



DARGĀHĪ, MOḤAMMAD

DARGĀHĪ, MOḤAMMAD (b. Zanjān, 1317/1899, d. Tehran, 1331 Š./1952), first chief of the state police under Reżā Shah (1304-20 Š./1925-41). After receiving his secondary education at 'Elmīya school in Tehran (Hedāyat, p. 386; Modarresī, I, p. 109), Dargāhī attended the gendarmerie officers' college. In 1299 Š./1920 he was appointed chief of police in Qom, with the rank of major. After the [coup d'état of 1299/1921](#) he was appointed military governor of Qom by the prime minister, Sayyed Żiā'-al-Dīn (Afsar, p. 273). In February 1922, after the [Cossack Brigade](#) had been merged with the gendarmerie, he was promoted to the rank of colonel and appointed chief of the military police in Tehran. In 1302 Š./1923 Reżā Khan Sardār-e Sepah, the new prime minister, dismissed the Swedish officers who had been in charge of the state police force and appointed Dargāhī as the new chief (Bahār, I, p. 286). He soon became a confidant of Reżā Khan and threw the support of the police behind his effort to put an end to the Qajar dynasty. He remained in charge of the police for six years and in March 1928 was promoted to the rank of brigadier-general.

During his tenure as chief of police there were a number of murders and assassinations in Tehran in which the police were believed to be involved: the murders of American vice-consul Robert Imbrie in 1303 Š./1924 and of Wā'ez Qazvīnī, editor of the newspaper *Naṣīḥat* in 1304 Š./1925; the attempt on the life of Sayyed Ḥasan Modarres in 1305 Š./1926; and the assassination of the poet [Moḥammad-Reżā Mīrzāda 'Ešqī](#) in 1303 Š./1924. In 1308 Š./1929 he invited the shah and a number of ministers to open a new prison on the site of the former Qajar palace known as Qaṣr-e Qajar, an occasion that led, for reasons



that are still a matter of debate, to his dismissal and arrest on the following day, 13 Āḍar/4 December (*Eṭṭelā'āt dar rob'-e qarn*, p. 57). He was detained for some time at the headquarters of the military police but was pardoned, on 14 Ordibehešt 1309/4 May 1930, and appointed chief of military conscription (*Sāl-nāma-ye Pārs*, 1310 Š./1931, p. 27). He served in this post until 1313 Š./1934, when he was appointed head of the National registry and census office (*Edāra-ye koll-e āmār wa ṭabt-e aḥwāl*). In 1316 Š./1937 he was dismissed by the shah. Dargāhī never held another government office. He spent the rest of his life as a farmer in Varāmīn.

He was responsible for having expanded the police force, created the state police system under Reżā Shah, and laid the foundations for intelligence gathering and strict police control of society. In the 1930s [Moḥammad-Hosayn Āyrom](#) and Rokn-al-Dīn Moḳtār perfected this system.

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(BĀQER ʿĀQELĪ)