



ĀYROM, MOḤAMMAD- ḤOSAYN KHAN

ĀYROM, MOḤAMMAD-ḤOSAYN KHAN, army commander and the head of the police under Reżā Shah (r. 1304-20 Š./1925-41). A native of the Caucasus (see [Āyrīmlū](#)) he joined the Cossack division where he became an associate of Reżā Khan. As an officer and a Russian translator he rose to the rank of *sartīp* (brigadier general) (Wilber, *Riza Shah*, p. 102; K̄vājanūrī, *Bāzīgarān*, p. 71). He is reported to have spent some years in Russia prior to the Bolshevik Revolution, where he served as an officer in the Tsarist army (*Paykār* 1/6). Upon his return to Iran in 1921, he was appointed commander of the northern army where his attempts at putting down the Turkman rebellion had little success (Farroḳ, *Kāṭerāt*, p. 359). In July, 1925, he replaced General ‘Abdallāh Amīr Ṭahmāsbī as commander of the northwest army (Wilber, *Riza Shah*, p. 118). Soon after, he joined other pro-Reżā Khan provincial army commanders in organizing a campaign aimed at the final overthrow of Qajar rule including sending intimidating telegrams to opposition Majles deputies (Makkī, *Tārīk* II, p. 549). In spite of these services, in August, 1926, Reżā Shah dismissed Āyrom from his posts, apparently for his failure to effectively suppress the Kurdish rebellion (Wilber, *Riza Shah*, p. 118; E’zām Qodsī, *Kāṭerāt* II, p. 87). He was then demoted to the position of the head of the military police and later, the army’s special inspector (K̄vājanūrī, *Bāzīgarān*, p. 89).

On 22 March 1931, Āyrom was appointed head of the national police force, a division within the armed forces (Şadīq, *Yādgar* II, p. 327). This was the third



appointment made by the shah after the arrest of Moḥammad Khan Dargāhī, a former chief of police, in December, 1929. At a time when the state's suppression of the oppositional elements was increasing, Āyrom was considered resolute enough not to be bound by legal restraints (Rezūn, *Soviet Union*, pp. 175-77). The duties of chief of police under Reżā Shah went beyond the mere establishment of law and order and included counter-espionage, intelligence gathering, intimidation of ordinary citizens, and the elimination of opponents of the shah. Moreover, the shah used the office of the chief of police to check the power of other high officials and to spy on their activities. Using this powerful position, Āyrom managed to become one of the shah's closest confidants. He established kinship ties with the shah through the marriage of his son to the shah's sister-in law (Şadiq, *Yādgar* II, p. 327). More importantly, he shrewdly catered to the shah's growing avidity for intelligence by reporting on high-ranking officials (Makkī, *Tārīk* VI, p. 109). This way, he also caused the fall from favor of some of his own opponents and rivals such as General Būdarjomehrī, an old collaborator of Reżā Shah and Tehran's mayor (M. Şadr, in *Sāl-nāma-ye donyā*, Tehran, 1346 Š./1968; Makkī, *Tārīk* VI, pp. 112-13). Sources indicate that he had an active role in the downfall and murder of such key political figures as 'Abd-al-Ḥosayn Teymūrtāş and Ja'far-qolī Khan Sardār As'ad Bakhtīārī (Ġanī, *Kāṭerāt* I, p. 221; Eskandarī, *Ārezū* I, pp. 24-26).

Āyrom's brutal conduct allowed him to comply with the shah's unrealistic and unreasonable demands such as the immediate identification and arrest of suspected criminals or political opponents (Makkī, *Tārīk* VI, p. 238; Şadiq, *Yādgar* II, p. 327). Equally important in gaining the shah's good favor was Āyrom's active role in accumulating wealth and property for the shah, including expropriation of land in Māzandarān which reached its peak under Āyrom (Makkī, *Tārīk* VI, pp. 252-59; F.O. 371, 1932, *Annual Report*, p. 55). After General Karīm Būdarjomehrī was dismissed from his duties as the manager of royal properties, Āyrom took over his post (Makkī, *Tārīk* VI, pp. 112-13). He also replaced Teymūrtāş as the shah's unofficial press liaison. Lacking his predecessor's ability to maintain a reformist image of the shah, on occasion he was blamed by the monarch for the inability of the press to present the state's modernizing policies with adequate effect (Daştī, *Ayyām*, p. 252; Bahār, *Tārīk*, introd., p. yd). Āyrom's efforts for gaining the shah's good favor by organizing a costly carnival to celebrate the shah's birthday, only angered the shah (*Eṭṭelā'āt dar yak rob'-e qarn*, pp. 227-29; Makkī, *Tārīk* V, pp. 151-52).

Unlike numerous other close aids to Reżā Shah who faced their deaths in



prison, Āyrom managed to escape the shah's wrath, as soon as the signs of dissatisfaction became apparent, by obtaining permission to leave the country in 1314 Š./1935 ostensibly to receive medical treatment in Europe. The shah's attempt to persuade him to return through financial incentives were unsuccessful (Farrok, *Kāṭerāt*, p. 367).

During World War II, Āyrom actively tried to form a German-backed government in exile in Berlin under the name of *Īrān-e āzād* (free Iran) to conduct anti-allied activity, and to take over Iran after a German victory (Makkī, *Tārīk* VI, pp. 230-38). When it led to the arrest of German sympathizers in Iran, Āyrom was arrested and confined to a village in Germany. He died in 1948 in Liechtenstein—where he had become a citizen—far away from his numerous enemies (Ġanī, *Kāṭerāt* VIII, p. 314; Makkī, *Tārīk* VI, p. 238). Among Āyrom's contemporaries, even the most ardent supporters of Reżā Shah have had nothing good to say about him, since to them he represented the darkest side of Reżā Shah's rule. Nevertheless, he was an important part of the coalition of army officers which played the determinant role in Reżā Khan's bid for ultimate power. Later, as a police chief, he developed the security apparatus which enabled the state to exercise a stronger control over nearly all aspects of the life of the people.

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