



BAQTĪĀRĪ II. ḤĀJĪ 'ALĪQOLĪ KHAN SARDĀR AS'AD

Ḥājī 'Alīqolī Khan **Sardār As'ad**, one of two military commanders who marched on Tehran, deposed Moḥammad-'Alī Shah, and revived the aborted movement for constitutional government in Iran.

'Alīqolī, a member of the Haft Lang branch of the Baqtīārī tribe and the fourth son of Ḥosaynqolī Khan Īlkānī (Sepehr, p. 576; Mo'ayyer-al-Mamālek, p. 68), was born in 1274/1857-58, when the tribe was at its winter encampment. He completed his elementary education with the tribe and, after accompanying his mother on a pilgrimage to Mecca, received the title of Ḥājī (Sepehr, pp. 576-77). On 27 Rajab 1299/14 June 1882, the powerful governor of Isfahan and the southern provinces of Iran, Mas'ūd Mīrzā Z̄ell-al-Solṭān, acting on his father Nāṣer-al-Dīn Shah's instructions (Z̄ell-al-Solṭān, p. 309; E'temād-al-Salṭana, p. 210), garroted Ḥosaynqolī Īlkānī, who had come to Isfahan at the governor's invitation. Z̄ell-al-Solṭān also imprisoned Ḥosaynqolī's two sons, Esfandīār Khan and the twenty-five-year-old 'Alīqolī Khan (Sepehr, p. 579; Bāmdād, *Rejāl* II, p. 449), who served the governor as brigadier (*sartīp*) and colonel (*sarhang*) respectively ('Okkāša, p. 183). A year later, however, as a result of Prime Minister 'Alī-Aṣḡar Khan Amīn-al-Solṭān's intercession, 'Alīqolī Khan was released from prison (Sepehr, pp. 177, 579) and brought to Tehran with the rank of brigadier (*ibid.*, p. 593). In the role of honored hostage, he took command of the hundred-man brigade of Baqtīārī horsemen that formed the prime minister's elite guard (Sepehr, p. 579; Owżan, *Waḥīd* 3/11, p. 92;



Bāmdād, *Rejāl* II, p. 450) and that served fifty men at a time (Zell-al-Solṭān, p. 241). 'Alīqolī's brother Esfandiār remained in prison until 1305/1887-88, when Zell-al-Solṭān was removed from office (Sepehr, pp. 171, 569; Okkāša, p. 252), and with the title Sardār(-e) As'ad became deputy chief (*īlbeḡī*) of the Bakṭiārī tribe. Upon Esfandiār's death in 1321/1903 (Bāmdād, *Rejāl* II, p. 448; or 1322/1904-05 [Sepehr, p. 593]), the title Sardār As'ad was conferred upon 'Alīqolī Khan (Sepehr, p. 594). During the more than forty-day interval between Nāṣer-al-Dīn Shah's assassination (17 Dū'l-qa'da 1313/1 May 1896) and Moẓaffar-al-Dīn Shah's arrival in the capital, 'Alīqolī Khan and his horsemen protected the life of Amīn-al-Solṭān, who had taken up residence in the Golestān palace and was directing affairs of state during that critical period (*ibid.*, p. 175; Bāmdād, *Rejāl* II, p. 450). After the accession of Moẓaffar-al-Dīn Shah, with Amīn-al-Solṭān removed from office and exiled to Qom (1314/1896), Sardār As'ad left Tehran to join his tribe. He returned to the capital in 1316/1898, during Amīn-al-Solṭān's second term as prime minister (Mo'ayyer-al-Mamālek, p. 71). In 1318/1900-01, Sardār As'ad visited several European capitals via India and Egypt, and, after a little more than two years residence in the advanced Europe of those days, having taken part in the funeral of the Queen of England and having become a Freemason in Paris, he returned to Iran (Sepehr, pp. 176, 580). Though, because of his close association with Amīn-al-Solṭān and with other important personages at the court of Moẓaffar-al-Dīn Shah he was considered a man of influence (Neẓām-al-Salṭana, I, pp. 206, 213), Sardār As'ad did not remain in Tehran long. After Amīn-al-Solṭān was removed from office a second time (1321/1903), Sardār As'ad, unwilling to serve as the commander of the guard protecting the new prime minister 'Ayn-al-Dawla (Mo'ayyer-al-Mamālek, p. 71) and believing that a person must either live in civilized countries such as those of Europe or in the mountains (Sepehr, p. 176), rejoined his tribe. Sardār As'ad returned to Tehran, but, finding the political atmosphere of the capital intolerable, in 1324/1906, during the first months after the issuing of the constitutional edict (*farmān-e mašrūṭiyat*) and about the time of the accession of Moḥammad-'Alī Shah, who preferred Sardār As'ad's rival Amīr(-e) Mofakḵkam and treated the sons of Ḥosaynqolī Khan with indifference ('Okkāša, p. 555), he once again made his way to Europe, seeking treatment for his eyes (Sepehr, p. 581). It was during this three-year sojourn that Sardār As'ad received word in Paris of the shelling of the Bahārestān and the arrest of the Constitutionalists. He contacted a group of exiles who had been driven from Iran by the tyranny of Moḥammad-'Alī Shah and who often gathered in Paris, and thanks to the financial resources at his disposal, turned his house into a meeting place for



those opposed to Qajar despotism (Moḵber-al-Salṭana, p. 181; Afšār, pp. 430-31; Sepehr, p. 581; Qazvīnī, p. 100). Having heard that the Qajar king had appealed to the Baḵtīārī tribe for help in putting down Constitutionalist forces and that several Baḵtīārī leaders had gone to Tehran and been ordered to quash the uprising in Tabrīz, he wrote admonishing letters to his relatives (Malekzāda, pp. 1080, 1082; Dānešvar ‘Alawī [p. 20] writes that he made a secret trip to Isfahan incognito and, residing in the house of an Armenian of Jolfā, met with Ḥājī Āqā Nūr-Allāh, an influential cleric from Isfahan and the brother of Āqā Najafī, and several other supporters of the Constitution to plan a revolt and then returned to Paris; however, there is no mention of this trip in the other sources, and it is probably apocryphal). As news of the general uprising in Iran filtered back to Europe, Sardār As‘ad met with the British ambassador in Paris (Mo‘āṣer, p. 991) and Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Sir Charles Hardinge in London (Bāmdād, *Rejāl* II, p. 450; Navā‘ī, p. 7; Moḵber-al-Salṭana, p. 181). His discussions with British authorities made him confident that they would not stand in the way of the reestablishment of Iranian constitutional government (Malekzāda, p. 1028) and, in fact, would welcome his intervention at this juncture—as he was in any event a supporter of Britain. (The British did not want to see the credit of opposing the despotic monarch go only to the Azarbaijani fighters and their allies from the Caucasus, whose victory would have increased the Russian influence in Iran.) He then felt free to dispatch messengers and messages urging his older brother Najafqolī Khan Şamsām-al-Salṭana Īlḵānī Baḵtīārī to amass troops and occupy Isfahan (Nāzem-al-Eslām, II, p. 274; ‘Okkāša, p. 592). Eventually Sardār As‘ad himself, accompanied by his younger brother Yūsuf Khan Amīr(-e) Mojāhed and his nephew Mortazāqolī Khan, the son of Şamsām-al-Salṭana, traveled to southern Iran by sea. En route he was greeted by Muslim and Parsi Iranians living in Aden and Bombay (Sayyāḥ, p. 613). Toward the end of Şafar, 1327/March, 1909, two and a half months after Baḵtīārī horsemen had attacked Isfahan and Şamsām-al-Salṭana had taken complete control of the city, ousting the state-appointed governor, Sardār As‘ad disembarked at Moḥammara (Ḳorramšahr; Mo‘āṣer, p. 1055). There he was enthusiastically greeted by the British-installed ruler of Ḳūzestān Shaikh Ḳaḏ‘al (Sayyāḥ, p. 613). Together they prepared a telegram demanding a return to constitutional government and expressing their loyalty to the monarchy and sent it via Azod-al-Dawla. Their telegram also contained this ultimatum: “If by the second month, a warrant (*dastḵaṭṭ*) for the return of constitutional government is not issued, we shall resort to force” (Mostašār-al-Dawla, p. 233; Mo‘āṣer, p. 1061). In the meantime, Shaikh Ḳaḏ‘al, who was certain of British approval (Navā‘ī, p. 7), sent a 10,000-toman draft to Şamsām-



al-Salṭana in Isfahan (Sepehr, p. 599).

Sardār As'ad sent his brother Amīr Mojāhed to Tehran to meet with and advise Baḳtīārī chiefs loyal to the shah (Malekzāda, p. 1094), and he himself traveled through Kūzestān to the Baḳtīārī region. He went directly to Jāneqān, where he delegated two of his relatives to raise an army (Sayyāḥ, p. 614). Finally on 23 Rabī' II 1327/14 May 1909 (Sayyāḥ, p. 628), at the head of an army of 1,500 horsemen and infantry, Sardār As'ad entered Isfahan and joined forces with Ṣamṣām-al-Salṭana's 1,500 troops. The resulting 3,000-man army staged outside of Isfahan to prepare to march on Tehran (Dawlatābādī, III, p. 104). Several days earlier (11 Rabī' II 1327/2 May 1909), the two brothers had sent a telegram via the Austrian ambassador, the ranking diplomat in Tehran, to the representatives of other foreign countries, declaring that, since the Constitutionalists' repeated demands had gone unanswered, they were going to Tehran to submit their entreaties to the shah in person and that because they feared that base and corrupt elements would try to prevent them, the aggrieved parties, from entering the capital, they had assembled what forces they could to accompany them to Tehran. They would not tolerate, whatever the pretext, the introduction of foreign troops into Iran and therefore requested the representatives of the great powers to maintain their neutrality and not to engage in any form of intervention (Sepehr, p. 560).

Already troubled by the revolt in the provinces and the movement of forces from Tabrīz and Rašt under the command of Sepahdār Tonokābonī, the shah's anxiety grew upon hearing of Sardār As'ad's preparations. As a result of repeated visits by Russian and British diplomats, on 14 Rabī' II 1327/5 May 1909 he issued a proclamation concerning the renewal of elections and the opening of parliament (Nāẓem-al-Eslām, II, p. 439). This proclamation was greeted with popular rejoicing and festivities. Advised by the Russian and British consuls-general that marching on Tehran was now pointless, Sardār As'ad had no choice but to return to Isfahan and disband his troops (Dawlatābādī, III, p. 104).

But a month later, when the shah's promises proved false, Sardār As'ad, after meetings with British Consul-General Grahame (Navā'ī, p. 7), on 27 Jomādā 1/16 June, set forth from Isfahan with 700 cavalymen (Navā'ī, p. 13) and a number of Baḳtīārī khans and leaders (Malekzāda, p. 1096). After Ṣamṣām-al-Salṭana's rebellion and with Farmānfarmā having elected not to go to Isfahan to confront him (Nāẓem-al-Eslām, II, p. 285), the shah used false promises to get Amīr Mofaḳkam Baḳtīārī and the horsemen under his command to



undertake the mission. As Amīr Mofakḳam remained camped at Kāshān for nearly seven months, awaiting necessary supplies and provisions (Sepehr, p. 573), Sardār As‘ad, aware of the tribal warfare and feelings of revenge that would be provoked by a confrontation with his kinsmen and fellow Bakṭiārīs, decided to avoid the city. He traveled instead through Neyzār to Qom (Nāẓem-al-Eslām, II, p. 468; Navā‘ī, p. 13). The advance battalion of the Sardār’s forces, composed of 200 cavalry under the command of his son Sardār(-e) Bahādor and two of the Sardār’s nephews, entered Qom on 6 Jomādā II/25 June (Nāẓem-al-Eslām, II, p. 468) and were welcomed by its chief administrator of religious property (*motawallibāshī*), who previously had had a taste of the Constitutionalists’ vengeance. They occupied the city and, in an unprecedented display of discipline, prevented any form of savagery. The next day Sardār As‘ad entered the city with the remainder of his troops (Dawlatābādī, III, p. 105; Nāẓem-al-Eslām, II, p. 469).

On 4 Jomādā II/23 June, British Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs Sir Edward Grey, who saw Sardār As‘ad’s movements as counter to his own strategy, sent a telegram to his envoy in Tehran, Sir George Barclay, telling him in effect that serious steps must be taken to stop Sardār As‘ad from reaching Tehran and that it would be wise of him to give the Sardār the details of the program of reform promulgated by the two powers (*Ketāb-e ābī* III, p. 582).

As news of Sardār As‘ad’s arrival in Qom spread, the anxiety felt by the royalists increased. With Premier Sa‘d-al-Dawla demanding action, on Barclay’s suggestion and with the approval of Sir Edward Grey, the Russian and British consuls-general were delegated to go to Qom and dissuade Sardār As‘ad from continuing his march on Tehran (*Ketāb-e ābī* III, p. 580; Nāẓem-al-Eslām, II, p. 456). The Sardār, however, did not accept their advice, saying, “The two embassies have been deceived; the shah does not have the slightest intention of establishing constitutional government” (8 Jomādā II/27 June; *Ketāb-e ābī* III, pp. 583, 637). During secret meetings with the British consul-general in Isfahan, Grahame, the Sardār said in effect: to stop now would be impossible; a great deal of money has been spent—besides I could not hope to receive a pardon from the shah (Barclay’s telegram, dated 6 Jomādā II 1327/25 June 1909; Mo‘āṣer, pp. 1135, 1137).

A group of Ḳalaj freedom fighters (*mojāhed*) joined Sardār As‘ad’s troops in Qom (Nāẓem-al-Eslām, II, p. 519), and finally on 13 Jomādā II/2 July, he left Qom for Tehran (Mo‘āser, p. 1146). Previously having cajoled a number of



royalist Baktiārī leaders and mounted troops, e.g., Kosrow Khan Sardār Zafar, into joining him (‘Okkāša, p. 595; Sayyāḥ, p. 619; Malekzāda, p. 1094), Sardār As’ad again tried to avoid a confrontation with Amīr Mofaqqam by sending him a message stating that, if he did not stand in his way and, instead of battling his fellow Baktiārī, would fight the army in the north, he (Sardār As’ad) was prepared to cede him all the wealth he possessed and to accept him as the permanent chief of the Baktiārī tribe. Amīr Mofaqqam did not accept his offer (‘Okkāša, p. 596; Sayyāḥ, p. 642) and marched to Ḥasanābād to block Sardār As’ad’s path. The Sardār reacted to this news by changing his route and going through Rebāṭ-e Karīm; there he held secret discussions with Amīr Mofaqqam but was unable to disabuse him of his loyalty to the shah (Sepehr, p. 181). Sardār As’ad in turn rejected the arguments of G. Churchill and Major Stokes, representatives of the two powers, who were sent to dissuade him from attacking Tehran (*Ketāb-e ābī* III, p. 608) and traveled to Qarātappa. At the same time Sepahdār Tonokābonī, with whom Ṣamṣām-al-Salṭana and Sardār As’ad had been corresponding and had reached an understanding, decamped with a force of 750 *mojāheds* (Šarīf Kāšānī, pp. 392, 395) at Yengī-emām. Sardār As’ad, whose army was a *farsaḳ* away, went to meet him personally (Sepehr, p. 182), and the two Constitutionalist commanders prepared their plan of attack on Tehran.

As the two armies, one from the north and the other from the south, were nearing one another around Qandīšāh, eight Baktiārī chiefs and relatives of the Sardār were mistakenly killed by some of Yeprem’s (Ephraim Sa’īd’s) *mojāheds*. As soon as he learned of the incident, Sardār As’ad wisely decided to stop the Baktiārīs from avenging the murder and accepted the apologies of the *mojāheds*, thereby avoiding war between the two armies (Šarīf Kāšānī, p. 399; Navā’ī, p. 71; Malekzāda, p. 1181). The armies merged at Bādāmak (Sepehr, p. 581) and on 21 Jomādā II/17 July, engaged government forces commanded by Amīr Mofaqqam (Šarīf Kāšānī, p. 401). After three days of inconclusive fighting, the two Constitutionalist commanders, having formed a plan, set out for the capital by night (‘Okkāša, p. 601). On 24 Jomādā/20 July (Sepehr, p. 581; Nāẓem-al-Eslām, II, p. 487), they entered Tehran through the Bahjatābād gate without encountering serious resistance from the Iranian officers of the Cossack brigade and settled in the Bahārestān buildings (Nāẓem-al-Eslām, II, p. 499; Mo’āṣer, p. 1143).

With the ousted shah having fled to the Russian legation and after a group of prominent Constitutionalist leaders had met in an extraordinary session of the



assembly, Sardār As‘ad was chosen as minister of interior and Sepahdār Tonokābonī as minister of war (Bāmdād, *Rejāl* II, p. 451) in the new cabinet that was formed without a premier (28 Jomādā II 1327/24 July 1909). This was done despite the fact that most Constitutionalist statesmen and those with the country’s best interests at heart opposed having the two Constitutionalist military commanders in administrative posts of government (Mostašār-al-Dawla, p. 256; Šarīf Kāšānī, pp. 245, 445; Dawlatābādī, III, p. 122; Moḵber-al-Salṭana, p. 194). Be that as it may, Sardār As‘ad was apparently not inclined to accept the post, and had to be persuaded by Sepahdār Tonokābonī who insisted that he take it (Sepahsālār, p. 295; Moḵber-al-Salṭana, p. 194). Around ten months later, during the middle of Rabī‘ II, 1328/April, 1910 (Sepehr, p. 587), the Majles, at the insistence of Nāṣer-al-Molk (Dawlatābādī, III, p. 126), selected Sardār As‘ad as minister of war in the cabinet of Sepahdār Tonokābonī; but on 4 Rajab 1328/12 July 1910, with the formation of the Mostawfī-al-Mamālek cabinet, the two conquerors of Tehran left their cabinet posts and, with the consent of the Majles (which at this time had discretion over filling its empty seats), became deputies in the National Assembly. At this crucial juncture, with rebellion brewing in every corner of Iran and power struggles rife, the Baḵtīārī army under Sardār As‘ad’s general command and led by his son Sardār Bahādor (Ja‘farqolī Khan who later received the title Sardār As‘ad from his father) in conjunction with Yeprem Khan and his army, distinguished themselves in putting down the rebels and claimants (such as Raḥīm Khan Čelpīānlū, Sālār-al-Dawla, and Sardār Aršad-al-Dawla); more important, they eliminated the difficulty posed by the transgressions of *mojāhed*s who entered Tehran with [Sattār Khan](#) and [Bāqer Khan](#) (Sepehr, pp. 743-45).

In Šafar, 1329/February, 1911, Mostawfī-al-Mamālek’s cabinet fell and Sepahdār Tonokābonī became premier again; however, Sardār As‘ad was not prepared to accept a cabinet post. Two months later, when he was awarded the medal *nešān-e qods* and the sum of 6,000 tomans, he returned the medal to the state and gave the money to the Ministry of Sciences to spend on education (Sepehr, p. 590). Vexed by the unsettled state of affairs in Iran, on 1 Jomādā II 1329/3 June 1911 (ibid., pp. 590, 746), the Sardār traveled to Europe to continue treatment for his eyes. Even during his treatments, he engaged in discussions designed to place himself in the position of vice-regent or to replace the then vice-regent Nāṣer-al-Molk with Sa‘d-al-Dawla, who was living in Switzerland at the time (Dawlatābādī, p. 215). Sardār As‘ad returned to Iran at the start of winter of that year (1329/1912; Sepehr, p. 746), and, in the absence of Vice-



Regent Nāṣer-al-Molk (in Europe on the pretext that he was ill) and with Sepahdār Tonokābonī appointed governor of Azarbaijan as a result of a Russian ultimatum and incursion into northern Iran, became an influential figure in the country during Ṣamṣām-al-Salṭana's premiership (Dawlatābādī, II, pp. 215-17). However less than a year after he returned to Tehran, Sardār As'ad lost his sight and strength in his limbs (Sepehr, pp. 747, 766) and retired to his home. He spent his remaining years, which coincided with the beginning of World War I, in dictating various books and in educational activities (ibid., p. 766); his house was always open to scholars and litterateurs. Sardār As'ad died on 7 Moḥarram 1336/23 October 1917 at the age of sixty-three (Qazvīnī, p. 99; most of the available sources give the second half of Moḥarram as the date of his death. This mistake is probably due to the interval between his death in Tehran and his burial in Isfahan). The people of Tehran paid fitting tribute to his memory by closing schools and offices during the funeral procession (Mo'ayyer-al-Mamālek, p. 72; Owżan, *Waḥīd* 4, p. 264), which brought the Sardār's body to Isfahan for burial at the Takīa-ye Mīr (Sardār Ṣafar, 4, p. 950) of the Taḳt-e Fūlād cemetery (Mo'ayyer-al-Mamālek, p. 72; Bāmdād, *Rejāl* II, p. 451).

Some Iranian historians who have tried to attribute the early 20th-century movement for constitutional government in Iran solely to British instruction and instigation insist that Sardār As'ad was carrying out the policy of a foreign power during the affair (Bāmdād, *Rejāl* II, p. 451), without actually believing in popular government himself. Several facts can be cited which sustain this view: 1. the special relations the Baḳtīārī khans enjoyed with the British government and the services rendered by Esfandīār Khan in policing the roads of Kūzestān and the awards he received from Queen Victoria for his services; 2. more significantly, the agreement of Sardār As'ad, Ṣamṣām-al-Salṭana, and the other Baḳtīārī khans to a 3-percent instead of a 10-percent share of the oil company of the south (Owżan, *Waḥīd* 4, pp. 175, 176; Bāmdād, *Rejāl* II, p. 450); 3. the patriarchal tradition among the Baḳtīārī and the inviolable authority invested in the khan (Sayyāḥ, p. 625); 4. the British interest in and active encouragement of establishing a constitutional government and ending the absolute power of the shah, whose guarantor was the Russian czar; this was especially evident after the dissolution of the first Majles, when disturbances broke out in Azarbaijan and Russian influence among the leaders of the *mojāheds* of Tabrīz and Gīlān was likely and when the British were searching for a solution that would both bring peace to the country and also allow the monarchy to remain in the Qajar family (thereby



eliminating the possibility of the Russians' using the Treaty of Torkamānčāy to intervene). Despite these facts, study of Sardār As'ad's life makes it clear that he was not solely an agent of British policy; he was also a man devoted to popular government and the advancement of the nation. He was the product of an environment which was exceptional for Iran of that era; his father, Ḥosaynqolī Khan, in the face of all the prevailing tribal violence and cruelty, remained a man of poetic sensibility (he was the author of many verses in the Baḳtīārī dialect) and was respected by a reform-minded, progressive premier like Mīrzā Ḥosayn Khan Sepahsālār (Zell-al-Solṭān, p. 243). 'Alīqolī Khan was himself also enthused about learning and possessed an inquiring mind and a spirit that sought reform and that was not polluted by many of the prejudices of the time (Major Stokes quoted in Sepehr, p. 642). Raised in an environment in which, because of the Baḳtīārī khans' close ties to British officials and travelers (Wright, pp. 43-44; Sepehr p. 639), Sardār As'ad met many Europeans in his youth, his desire to see Europe ultimately impelled him to travel there and made him a devoted admirer of European order and advancement. It is no wonder then that a man with such a background, who had direct experience with and bitter memories of Nāṣer-al-Dīn's tyranny and the bloodshed and power of Zell-al-Solṭān, who witnessed firsthand the raids on the treasury made by Moẓaffar-al-Dīn Shah's comrades, and who saw how greedy clerics kept the people in ignorance and superstition, would turn to the secret of European advancement in viewing the expansion of modern schools as the key to his country's awakening and would join his voice to those of respected and progressive men who were calling for creation of schools and libraries before the announcement of the Constitution. It was during his second trip to Europe and his association with a group of the outstanding refugee intellectuals and reformers, who also resided in Paris and were often his guests, that he heard news of the remonstrations of Shaikh Faẓl-Allāh Nūrī and like-minded clerics who supported the tyranny of Moḥammad-'Alī Shah in the name of the Qur'ān and Islam and of the unleashing of bands of ruthless troops on the people, that he conceived a passion for constitutional government and the rule of law. It was Sardār As'ad's respect for law and order that restrained the Baḳtīārī tribe, long-accustomed to robbing and pillaging, from any form of such crimes after their conquests of Qom and Tehran.

Other historians view Sardār As'ad's basic motive as a desire to gain the crown for himself. While such ambition on his part is not out of the question, Sardār As'ad was not uninformed; he knew of the Russian pledge to maintain the



monarchy for the descendants of the vice-regent 'Abbās Mīrzā, and he also had seen evidence of the coordination of Russian and British policy on Iran in that era. Moreover, his behavior after the conquest of Tehran suggests that he refrained from accepting the vice-regency (Owżan, *Waḥīd* 4, p. 217) and even had to be persuaded by Sepahdār Tonokābonī and other well-intentioned men to take the foreign affairs portfolio (Sepahsālār, p. 295). He took the post of minister of war at the insistence of Nāṣer-al-Molk (Dawlatābādī, III, pp. 126-27) but a year after Tehran was taken withdrew from public life altogether. Sardār As'ad was apparently one of the few people who knew what the Constitutional revolution was all about. Thus, when the Armenian commander Yeprem Khan was chosen to be the head of the police force and Sepahdār Tonokābonī objected on the basis of his religion, Sardār As'ad pointed out that under constitutional government the majority must rule (Šarīf Kāšānī, p. 409). For the same reason, after Tehran fell, he joined the so-called *enqelābī* group, the “democrats,” and sided more with such statesmen as Mošīr-al-Dawla, Mo'taman-al-Molk, Šanī'-al-Dawla, Woṭūq-al-Dawla, and Taqīzāda, who favored the freedom and civilization of Europe (Šarīf Kāšānī, p. 409), unlike Sepahdār Tonokābonī, who joined the group known as *e'tedālīs* with Sayyed 'Abd-Allāh Behbahānī and sided with Sardār Moḥyī, Žargām-al-Saltāna, Bāqer Khan, and Sattār Khan (Dawlatābādī, III, pp. 127-40; Owżan, *Waḥīd* 4, p. 230).

Sardār As'ad's behavior was tempered by moderation (Qazvīnī, pp. 100-01) and was free of malice and revenge. When he was at the height of his power, he was humane in his treatment of his father's murderer Žell-al-Soltān and of Amīr Mofakḳam, who never wavered in his opposition to the Sardār (Malekzāda, pp. 1077, 1313; 'Okkāša, p. 601; Owżan, *Waḥīd* 4, p. 214). During the first days after the conquest of Tehran, in response to Sepahdār Tonokābonī who decried the return of fugitive members of the first Majles, Sardār As'ad brought calm by promising “Wait until we dethrone Moḥammad-'Alī, then we will think of something; it is too early now” (Sepahsālār, p. 295). After Colonel Liakhoff, commander of Moḥammad-'Alī Shah's Cossack brigade, swore his allegiance to constitutional government, Sardār As'ad allowed him to continue in his post (Mostašār-al-Dawla, p. 98).

So devoted to maintaining constitutional government was Sardār As'ad that he personally confronted the rebellions of Sattār Khan and Bāqer Khan, who, while national heroes and the people's favorites, were supported by armed *mojāheds* who were fomenting riots at the instigation of Sardār Moḥyī (Dawlatābādī, III, pp. 127-40). When these armed supporters refused to lay



down their arms, despite all the proof of their complicity and the binding vote of the Majles, Sardār As‘ad sent his son Amir Bahādor along with Yeprem Khan to disarm them (Sepahsālār, p. 286; Sepehr, p. 744). He also sent his son and relatives with Baḳtīārī cavalry to fight rebels wherever they raised their heads (*ibid.*, p. 576; Shuster, pp. 90, 127; Owżan, p. 209). After hearing rumors of Sepahdār Tonokābonī’s secret dealings with the deposed shah (Shuster, p. 90), he sent him a reproachful telegram warning, “After having his share of life and fame, how could a man destroy his good name?” (Malekzāda, p. 1378).

While Sepahdār Tonokābonī was an emotional man, quick to anger and mercurial, Sardār As‘ad was the picture of virtue, steadfast, forgiving, farsighted, and a promoter of education (Bāmdād, *Rejāl* II, p. 451). More than anything else he focused on training the nation and the expansion of existing educational facilities. With his encouragement and resources, and occasionally under his own direction, several books written in European languages were translated into Persian and published (Qazvīnī, p. 99; Sepehr, pp. 44, 593; Bāmdād, *Rejāl* II, p. 451). Using his own funds he sent a number of young Baḳtīārīs, who had been educated in schools established by him (Rā‘īn, p. 26; Malekzāda, p. 1079; Sepehr, pp. 44, 593), to Europe for further education (Qazvīnī, p. 100; Bāmdād, *Rejāl* II, p. 451). He was a man beloved by the people, just, and uncorrupted by the graft-taking that was customary at the time (Mostašār-al-Dawla, p. 98; Bāmdād, *Rejāl* II, p. 451). He was also free of the boasting and immune to the kind of toadyism that was practiced in his day.

These qualities notwithstanding, after the initial uproar of the Constitutional movement died down and after Sardār As‘ad’s gradual withdrawal from public life, the Baḳtīārī chiefs reverted to their old nature, i.e., cupidity, and made forays into the already bankrupt public treasury (Shuster, pp. 122, 206; Sepahsālār, p. 299). These forays went so far, after Sardār As‘ad lost his sight and retired to his home, that the Baḳtīārī khans, who were often provincial rulers, vied with one another in possessing their own personal armies. In addition to official forces provided by the state, each ruling khan also maintained a number of Baḳtīārī horsemen, which sometimes reached 200 and whose pay was borne by the state treasury (Mostawfī, II, p. 368).



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