



BAQTĪĀR, TEYMŪR

BAQTĪĀR, TEYMŪR, Iranian general born in 1914, the son of Sardār Moʻazzam Baqtīārī. At the age of fourteen, he was sent to Beirut where he studied at a French high school until he was nineteen. Upon graduation he was accepted at St. Cyr military academy, where he studied between 1930-35. On his return to Iran, he was sent to Zāhedān, Baluchistan, with the rank of 1st lieutenant. He was married first to Īrān Khanom the daughter of Sardār(-e) Żafar, a well-known Baqtīārī chieftain. That marriage produced a daughter and a son who died in early childhood. His second wife was Qodrat Kānom, who bore him two sons.

During the Moşaddeq era, Baqtīār was the commander of several provincial garrisons including Kermānşāh on the Iran-Iraq border. The shah's second wife, Torayyā (Sorayya) Esfandiārī, was of the same tribe and cemented the bond of loyalty of the general to the royal family. His meteoric rise to power began after the fall of Moşaddeq in August, 1953, when he was called to Tehran, promoted to brigadier general, and put in charge of Tehran's military governorship. In that position he waged a vigorous campaign to eradicate the Tudeh (Tūda) party, the Fedā'īān-e Eslām, and to a lesser extent remnants of the pro-Moşaddeq National Front. In 1954, he uncovered the Tudeh military organization (*Ketāb-e sīāh*) and a year later he arrested Nawwāb Şafawī, the leader of Fedā'īān-e Eslām. Twenty-four ringleaders of the Tudeh military organization, Nawwāb Şafawī, and Kālīl Ṭahmāsebī, the assassin of the late Premier General Ḥāji-'Alī Razmārā, were executed after having been convicted by a military tribunal. In February 1958, he was appointed as the first chief of



SAVAK (State Security and Intelligence Organization). Four years earlier at the age of 40 he had become the youngest three-star general in recognition of his successful, anti-communist and anti-Islamic fundamentalist campaign.

In 1961, when Dr. 'Alī Amīnī was made prime minister, he convinced the shah that the more moderate general Pākṛavān should replace Baqtīār. The shah, who had become somewhat concerned about Baqtīār's ambitions and reported contact with President Kennedy in Washington D.C., consented. The general soon turned into a sworn enemy of the shah. First in Europe and then in Lebanon and Iraq, he contacted every known opponent of the regime. In retaliation, he was cashiered as an officer and a warrant for his arrest and extradition from Lebanon was issued. While in Iraq, he met not only Ayatollah Khomeynī but also Dr. Reżā Rādmāneš, the general secretary of the Tudeh party, and Maḥmūd Panāhīān, the war minister in the short-lived Āḍarbāyjān Republic of 1945-46. SAVAK was instructed by the shah to eliminate Baqtīār at all costs. In a carefully organized plot, SAVAK agents managed to cultivate his trust. On August 12, 1970, his trusted driver, sent two years earlier from Tehran, shot him as he was lured to an area near the Iranian border ostensibly for hunting. Half a dozen Iranian agents were arrested and promptly executed for bringing an end to the life of the colorful general at the age of fifty-six.

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Some of the information in this article was obtained in interviews with members of the Iran Liberation Army.

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