



BONYĀD-E ŠAHĪD

BONYĀD-E ŠAHĪD (Martyrs' Foundation), a non-profit organization established on 22 Esfand 1358 Š./12 March 1980 on the orders of Imam Khomeynī, in order to care for the veterans of the revolution and the dependents of those who had died in it. After the beginning of the war with Iraq in September of the same year, caring for the needs of disabled war veterans and the families of war dead, prisoners, and those missing in action was added to the responsibilities of the Bonyād.

The Bonyād officially started work on 20 Farvardīn 1359 Š./9 April 1980. A decision taken by the Revolutionary Council on 23 Kordād 1359 Š./13 June 1980 attached the Martyrs' Foundation to the National Health Organization (Sāzmān-e Behzīstī-e Kešvar), itself administered under the supervision of the prime minister. However, given the growing importance of the work done by the Bonyād, the Majles (Majles-e Šūrā-ye Eslāmī) passed a law on 10 Dey 1359 Š./31 December 1980, separating the Bonyād from the National Health Organization and placing it directly under the supervision of the prime minister's office. Since then the Bonyād has been administered by a director named by the prime minister and confirmed in office by Imam Khomeynī. At the beginning of 1988, the director was Hojjat-al-Eslām Mahdī Karrūbī.

The same law provided for the drafting of a set of regulations (*asās-nāma*) to govern the operations of the Bonyād, which was to be submitted to the Majles for approval. Regulations were prepared, but while they were under discussion in the Majles, Imam Khomeynī decided that the Bonyād should continue to operate without such formal regulation.



The Bonyād includes the following units: Directorate; Public and International Relations Office; Educational Unit; Office for Publishing the Magazine *Šāhed* (Witness); Office for the Tehran Region; Office for Supervising the Chain of Stores Run by the Bonyād; Office for Provincial Affairs; Housing Unit; Marriage Office; Medical Center; Administrative and Financial Unit; Unit for Resolving Disputes; Follow-up and Inspection Unit; Economic Affairs Unit. The Bonyād has numerous active branches outside Tehran, including some in foreign countries, notably Syria and Lebanon. It also has its own printing plant, fully equipped and supplied with materials confiscated by the Revolutionary Courts.

The Bonyād provides its clientele with the following principal services: 1. priority in admission to all educational institutions, from primary school to university; 2. priority in obtaining basic economic needs; 3. priority in obtaining employment; 4. exemption from fares on all state-owned city transport, and the payment of half-fares on intercity transport; 5. medical insurance and a special card for the purchase of drugs; 6. hospitalization and treatment of the disabled and wounded, including if necessary their dispatch abroad.

The Employment Division of the Bonyād is charged with providing work to eligible persons; the law of Āḍar, 1359 Š./November-December, 1980, requires the government to appropriate funds annually to assist the Bonyād in this endeavor (see [Table 10](#)). The Central Bank (Bānk-e Markazī), the National Bank (Bānk-e Mellī), and other government agencies also provide support. One of the primary means used for providing work is the establishment or acquisition of factories. More than eighty projects for providing work have been drawn up, the implementation of which will require a budget of more than 15 billion rials; part of this sum is to be provided by a loan from the National Bank.

The Welfare and Health Division of the Bonyād provides medical services including hospital care, radiology, physiotherapy, and laboratory work, and supplies items such as hearing aids, glasses, artificial eyes, and artificial limbs.

The Housing Unit of the Bonyād provides housing to the needy families of war dead, prisoners, and those missing in action, as well as to disabled veterans who are unable to work. Already by the beginning of 1366 Š./21 March 1987, 1,382 families had received housing in 19 settlements and housing complexes. The Bonyād also assigns land to families able to build their own housing and



assists them in obtaining bank loans for this purpose. So far 939 families have been aided in this way.

A particularly remarkable feature of the Bonyād is its Marriage Unit which aims at facilitating the marriage of war widows and veterans. It provides the former with necessary household goods at a reasonable price and, if necessary, a loan, and gives the latter necessary household goods free of charge, a cash grant, and, if necessary, a loan. By 1364 Š./1985, the number of marriages arranged by the Bonyād had reached 369. In addition, help was given to numerous eligible couples who had not married under its auspices.

The funds assigned in the national budget to the Bonyād and its annual expenditure are set out in [Table 10](#).

The financial basis of the Bonyād has also been secured by the assignation to it of properties confiscated by the Revolutionary Courts. In accordance with a proposal made by the Bonyād, part of the cash and other property belonging to members and affiliates of the former royal court were awarded to the Bonyād in Ābān, 1364 Š./October, 1985. Certain companies were also assigned to the Bonyād, enabling it to benefit from their profits. This is said to have been beneficial for the companies themselves, in that their financial situation has improved thanks to better management. The Bonyād has in addition established a number of new companies which provide not only a source of income but also jobs for those the Bonyād seeks to serve.

In late 1364 Š./early 1985, the total number of companies and factories at the disposal of the Bonyād was as follows: 68 companies and factories in the industrial sector; 75 companies and agencies in the commercial sector; 21 companies in the construction sector; 17 companies in the agricultural sector.

Factories belonging to the Bonyād produce a wide range of goods including radios, black-and-white and color televisions, tape recorders, ceiling and table fans, electric motors, automobile spare parts, wire and cable, heating and pumping equipment, equipment for breaking rocks and manufacturing sand, cranes and forklifts, firefighting equipment, steel wool, hospital bowls, office equipment, kerosene-burning household gadgets, ice- and ice cream making equipment, nylon and nylex, paint for industrial and household use, light bulbs and chandeliers, soap, shampoo and toiletry articles, chemical cleansers, livestock and poultry feed, various kinds of biscuits, potato chips and sausages. Other companies attached to the Bonyād engage in activities as diverse as film



making, irrigation, livestock raising, chicken farming, and building.

The Bonyād owns more than 6,000 items of real estate in Tehran, including villas, apartments, shops, malls, schools, hospitals, and hotels, the majority of which it uses to house the families of war dead. It also has 140 orchards and plots of land at its disposal.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

The article is based on information received from Persia.

Table 10. Funds and Expenditure of Bonyād-e Šahīd (in billion rials)