



## JĀN MOḤAMMAD KHAN

**JĀN MOḤAMMAD KHAN, AMIR 'ALĀ'I**, (b. Tehran, ca 1886; d. Tehran, 1951; [FIGURE 1](#)), brigadier general and commander of Khorasan army during the early Reżā Shah period. His father, Mirzā Aḥmad Khan Alā'-al-Dawla (q.v.), was a ranking state officer during the reigns of Nāṣer-al-Din Shah and Moẓaffar-al-Din Shah and held several prominent positions, including the governor of Tehran at the dawn of the Constitutional Revolution (Bāmdād, *Rejāl* I, pp. 89-92). After completing his primary education, Jān Moḥammad entered the Cossack School, where he graduated as an officer and eventually advanced to the rank of a colonel. In the 1921 coup d'état, he was one of the officers serving under Reżā Khan and arrived in Tehran as a member of his entourage (Makki, I, p. 206). He was promoted to the rank of brigadier general and appointed as the commander of the 'Ešratābād military base, where all the politicians arrested after the coup were jailed. Subsequently, he was appointed as the commander of Erāq Infantry Brigade that was also stationed in 'Ešratābād. He frequently participated in battles aimed at the disarming of the tribes.

In 1924, Reżā Khan Sardār-e Sepah, who was at the same time the prime minister and minister of war, resigned due to certain disagreements that he had with the Majles representatives and left Tehran in protest. The military staged a demonstration in favor of Sardār-e Sepah and against the Majles, and Jān Moḥammad Khan, who was still the commander of the 'Ešratābād brigade, actively threatened the Majles and its deputies by staging a military maneuver in front of the Majles building at the head of his troops in full force (Bahār, II,



p. 65). During the same year, he sent his brigade to the south and himself accompanied Sardār-e Sepah in the expedition against Shaikh Ḳaz'al, the Arab shaikh of Moḥammara, the present-day Ḳorram-Šahr (Rezā Shah Pahlavi, p. 7). A year later he became the commander of the Khorasan army (*laškar-e šarq*). As his first mission at this post, he set out to disarm the Turkmans, which he followed with such ruthlessness that many people left their homes and ran to the desert to save their lives (Yakrangiān, p. 374). Among his most cruel acts was the hanging of Sardār Mo'azzaz Bojnurdi along with his brother, his son-in-law, and a number of people working for him. Sardār Mo'azzaz was the governor of Bojnurd, who had adeptly ruled and kept in peace this extensive area on the border with Russia. For a whole century, the entire border in the Northeast had been guarded by his family and, since 1880, the government of Gorgān had been entrusted to them as well (Bahār, II, p. 230; 'Āqeli, p. 793). Three months after arriving in Mashad, Jān Moḥammad Khan went to Bojnurd. Sardār Mo'azzaz received him warmly and also escorted him on his return trip to Mashad. Once they reached Mashad, Jān Moḥammad ordered the arrest of Sardār Mo'azzaz and his six companions and a few days later had them all hanged. On the same day, ten local leaders of Mashad and sixty-five Turkmen tribal chiefs were executed in Bojnurd and Mashad. Then immediately Jān Moḥammad proceeded to plunder the Sardār's property (Bahār, II, p. 240; 'Āqeli, pp. 203, 794-95).

Jān Moḥammad continued his cruel bloodshed in Khorasan and the Torkaman Šahrā with impunity, with every day several people were executed upon his orders (Bahār, II, p. 239). He kept busy accumulating personal wealth at the expense of others and of attending to his official duties. State money was mishandled and the wages of the people working under him were not paid (Yakrangiān, p. 377). As a result, a revolt broke out in Marāva Tappa military base under the command of Captain Lahāk Khan, and the unpaid soldiers overpowered the cities of Darragaz, Qučān, and Širvān and set forth to attack Mashad. They announced the establishment of a republic and in Bojnurd killed the officers that had refused to join them by firing squad (Makki, IV, p. 120). Since it was clear that Jān Moḥammad was unable to stop the rebellion, a force was dispatched from Tehran under the command of Colonel Ruḥ-Allāh Jahānbāni who, reinforced by the air force, succeeded in defeating Lahāk Khan, who fled to Russia. Thereafter, Rezā Shah went to Mashad to investigate the causes of the rebellion personally. Upon arrival in Mashad, he replaced Jān Moḥammad by Brigadier General Amān-Allāh Jahānbāni as the commander of the Khorasan army. Jān Moḥammad was sent back to Tehran in disgrace,



where he was incarcerated for some time (Hedāyat, p. 371) and eventually discharged in dishonor from the army. Rezā Shah confiscated all his assets and used them to pay the back wages of the officers in Khorasan. He also arrested and executed twelve people in Bojnurd who had cooperated with Lahāk Khan.

After his dishonorable discharge from the army, Jān Moḥammad started a farming business. He is described as an extremely excitable man with a harsh and cruel mentality, a characteristic reportedly displayed also by his father (Bāmdād, *Rejāl* I, p. 92).

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