



BĀKTAR-E EMRŪZ

BĀKTAR-E EMRŪZ (Today's West), daily evening newspaper published in Tehran from 8 Mordād 1328 to 28 Mordād 1332 Š./9 August 1949 to 19 August 1953. It was founded by its editor-publisher **Ḥosayn Fāṭemī** (1917-54), one of the principal associates of Dr. Moḥammad Moṣaddeq (q.v.) in the National Front (Jebha-ye Mellī; q.v.). Its editorial board included Moḥammad Moḥiṭ Ṭabāṭabā'ī, Jalālī Nā'inī, Raḥmat Moṣṭafawī, Sepehr Zabīḥ, Nāṣer Amīnī, and Esmā'īl Pūrvālī, some being journalists of stature; Naṣr-Allāh Šifta and Sa'īd Fāṭemī were associate editors. In format it was slightly larger than tabloid (32 x 52 cm); it consisted of four, six, and occasionally eight pages, and was devoted to national as well as international news. It carried pictures, usually on its first page, and featured commentary. The name, *Bāktar-e emrūz*, was a combination of the names of two earlier publications *Bāktar* and *Mard-e emrūz* that Ḥosayn Fāṭemī had been associated with.

The rousing daily editorials penned by Fāṭemī himself were exhortative commentary on the day's events and energetic exposition of the National Front's views and positions. *Bāktar-e emrūz* as an "unofficial" spokesman of the National Front advocated and led a public opinion campaign for the nationalization of the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company, a platform whose initial concept and suggestion was posthumously credited to Fāṭemī by Moṣaddeq.

Bāktar-e emrūz was banned several times and was replaced by *Sargodašt* and *Bāktar* on two occasions; once during the premiership of General Ḥ-'A. Razmārā (q.v.), who opposed the nationalization legislation, Fāṭemī was also imprisoned. Subsequent to the approval by the Majles on 20 March 1951 of the



Nationalization Act, Moṣaddeq became prime minister on May 10 and appointed Fāṭemī as his deputy and government spokesman. Thenceforth, *Bāktar-e emrūz*, which had reached a daily circulation of more than thirty thousand (a record for Iran at the time), gained substantially in political status; both in Iran and abroad its views were construed as reflecting inner thinking of the government leaders. On 16 February 1951, Fāṭemī was the target of an assassination attempt by a youthful member of *Fedā'īān-e Eslām* while delivering a memorial speech at the tomb of Moḥammad Mas'ūd (q.v.), the assassinated editor of *Mard-e emrūz*. Narrowly escaping death, he was hospitalized for several months, during which period he ceased his direct supervision of *Bāktar-e emrūz* and occasionally even missed his daily column. On 30 September 1952, he was appointed foreign minister, a position that he held until 19 August 1953, when the Moṣaddeq government was overthrown by a CIA-engineered coup d'état. On the same day, *Bāktar-e emrūz* offices and printing house were ransacked and that day's issue never reached the newsstand.

Almost a decade later, the name *Bāktar-e emrūz* was temporarily revived when a group of National Front supporters living in exile in Europe and America attempted to reorganize themselves under the banner of this newspaper. In April, 1962, a regular weekly publication of what was called *dawra-ye jadīd* (new series) in a bulletin-size format under the direction of Ḳosrow Qašqā'ī and the editorship of Moḥammad 'Aṣemī began in Munich. There was very little resemblance in format or content between the original and this revived version, which was said to have been under the influence of the Tudeh party and its supporters. After two years, this period of publication came to an end. Between the years 1964 and 1966 supporters of the National Front in the United States, under the leadership of 'Alī Šāyegān, a former close associate of Dr. Moṣaddeq, chose *Bāktar-e emrūz* as the name of their official publication. In this period there were about ten irregular issues published.

The African and Middle Eastern Division of the U.S. Library of Congress is in possession of a set of *Bāktar-e emrūz* containing the 22 February to 28 July and 30 July 1950 to 26 July 1952 issues.



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