



## BŪDARJOMEHRĪ, KARĪM ĀQĀ

**BŪDARJOMEHRĪ**, Major General (*sar-laškar*) Karīm Āqā (b. 1265/1886 in Kāšān, d. 1330 Š./1951 in Tehran), military officer, mayor of Tehran, and minister of Public Welfare. After some elementary education he worked as an errand boy before becoming a bricklayer. He moved to Tehran before the organization of the Constitutional movement (1324/1906) and was conscripted into the [Cossack brigade](#) for short-term service; during this period he entered the military training school (Falsafī, p. 81). He served in various units of the brigade, finally joining the machine-gun company led by Major Rezā Khan Sawādkūhī (later Rezā Shah). This company participated in most of the internal fighting that occurred following the establishment of the Constitutional government, including the one between the government and Abu'l-Fatḥ Mīrzā Sālār-al-Dawla (q.v.) in 1291 Š./1912 near Kermānšāh. By the time of the coup d'état of 1299 Š./1921 Būdarjomehrī had attained the rank of first lieutenant. The next day he was promoted to captain and put in charge of the Cossack barracks (Makkī, p. 237), where a number of leading national figures were being detained. In Bahman, 1300 Š./February, 1922, Rezā Khan, who was by then commander in chief of the Iranian armed forces, promoted Būdarjomehrī to the rank of major with command of the Bahādor regiment (Falsafī, p. 91). The following year he was promoted to colonel and given command of the 1st Infantry brigade.

When Rezā Khan became prime minister in 1302 Š./1923 he appointed Būdarjomehrī acting mayor of Tehran with instructions to act vigorously in the reconstruction and renovation of Tehran (Mostawfī, III, p. 582).



Būdarjomehrī was also actively involved in the events leading up to the fall of the Qajar dynasty (Ādar, 1304 Š./December, 1925) and the designation of Reżā Khan as shah. He was one of three men (with Brigadier Mortazā Yazdānpanāh and Major General ‘Abd-Allāh Ṭahmasbī) whom Reżā Shah entrusted to oversee the expulsion of the Qajar crown prince and the family of Aḥmad Shah from Iran and to seal the imperial palaces (Bahār, II, pp. 370-71). In 1307 Š./1928 Būdarjomehrī was promoted to brigadier general (*Sāl-nāma-ye Pārs*, 1308 Š./1929, p. 37), continuing to serve as mayor of Tehran and commander of his infantry brigade. In Šahrīvar, 1308 Š./August, 1929, he was named minister of Public Welfare (Fawā’ed-e ‘Āmma) in the cabinet of M. Mok̄ber-al-Salṭana Hedāyat (*Eṭṭelā’āt-e sālāna*, p. 38). At that time the ministry was responsible for all agricultural, industrial, and commercial affairs, as well as for roads and construction. Būdarjomehrī reorganized it, requiring employees to wear uniforms; he also established a prison where employees could be detained in the ministry building. News of his dictatorial behavior gradually reached the press and even the Majles, where Farroḳī Yazdī and Moḥammad-Reżā Ṭolūī strongly criticized his behavior and requested that steps be taken against him (*Eṭṭelā’āt dar rob’-e qarn*, p. 59). The only consequence of this request was that the government made sure both deputies lost their seats in the next elections. After he had served as minister for six months the ministry was dissolved, and he was reappointed mayor of Tehran and commander of the 1st Infantry brigade; he was also made responsible for the bureau of military transportation. In Farvardīn, 1312 Š./March-April, 1933, Būdarjomehrī was promoted to the rank of major general (*ibid.*, p. 107) and given command of the 1st Army division. He was also charged with supervising the administration of Reżā Shah’s private property (M. Šadr, in *Sāl-nāma-ye donyā* 13, 1336 Š./1957, p. 11). Toward the end of 1312 Š./1933 he became ill as a result of overwork and was sent to Europe for treatment. When he returned he was relieved of his responsibilities as mayor of Tehran but remained in command of the 1st Army division and supervisor of Reżā Shah’s private estate. On 8 Šahrīvar 1320 Š./30 August 1941, five days after the invasion of Iran by Allied forces, Būdarjomehrī was one of those who signed a decree prepared by the supreme military council calling for release of conscripts and recruitment by contract. A few days later the signers were summoned to Sa’dābād Palace and chastised by Reżā Shah. Būdarjomehrī is said to have borne the brunt of the shah’s severe and abusive criticism (*Kvāndanīhā* 24/39, p. 4). After the shah’s abdication Būdarjomehrī retired (Mehr, 1320 Š./October, 1941), but later he was appointed chief of the royal court’s inspectorate that supervised the financial affairs of the court. He died on 21 Mehr 1331 Š./13 October 1952 and was



buried in the Mirror Hall (Şahn-e Āyīna) in the shrine complex at Qom.

Būdarjomehrī, though a semiliterate man with scant education, possessed intelligence, ability, and great energy (cf. Mostawfī, III, p. 582). He was a close confidant of Reżā Shah and during his tenure as mayor of Tehran worked hard to rebuild the city, constructing streets, squares, and parks, paving highways and streets, planting trees, and erecting public buildings. Unfortunately, however, there was no systematic plan that might have prevented destruction of many buildings of artistic and historical interest (e.g., Takīya-ye Dawlat), and both public and private property were often arbitrarily destroyed or expropriated in the name of reconstruction (ibid., pp. 240-50). Būdarjomehrī is also accused of having used his office to accumulate wealth for Reżā Shah and for himself (Dawlatābādī, *Ḥayāt-e Yaḥyā* IV, pp. 256-57). The shah acknowledged his efforts by naming after him the east-west street that passes in front of the *bāzār*.

Būdarjomehrī had one daughter and two sons. Both of his sons entered the army, one of them, Ebrāhīm, becoming a colonel, the other, Zayn-al-Ābedīn, a brigadier. Zayn-al-Ābedīn married a cousin of Reżā Shah.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

Much of the information in this article is drawn from personal interviews with people who knew Būdarjomehrī, including Lieutenant General Aḥmad Amīraḥmadī, Lieutenant General Mortazā Yazdānpanāh, Lieutenant General Qahhārqolī Šāhroḳšāhī, and Brigadier Moḥammad-Ālī Şaffārī, who was Būdarjomehrī's deputy while he was mayor of Tehran. See also M.-T. Bahār, *Tārīḳ-emoktaşar-e aḥzāb-e sīāsī* II, Tehran, 1363 Š./1984.

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