Russian rivalry over the loans continued as well as social disturbances. The anti-Atābak campaign now embraced the strengthened court party, the shah's favorite wife and daughter, *ʿolamāʾ*, and secret societies. Atābak, however, obtained from the shah the dismissal and exile of two powerful opponents; Mīrzā Maḥmūd Khan Ḥakīm-al-molk (sent as governor to Gīlān) and Solṭān-ʿAlī Khan Wazīr-e Afḵam (made governor of Yazd; Keddie, op. cit., pp. 155f.). In Rabīʿ II, 1321/June, 1903, there were serious *ʿolamāʾ*-led riots in Tabrīz against Belgian customs officials and other symbols of foreign influence (Algar, *Religion and State*, pp. 232f.; Destrée, pp. 95ff.). Babi massacres were also perpetrated at Isfahan. Atābak complained to Hardinge that these

disturbances were organized with strong support from Karbalā and Naǰaf, notably from the most influential *moǰtahed* Āqā Moḥammad Fāżel Šarābīānī. Hardinge warned in his turn the Atābak against a third Russian loan. Both Hardinge and the shah vainly tried to calm down the *ʿatabāt ʿolamāʾ* (Algar, op. cit., pp. 235ff.; Keddie, op. cit., pp. 157ff.).

In the summer of 1903, riots and unrest went on in Tabrīz, Tehran, Yazd (Babi massacres), and southern Iran (Dawlatābādī, I, pp. 320-22). In these troubled circumstances there came the dramatic news of the unexplained death of the recently exiled Ḥakīm-al-molk at Rašt (21 Jomādā 1312/16 August 1903, see Bāmdād, II, p. 420 n., IV, p. 37). Atābak was suspected to have ordered the elimination of this rival (see below). Concomitant with this event there surfaced a *takfīr-nāma* against Atābak. Copies of this document of excommunication—said to be originating from Naǰaf or to have been forged at British instigation—were widely circulated in Iran and abroad (Algar, op. cit., pp. 234f.; Keddie, op. cit., pp. 163f., reproducing an English translation of it; Persian text in Dawlatābādī, I, pp. 323-24, Kasravī, pp. 22f., and Amīrī, pp. 412f.). Although Atābak still enjoyed some prestige (verses sung in the bazaar said his power was superior to the shah's), court and harem factions then redoubled their efforts to undermine his position. While he was harassed from every side, ʿAyn-al-dawla and Waǰīhallāh Mīrzā convinced the shah they could ensure security and order. Pressed by the shah, Atābak presented his resignation (22 Jomādā II/15 September 1903).

Apart from the normal weariness resulting from a long stay in power, the causes for this sudden fall have been variously explained. For some modern Iranians, the main factor was British policy carried out by such officials as Sir Percy Sykes and Sir Valentine Chirol (Ṣafāʾī, *Rahbarān* II, p. 83; Amīrī, pp. 414ff. quoting M. Maḥmūd). This opinion is best summed up by Moḵber-al-salṭana Hedāyat: "The reason for the Atābak's dismissal is the English grievance and the third loan" (cited in Amīrī, loc. cit.). On this occasion, Atābak found no support from the Russians, being apparently distrusted by the new minister Vlasoff (who replaced Argyropulo, early 1903: see Hardinge, pp. 301ff.). As soon as rumors of his fall transpired, they put their hopes in the appointment of Solṭān ʿAbd-al-Maǰīd Mīrzā ʿAyn-al-dawla "who enjoyed a solid reputation as an extremist reactionary" (Desctrée, p. 113; see also ʿAyn-al-dawla, with additional bibliographical details).

World tour, third tenure, and assassination. After his second dismissal, the Atābak sought permission to go to Mecca. Since there remained five months

before the *ḥajj* and the shah had forbidden him to go through Turkey, before going to Arabia he undertook extensive travels to Russia, China, Japan, the United States, and Egypt. Accompanied by some of his closest friends (notably his son Mīrzā Aḥmad Khan and Mahdī-qolī Khan Hedāyat who wrote the account of this travel: see the bibliography), he was in several instances (e.g., in Japan and Ottoman Arabia) given a semi-official reception. Swift economic and social progress in Meiji Japan greatly impressed him. After performing the *ḥajj*, he proceeded to Europe through Syria and North Africa. He stayed in France, England, and Switzerland (with excursions to Italy). He is said to have been to Carlsbad "on a lesser pilgrimage" where he was initiated into "freemasonry" (see below). He also met British officials and Iranians and posed as a victim of his royal masters. He professed that his travels had convinced him of the need for reform and independence from Russia.

During his long absence, Moẓaffar-al-dīn Shah had first turned to ʿAyn-al-dawla (minister of the interior and *ṣadr-e aʿẓam* (from January, 1904). Political chaos, financial crisis, and religious opposition continued. During the shah's third trip to Europe with ʿAyn-al-dawla and most of his rivals (May-autumn 1905), Moḥammad-ʿAlī Mīrzā's temporary rule gave the Russians a chance to strengthen their position. However, Japan's victory over Russia and the Russian revolution of 1905 gave Iranian nationalist and constitutionalists hopes for governmental reforms without Russia being able to intervene. Massive protests against ʿAyn-al-dawla and Naus' policies led to the granting of a representative and constitutional government. ʿAyn-al-dawla (dismissed July, 1906) was replaced by the Atābak's former protege Mīrzā Naṣrallāh Khan Mošīr-al-dawla (said to have turned against his former master; as minister of foreign affairs, he had protested against the Ottoman's reception granted to him: Amīrī, p. 419; but see below).

Early in 1904, some of ʿAyn-al-dawla's opponents were working for the Atābak's reinstatement, but their action was hindered by *ʿatabāt ʿolamāʾ* who confirmed the genuineness of the *takfīr-nāma* against the latter (Keddie, "Iranian politics," p. 237). While ʿAyn-al-dawla's policy resulted in the splitting of the 1903 opposition to the Atābak, many of the latter's partisans remained faithful to him (notably Sayyed ʿAbdallāh Behbahānī who, after a short break, participated in the campaign against Naus; ibid., pp. 239ff.). The Atābak remained in close contact with his partisans through various channels. As his mail was censored, most of his correspondence was forwarded through the Iranian minister in Vienna, Narīmān Khan Qawām-al-salṭana. In Tehran,

letters were collected by Mīrzā Moḥammad Khan Wakīl-al-dawla Wazīr-e Ḵalwat (Ṣafāʾī, *Rahbarān* II, p. 85).

It seems that from the outset of his reign (January, 1907), Moḥammad-ʿAlī Shah had decided to recall the Atābak from exile. According to Wakīl-al-dawla, many letters of invitation were written to him. But influential personages (Mīrzā Naṣrallāh Khan Mošīr-al-dawla; his son Mīrzā Ḥasan Khan Mošīr-al-molk; Mīrzā Maḥmūd Khan Nāṣer-al-molk Qaragozlū; Farmānfarmā) were opposed to his comeback (ibid., p. 88). As soon as rumors of his return transpired, those opposed to him (especially the representatives of the Anǰoman-e Āḏarbāyǰān) strongly protested. Mīrzā Naṣrallāh Malek-al-motakallemīn and other *ʿolamāʾ* preached against the shah's decision, which was also criticized abroad in Iranian and European newspapers (Kasravī, p. 251; Khan Malek, II, p. 320; Amīrī, pp. 430f.). Continuous disturbances led to Naus' resignation (February, 1907) and departure (May, 1907; Destrée, pp. 134ff.). The *ṣadr-e aʿẓam* Mošīr-al-dawla, who was favorable to the Belgians without being execrated by the constitutionalists, was compelled to resign (Moḥarram, 1325/March, 1907; ibid., p. 164; Dawlatābādī, II, p. 119). Pending the Atābak's return, a provisional government was formed by Solṭān-ʿAlī Khan Wazīr-e Afḵam, minister of the Interior (Ṣafāʾī, p. 88; according to Dawlatābādī, II, pp. 120ff., Mošīr-al-dawla's functions had been given to Ḡolām-Ḥosayn Khan Gaffārī Wazīr-e Maḵṣūṣ, governor of Tehran and minister of court).

At the end of Moẓaffar-al-dīn Shah's reign and after he had received Moḥammad-ʿAlī Shah's telegraph of invitation, Atābak was invited by Sir Drummond Wolff to go to London. But he refused and entered Iran by way of Russia and the Caspian Sea. Fearful of the militant revolutionaries (*moǰāhedīn*) in Caucasus he did not go to Baku, instead a Russian warship took him till Bandar Anzalī. As soon as he arrived (6 Rabīʿ I 1325/19 April 1907), local *moǰāhedīn* prevented him from landing. Telegrams were sent from Anzalī and Rašt to Sayyed Ḥasan Taqīzāda and other radical deputies in Tehran asking for advice. After heated debates, the Majlis voted that he should be allowed to proceed. Despite demonstrations organized against him, he was generally warmly welcomed in Rašt, Qazvīn and Tehran (Dawlatābādī, loc. cit.; Kasravī, pp. 252ff.; Keddie, p. 318; Ṣafāʾī, loc. cit.).

Upon his arrival in Tehran, the Atābak advised the shah about the benefits that Iran and the monarchy might derive from parliamentarianism which he had seen at work in Europe. The shah confirmed his intention to preserve the

constitution which he had signed together with his father. The Atābak was appointed minister of the interior and head of the new government, which included some pro-British officials such as Mīrzā Abu'l-Qāsem Khan Nāṣer-al-molk, ʿAbd-al-Ḥosayn Mīrzā Farmānfarmā, Mīrzā Moḥammad-ʿAlī Khan ʿAlāʾ-al-salṭana. This government and the Atābak's declaration of intentions in favor of the constitution were welcomed by the majority in the Majlis (21 Rabīʿ I 1325/4 May 1907: Ṣafāʾī, op. cit., p. 89; Amīrī, pp. 432ff.). Insecurity and poverty then prevailed in the country. The state owed 3.5 million tomans in salaries to its employees; *ṣarrāf* creditors claiming the funds they had advanced took *bast* at the Atābak's house. Disturbances were fostered by Tehran *anǰoman*s. Anglo-Russian rivalry, Ottoman pressure on Iranian borders (Kurdistan area), and local rebellions were also threatening the authority of the government. From the outset, the Atābak had difficulties with the Baḵtīārī Khans (see Garthwaite, p. 111). Sālār-al-dawla who rebelled in Kermānšāh took *bast* in the Atābak's house. The Atābak sent ʿAbd-al-Ḥosayn Mīrzā Farmānfarmā to Urmia to deal with Ottoman frontier violation and also appointed Moḥtašam-al-salṭana to pacify the area. Whereas the Majlis representatives were reluctant to provide financial means to the government, order had also to be re-established in Arāk, Shiraz, and Zanǰān. About 500 *ʿolamāʾ* led by Shaikh Faẓlallāh Nūrī had taken *bast* at Shah ʿAbd-al-ʿAẓīm whence they were preaching against the constitution (Dawlatābādī, II, pp. 129ff.; Ṣafāʾī, op. cit., pp. 90ff.). Newspapers and *šab-nāma*s kept proclaiming that, as before, the Atābak had come to sell Iran to Russia.

Although the shah apparently believed he would help him in overthrowing the constitution and the Majlis, the Atābak soon realized the strength of constitutional feeling even among the religious classes. He endeavored to strengthen moderate members of the Majlis, such as his old friend Sayyed ʿAbdallāh Behbahānī, who were opposed to radicals such as Taqīzāda, who plotted against him. While courtiers spread rumors that he wanted to turn the realm into a republic, the Atābak opposed the shah on various issues. He asked him to dismiss the unpopular members of the cabinet and to arrest the tribal leader Raḥīm Khan who, with the shah's connivance, had been leading an attack against the revolutionary city of Tabrīz. Although he had temporarily recovered some of his former influence and had partisans among moderate or conservative *ʿolamāʾ*, traders, and various officials, he soon aroused opposition both from the radical and the reactionary sides. He also tried in vain to convince the shah to collaborate with the moderate majority in the Majlis. The necessity of a new foreign loan which he advocated again caused popular

discontent. In June and July, he confided to the British his hopelessness regarding finances, court, and popular opposition and fears for his own life (Keddie, "Assassination," p. 322). The first anniversary of the constitution was, however, celebrated with popular rejoicings at Tehran in the presence of the shah, the Atābak, dignitaries, diplomats, and representatives of every social group (25 July 1907; see Farīd-al-molk, p. 276; Ḡanī, IX, p. 269; Browne, *Revolution*, pp. 143ff.).

The story of the intricate events which culminated in the Atābak's assassination can only be summarized. While revolutionary *anǰoman*s continued their opposition, members of a secret Tehran committee affiliated with the Social Democratic Party (the Komīta-ye Eǰtemāʿīyūn-e ʿĀmmīyūn) voted for the Atābak's execution and entrusted it to the Komīta-ye Moǰāzāt (Committee for punishment) which assigned it to a group headed by the Caucasian revolutionary Ḥaydar Khan Amū Oḡlū (ʿAmoḡlī). A certain ʿAbbās Āqā was designated by drawing lots to do the job. According to an opposite version—put forth by Moḵber-al-salṭana Hedāyat and shared by his brother Ṣanīʿ-al-dawla, who was then president of the Majlis—the assassination was instigated by the shah and carried out by the Ādamīyat group. There are also stories of plots involving various constitutionalists, British, or Russian maneuvers, etc. (see controversial points below). Whatever the truth may be, on 21 Raǰab 1325/31 August 1907, Atābak and his ministers went to the place and obtained from the shah a *dastḵaṭṭ* in which he pledged that he would cooperate with the Majlis and delegate his powers to the ministers (text in Kasravī, p. 446). In the evening, they went to the Majlis, where the Atābak introduced two newly appointed ministers and the ministers' requests and the shah's reply which the deputies approved. About two hours after sunset, as the Atābak and Behbahānī were leaving the Bahārestan, a beggar retained Behbahānī some steps behind Atābak, who proceeded alone towards his carriage. Suddenly saw and tobacco dust and ashes were thrown into the air and pistol shots were heard. The Atābak was hit by several bullets and died shortly afterwards. Another shot was heard when his alleged assassin, ʿAbbās Āqā, killed himself (or was killed); (Kasravī, pp. 445ff.; Ṣafāʾī, op. cit., pp. 46f.; Amīrī, pp. 441ff.).

The Atābak's assassination—on the very day the Anglo-Russian convention dividing Iran into spheres of influence was signed at St. Petersburg—had far-reaching political consequences (see below). The court and the Majlis were so afraid of terrorists that the government and the

Atābak's family and friends could not hold an official mourning. They had to content themselves with a private *fāteḥa-ḵᵛānī* (funeral assembly). The Atābak's body was transported to Qom and buried in the mausoleum he had built there. The Majlis presented condolences to the shah. Both it and the shah praised the Atābak's services and constitutional sentiments. Official condolences were also presented by the British and Russian ministers. Representatives of the guilds, regrouped in the Anǰoman-e Aṣnāf, praised Atābak's achievements in the Majlis and asked for a prompt chastisement of those responsible for it (nothing serious was done in this respect; see below). One year after the event (21 Raǰab 1326/19 August 1908), Moḥammad-ʿAlī Shah ordered official ceremonies to be held at the Atābak's mausoleum and to destroy ʿAbbās Āqā's tomb (Ṣafāʾī, op. cit., pp. 98f.). On the other hand, popular sentiment approved the assassination. The streets of Tabrīz were illuminated (Keddie, p. 325). ʿAbbās Āqā was held as a martyr and a model by radicals and other nationalists, who put flowers on

his grave. The fortieth day of his death was celebrated as a holiday. Thousands gathered at his tomb and swore to follow his path (Dawlatābādī, II, pp. 142ff.; Malekzāda, III, pp. 49-51; Farīd-al-molk, p. 280; Browne, pp. 150-54). ʿAbbās Āqā's photographs (alive and dead) were widely published in the press in Iran and abroad (Browne, loc. cit.) They were sent as "colored" postcards as a token of revolutionary sympathy (see RMM, IV [1908], pp. 426f.).

The man and his achievements. Although he was one of the most outstanding Qajar statesmen, the Atābak spent most of his energy to "hold up his head amid the hurricane of intrigue that surges round a leading man in Persia" (Curzon, I, p. 428). Therefore, the man and his career have always been controversial. His value was, however, recognized even by his direct rivals such as Amīn-al-dawla (at the beginning), Kāmrān Mīrzā and Ẓell-al-solṭān. The most violent attacks against him came from Eʿtemād-al-salṭana's private writings. The utterly negative, lengthy account he gives of him and his political action in his *Ḵalsa* (pp. 63-145) probably contributed to undermine his reputation. His claim that he was, as Malkom, of an obscure Armenian origin was believed at the time and was recalled during the agitation against him in 1902 (ibid., p. 65; Curzon, I, p. 426; Algar, *Malkum Khān*, pp. 164f.; on his origin, see Amīn-al-solṭān, Āqā Ebrāhīm). His moral defects and shortcomings (gluttony, love for gambling, drinking, women, etc., pride and arrogance towards officials and the shah; love for honor and money; disorganization of administration, etc.) are mentioned at length in his memoirs (*Rūz-nāma*,

abundantly cited by Bāmdād). Completely different views are set forth in Eʿtemād-al-salṭana's official publications which are full of praise of the Atābak's literary abilities and his capabilities in government affairs (*Ṣadr al-tawārīḵ*, pp. 297-300). A laudatory biography of him is given by Ḥasan ʿAlī Khan Nawwāb, oriental secretary at the British Legation (Appendix II to Sir Mortimer Durand's memorandum, see the bibliography). Notwithstanding his versatile attitude, British diplomats generally had a favorable opinion on him (e.g., Curzon, ibid.; Wolff and Durand, see above; Stuart, front page and pp. 156f.; Chirol, pp. 105-07; Hardinge, pp. 270ff., for whom he was "a Georgian slave," etc.).

According to Mostawfī's moderate opinion, although he had an average education, the Atābak was intelligent and clever. He had a quick understanding and a good memory. He had learnt to deal with petitions (sing. *ʿarīża*) in his father's lifetime. He was high-minded, indulgent, generous, magnanimous, and extremely prodigal and extravagant. He could work hard twenty hours without interruption and spend over one night and day on pleasures. He had a handsome appearance and was endowed with tact (Mostawfī, I, p. 374). There are anecdotes about his munificence and generosity in favor of the poor. Once a week, he entertained those fallen out of favor and regularly gave money and food to the needy of Tehran (Ṣafāʾī, *Rahbarān* II pp. 100f.; Amīrī, pp. 456ff.). Through his magnanimity and forbearance, his enemies were disarmed and his friends became firmly devoted to him. Influential men such as Malkom Khan and Afḡānī sought after his favor or forgiveness. Lesser politicians or opponents were thankful for his pardon (see e.g., Farīd-al-molk, pp. 113f.).

Although often accused of corruption in his first tenure, like other officials he gave and received *pīškeš* (presents) and everything he possessed came from the shah's goodwill. Most gratuities he received from concessions were given to the shah, well renowned for his love for money. He surely made money on some ministries and monopolies (customs, royal mint) and on semi-private business (in Ḵūzestān and Kārūn river navigation; as a silent partner in Amīn-al-żarb's enterprise). But he spent so much and was so heavily in debts that little was left when he died. The most positive achievement of his first tenure was that, with a weakening Nāṣer-al-dīn Shah, he limited the consequences of foreign encroachments in Iran. Although more contestable, the results of his second tenure may be compared with those of his rival Amīn-al-dawla, who did not do much better under similar circumstances (see Bakhash, "The

Failure of Reform," pp. 29f.). Some obscure points however remain regarding the causes of his second dismissal. Apart from British maneuvers and Russian lack of support, his involvement in the elimination of his rival Ḥakīm-al-molk (the shah's physician) has also been put forth (see Bāmdād, p. 420; Amīrī, pp. 414f.). He was also suspected in the poisoning of Eʿtemād-al-salṭana and Mīrzā Naṣrallāh Khan Mošīr-al-dawla, whereas there is no proof that any of the three died an unnatural death (Ṣafāʾī, op. cit., p. 102). His ability to placate his enemies, is best illustrated by the circumstances leading to his comeback in 1907 and particularly by Malkom Khan's radical change towards him (see his letter in Ṣafāʾī, *Asnād e sīāsī*, p. 307). The reality of his affiliation to Freemasonry (i.e., the Ādamīyat Lodge), at Carlsbad—based on ʿAwn-al-mamālek's testimony (Ādamīyat's *Fekr-e āzādī* quoted by Algar, *Malkum Khān*, pp. 251ff.)—has however been disputed (Amīrī, p. 461; see also Rāʾīn, *Farāmūš-ḵāna* II, pp. 262ff.). According to many testimonies, after having traveled extensively in Japan and Europe he had changed his ways. Only the revolutionary radicals such as Sayyed Ḥasan Taqīzāda had a totally negative opinion of him and talked of him in terms of abuse, like Taqīzāda's "Ḵāʾen-al-solṭān" (The Sultan's traitor, see Afšār, *Awrāq-e tāzayāb*, p. 68). In any case, he can not easily be dismissed as a mere reactionary versus enlightened modernist reformers. His elimination radicalized the political situation to such an extent that parliamentary life was paralyzed. The sentiment held by the moderates that he was the only man able to establish a constitutional monarchy in Iran is reflected down to modern scholars' writings (see Sheikholeslami and Wilson, p. 25). His career encompasses such a large span of Qajar history that he has sometimes been mistaken for his father Āqā Ebrāhīm or his so called ultra-reactionary successor in 1903, ʿAyn-al-dawla.

Although his political responsibilities did not leave him much time for literary occupations, he favored the company of literary men who praised him in poems. He composed himself *ḡazal*s and *qaṣīda*s under the *taḵalloṣ* of Qodsī (Ṣafāʾī, *Rahbarān*, pp. 104f.). The Atābak was also responsible for the construction of many religious and public buildings. In 1305/1887-88, he had built with his own funds the New Courtyard (Ṣaḥn-e Now, also called Ṣaḥn-e Amīn-al-solṭān or Ṣaḥn-e Atābakī) at Qom. This Courtyard is surrounded with many tombs of Qajar notables, the most important being Atābak's mausoleum. It also includes the Ayvān-e Āyīna leading to Fāṭema Maʿṣūma's shrine (on Atābak's constructions at Qom, inscriptions, etc. see Modarresī Ṭabāṭabāʾī I, pp. 95-111, 113; see also the bibliography in "Ḳum," *EI*^{2}; he also built a bazaar at Qom: Amīrī, p. 462). He had other shrines repaired (Shah ʿAbd-al-ʿAẓīm at

Ray; Shah Neʿmatallāh Walī at Māhān; tombs at Madīna) and public construction works (a dam on the Qom River; bridges on the Šūr River, Qom, and the Qara Čāy, Sāva; see Ṣafāʾī, op. cit., p. 106). In the 1880s following his father's undertakings, he had roads and guest houses constructed or repaired, notably between Tehran and Qom (on the "improved" new road, see, however, Curzon, II, pp. 2-6; Browne, *A Year*, pp. 176ff.). The most important improvements on road, bridge, and guest house constructions were made on the axis Tehran-Qazvīn-Rašt (see Ṣafāʾī, op. cit., p. 72). Apart from his summer house at Šamīrān (Qayṭarīya), his stately residency in Tehran was known as Pārk-e Atābak (the present Soviet Embassy).

Although often accused of living in revelry, the Atābak did not neglect his religious duties. Moḥarram ceremonies and particularly *rawża-ḵᵛānī*s were given on a lavish scale in his house. Various religious people as well as "*sayyed*s" and the poor benefited from his munificence (Browne, op. cit., p. 602; Ṣafāʾī, op. cit., p. 105; Amīrī, p. 462).

The Atābak had four sons: Mīrzā ʿAbdallāh Khan (who inherited his *laqab* Amīn-al-solṭān), Ḥājj Mīrzā Aḥmad Khan Mošīr-e Aʿẓam (he was *raʾīs-e tašrīfāt*, master of ceremonies, at Aḥmad Shah's court and held various ministerial and parliamentary functions, he died in 1316 Š.), Moḥammad Ebrāhīm Khan, Amīr Moḥsen Khan, and five daughters: Qods-e Aʿẓam, Faḵr-e Aʿẓam, Nūšāfarīn Aʿẓam-al-salṭana, Moḥtaram Ḵānom, and Efteḵār-e Aʿẓam (Ṣafāʾī, op. cit., p. 107; Amīrī, p. 462). His descendants are known under the family name of Atābakī.

The Atābak's photographs at different ages and in various circumstances have been repeatedly printed both in Persian (cf. Eʿtemād-al-salṭana's *Rūz-nāma*, Mostawfī, Ṣafāʾī, Amīrī, Bāmdād, Khan Malek, Moʿāṣer, etc.) and European publications (Curzon, I, p. 427; Stuart's front page; Browne's *Revolution*, etc.), as well as numerous Persian and European periodicals.

Controversial points. Among the controversies regarding his origins, attitude towards political rivals and even the shah, his affiliation to Freemasonry, etc., the most debatable points in his political biography are

linked with the circumstances surrounding his second dismissal and, above all, his assassination. In both cases British maneuvers have been as usual evoked without tangible proofs (on the second dismissal, see above and M. Maḥmūd cited by Ṣafāʾī, op. cit., p. 83; on the assassination, see Amīrī, pp. 451ff. with reference to the Anglo-Russian Convention). Many versions have

been put forth concerning his assassination. Supporters of a single nationalist-radical plot (instigated by a Tehran revolutionary circle and executed by Ḥaydar Khan Amū Oḡlū (ʿAmoḡlī) and his friends) and upholders of a single royalist-reactionary plot (instigated by the shah or Jawād Khan Saʿd-al-dawla, or both, and carried out by the Ādamīyat lodge) steadily remain on their respective positions, those favoring the first version adopting Kasravī and others' opinion, those favoring the second mainly following Ṣanīʿ-al-dawla Hedāyat and Mahdī-qolī Hedāyat's conviction. (For the possible involvement of Freemasonry lodges see also Rāʾīn, *Farāmūš-ḵāna* II, pp. 262ff.) Although the publication of testimonies of the main protagonists and contemporaries threw some doubts on the reality of a single plot, controversies remain. A reappraisal of the whole story based on a thorough investigation of British diplomatic archives (further to Navāʾī's article), led N. R. Keddie to adopt Malekzāda and ʿAbbās Eqbāl's hypothesis of a double plot, revolutionary and reactionary, without knowing which one had prior success ("Assassination," pp. 327f., n. 23). However, a study on Ḥaydar Khan's memoirs taking into account J. Šayḵ-al-eslāmī's views favors the single radical plot version (Sheikholeslami and Wilson, p. 25, n. 20).

Many questions still remain unanswered: on the day of murder, Behbahānī and Atābak's carriages were not kept in their usual places (Dawlatābādī, II, p. 140; Behbahānī later shifted to Taqīzāda's side; on his possible involvement, see Ṣafāʾī, op. cit., p. 97); Atābak's being shot by three bullets from different sides, a *sayyed* and a soldier coming to his rescue being killed on the spot (ibid., p. 98); the shah and his courtiers' lack of perturbation on hearing the news, and the fact that the commission of enquiry came to no conclusion, the persons suspected being soon released (ibid., pp. 99f.; Keddie, p. 324); Mīrzā Naṣrallāh Mošīr-al-dawla's death in suspicious circumstances (13 September 1907) after he had refused to collaborate with Saʿd-al-dawla (Browne, *Revolution*, p. 155; according to rumors in the Majlis, which his sons did not dare comment on, he was poisoned because he wanted to discover the truth about Saʿd-al-dawla's involvement: see Šarīf Kāšānī, I, n. 130); Shaikh Fażlallāh Nūrī (strangely accused by some, such as Ḥaydar Khan, followed by Kasravī, to be Atābak's collaborator) and his followers' safe return to Tehran where they continued to undermine the constitutionalists undertakings (Browne, op. cit., pp. 146f.; Dawlatābādī, II, pp. 146f.); some later testimonies such as that of Ḡolām-Ḥosayn Ṣāḥeb Eḵtīār, who was then governor of Tehran and confided to Bāmdād (Reǰāl II, p. 425) that Mowaqqar-al-salṭana (one of the implied members of the Ādamīyat Lodge) killed Atābak.

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