

MUSADDIQ 'S MEMOIRS

By: Dr. Mohammad Mosaddiq, Champion of the Popular Movement of Iran and Former Prime Minister

Translated by: Hassan Amin, Advocate (Edinburgh) and Former Professor of Law at Glasgow Caledonian University

CHAPTER 20 MY APPOINTMENT TO THE GOVERNORSHIP OF FARS

My arrival in Shiraz coincided with problems of lack of law and order which had surfaced in a number of areas in Fars, in particular in the region between Abadeh and Shiraz. Governor-General Farmanfarma had resigned his office and the government in Tehran could not find any suitable person willing to take up this responsibility. Whoever was offered this job by the government would need adequate funds and men to establish security, so the governor-general for Fars had not yet been appointed.

Neither would the people of Fars accept a governor-general who would follow the practices of the previous governors-general; nor did the foreign powers wish to see people becoming dissatisfied in a situation where Communist propaganda was on the increase. Well aware that any appointment from Tehran would be against the public interest, the critics,¹ from all the various classes, parties and groups went to the telegraph office and requested the prime minister, Mushir al-Dawleh, to appoint me as the governor-general. He sent me a telegram asking my conditions for accepting this appointment. People then came to the house of Mu'ayyid al-Mulk and began to negotiate with me. They encouraged me to stay in Shiraz and accept this office, essentially because of the financial gain that the job would offer. Acknowledging that I had been appointed minister of justice, they argued that the salary of a cabinet minister was no more than 7,500 rials per month and if I hoped as a minister to last in office for one year I would not receive more than 90,000 rials in that year. By contrast, if I accepted this post as governor-general, I could make 1,400,000 rials a year in that province as follows:

The government salary of 60,000 rials per month, i.e. 720,000 rials per annum; 20,000 rials per month (i.e. 240,000 rials per annum) from Qavam al-Mulk;² 20,000 rials per

month (i.e. 240,000 rials per annum) from Sawlat al-Dawleh, chieftain of the Qashqa'i nomads; from Nasir al-Mulk for various revenues in a year the amount of 20,000 rials; the grand total being 1,400,000 rials.

These suggestions were contrary to my style and taste in government office, so I did not accept the proposition. They then said, 'now that you do not want it, we shall not give it to you'. I told them the whole point was that they should not extort money from the people, for what difference would it make to them if they were forced to pay, but I was not the ultimate receiver. Following this discussion, the local grandees undertook neither to take anything from people nor pay anything to me. Therefore, I telegraphed the government saying that provided the local grandees stuck to their pledge, I would neither need funds nor security forces, and I myself would only draw 20,000 rials from my salary of 60,000 for official expenses and receptions. However, if they did not keep their promise, I would not be the man to use force against the people. In that case I would resign from office, and the government could appoint to office another person.

In reply to this telegram, the prime minister expressed his gratitude and I went to work, and managed to bring security to the whole of the province. Before my appointment, some members of the Qashqa'i nomads had looted the belongings of Prince Arfa'a al-Dawleh, the Iranian delegate to the League of Nations, on his way to Europe from Fars in Abadeh. They had also killed Arbab Kaykhusraw's son who had been travelling with the prince to Europe for education. When I became governor-general, all the belongings were taken back from the robbers and returned to their owner.

The main reason behind the formation of Pirmiya's government was to have a popular government after Vusuq's [which was unpopular] in order to diminish the effect of Communist propaganda. But it could not last for long because foreign powers are in favour of those about whose patriotism they need not be concerned, and who would be their mere

stooges. Hence Mushir al-Dawleh [Pimiya] resigned from office, and Sepahdar [-i Rashti] (Sardar-Mansur) formed another caretaker government. For other reasons³ I did not think that I would be able to work with that government and was about to resign, but the prime minister encouraged me to stay on and promised support.

The imposition of security [in the province] required the appointment of Sawlat al-Dawleh, Sardar Ashayer, as chieftain of the Qashqa'i nomads. My predecessor had held the same opinion, but he had demanded 600,000 rials [from Sawlat] for making the appointment, which he had refused to pay, and so had not been made the chieftain of the Qashqa'i nomads. Hence, as Sepahdar (the [new] prime minister) suspected that I had been paid for Sawlat's appointment, he asked me for the [legal] basis of the appointment. I replied that, in the first instance, official decisions had to be based either on law, or the [existing] rules and regulations, or, in their absence, on precedent. There were no laws or regulations regarding this appointment, but - according to precedent - it was usually made with the governor-general's consent. I further explained that, apart from the sum of 1,500 rials which Sawlat had paid into the governorate's official fund, he had not paid a farthing to anyone else. The prime minister then sent me a telegram of apology.

Of those who had made the initial pledge, only one broke it, and that happened as follows. During the previous winter there had been a shortage of coal in Shiraz. To overcome this problem each of the villages around the town had been asked to provide a number of donkeys to carry coal to Shiraz from the area of Kuhmareh, but as the number of donkeys was more than necessary, the officials were prepared to exempt their owners on a charge of 10 rials per donkey. This was both unreasonable and unjust: unreasonable, because there was no reason why villagers should carry the coal for city-dwellers [without charge]; it was unjust, because it meant that the officials concerned would sell the coal and pocket the transport cost.

Since during the [First World War] most foreign imports were made through the port of Bushire, it was decided that all the muletiers who came from Bushire to Shiraz should be required to transport coal from Kuhmareh to the city for three

days, and be paid the usual charges for it. This became the regular pattern, and made everyone happy, because buyers in Shiraz would not have to pay more than the local price of coal plus cost of transport, and the rural donkey-owners who were not in the transport business would neither have to supply donkeys, nor pay any money.

However, an influential Shirazi family requested that certain muletiers' beasts be exempted from carrying coal. Both during and after the First World War, some foreign goods had become scarce, and their prices had risen sharply: hence any consignment which was delivered early therefore would afford a large profit to the muletier. Anyhow, I did not agree to this discriminatory demand, but, next day, when I saw the list of muletiers who had been sent for the coal transport, I noted that the muletiers in question had been exempted by my deputy on the request of that same family, so that they would carry their goods to Isfahan [before the others] and make a big profit. Therefore, I decided to give up my job, and leave for Tehran as soon as the means of transport could be prepared. But my decision became known and a large group of people from all walks of life brought my deputy, and he undertook never to violate the rules again. Thus the matter ended, and as long as I was governor-general, I never heard anyone who had made the original pledge break it. On the contrary, they all without exception supported my views and decisions, and did their best to facilitate the smooth functioning of the work of the governorate. So much for the internal problems and politics of the province.

However, regarding my contacts with foreign (at the time, solely British) officials, from early October 1920, when I first took up the governorship of Fars, to the end of March 1921, when the Shah accepted my resignation, I dealt with a number of British officers whose mode of conduct I shall now briefly describe:

1. After my appointment as governor-general of Fars, Major L.R.J. Weir,⁴ the British consul-general in that province, came to see me and, during the conversation, said that the people of Fars hated the South Persia Rifles⁵ and that they were wondering how they could mitigate this hatred. A few days later he came back and said that they had sent the Rifles to punish a number of Tangistani chieftains who, he

said, regularly caused trouble in the area. Suddenly my mood changed, and he realised that it was because of something he had said. When he asked why, I told him that anyone else hearing what he had said, would probably have felt even worse. Was it not he who, in our previous meeting, had said that the people of Fars hated the Rifles, and that they wanted to try and diminish that hatred? And yet they were sending the force to punish a number of my compatriots, thus adding to the people's hate and outrage. It had not been forgotten, I added, that Shaikh Husain Khan Chah-Kutahi, whose murder had been attributed to a British agent, was publicly mourned in several sessions in Tehran as a national martyr. I told him that I was not trying to absolve the Tangistanis from the charges which had been brought against them, but point out that the involvement of the Rifles would increase the people's hatred, and would damage their own [i.e. British] interest.

I went on to add that concerning my own personal position, they should not interfere in matters which concerned the governorate. [For example] if the highways were unsafe they should complain to me, and let me discharge my duties. However, now that they wished to take unseemly actions, they should let me leave the province first, and then do as they pleased. When I stopped, the consul got up, shook my hand and said he was grateful for my advice and wished that I would carry out my duties, thus relieving them from their worries. A few days later he came and thanked me again.

2. Major Weir was later changed, and Major [Malcolm John] Meade was appointed consul-general in Shiraz. He was one of the British officers who saw eye to eye with me, because we both had the same ideals. He was Irish and wanted his country to gain freedom and independence. The 74-day hunger strike of the Irish freedom fighters in 1920 is an event which has been recorded in the history of peoples' struggles for freedom and independence, and shall never be deleted from it.

Returning to our theme, however, I should say about this patriotic official that Meade was such an honourable man, the like of whom I have rarely seen, and as long as I was governor-general he was there in Shiraz, and we served Iran like two true brothers.

His predecessors used to obtain a certain sum of money

as a kind of deposit from some of the local magnates and nomadic chieftains which they would forfeit upon their breach of promise for good conduct. However, Major Meade put them in my care saying that these people should give undertakings to me as the chief deputy of the Iranian government in that province. He added that one of the reasons for the deposits being held in the British consulate was that their owners trusted the consulate. But, he went on to add, now that they trusted me as well, he would put the deposits in my care. He also said that there had been other reasons for keeping the deposits in the consulate, but that, as far as he was concerned they were no longer binding.

FOOTNOTE

1. Tr. This is the word in the Persian original, but it seems that the Persian word mutanaffizin (ie the influential people) has been misread for muntaqedin by Iraj afshar, the editor of the Persian text.
2. Tr. Qavam al-Mulk was a descendant of Haj Ibrahim Kalantar (Itimad al-Dawleh) and a most influential man in Shiraz.
3. One reason was the prime minister's inertia which set the stage for the [1921] coup.
4. Tr. Major L.J.R. Weir, appointed consul at Kirmanshah (Iran) in September 1818.
5. Tr. A highly controversial territorial force organised by Lt Col (later General) Sir Percy Sykes.



اعضای حزب ایران (حوزهی رشت)
در تظاهراتی در دفاع از
حکومت ملی دکتر مصدق، ۱۳۳۲
ناصرالدین موسوی در حال سخنرانی

HAFIZ MONTHLY

A PERIODICAL OF IRANIAN STUDIES

Issue : 40

May 2007

ISSN : 1735-1421

All correspondence should be addressed to the Editor:

Hassan Amin, Ph.D. (Glasgow), Advocate (Edinburgh)
The Encyclopaedia of Iran Publications
Mehr Building, 2 Palestine Street, Enghelab Avenue,
Tehran, Iran, Post Code: 14168
Tel: 009821-66968488

Fax: 009821 - 66968487

- Editor-in-Chief : Professor Hassan Amin, Ph.D.
- Executive Director : Hojjat Heydari, MSc.
- Design Consultant : H.R. Mohseni, M.A.
- Librarian : Manouchehr Raeesi
- Typesetting & Layout : Azam Daneshjoo, B.A.
- Assistant Manager : Akram Heydari
- Public Relations : Ali Akbar Asadzadeh, LL.B.

Hafiz Monthly, is an independent Iranian journal - dedicated to Iranian studies. The authorities of the Islamic Republic of Iran - in breach of the freedom of the Press - stopped its publication and circulation in October 2006. It is now only published as a gesture of "civil disobedience"! It covers a wide range of subjects - including Persian literature and contemporary political history, as well as the cultural, legal and political developments in the present-day Iran. The varied essays and reports represent all the major cultural, legal and political trends in the contemporary Iran. In each issue, **Hafiz Monthly** publishes several detailed research articles and interviews, along with a number of shorter works by contemporary Iranian scholars, writers and poets. The contributors range from national figures, examiners, leading professors, well-known authors and scholars to younger and upcoming writers and poets. **Hafiz Monthly** also disseminates information on recent publications and cultural events in and about Iran and highlights social and economic issues which are of interest to its readership.

Hafiz Monthly is a refereed journal. The selection of all published material is processed through a qualitative assessment by the Editorial Board - with the help of outside experts and external assessors.

SUBSCRIPTION FORM

برای اشتراک نشریه‌ی داخلی دوستداران حافظ

- هزینه‌ی اشتراک + هزینه‌ی پست در داخل کشور / یک سال: اشخاص ۱۲/۰۰۰ تومان؛ مؤسسات ۱۵/۰۰۰ تومان
هزینه‌ی اشتراک + هزینه‌ی پست در خارج کشور / یک سال: اشخاص ۶۰ دلار (معادل ریالی نیز پذیرفته می‌شود).
۱- برای اشتراک درون مرزی، وجه اشتراک (اشخاص حقیقی ۱۲۰۰۰۰ ریال / اشخاص حقوقی ۱۵۰۰۰۰ ریال) را به حساب سیبا، شماره حساب ۰۱۰۲۰۰۱۸۴۳۰۰۸ نزد بانک ملی، شعبه‌ی دانشگاه تهران کد ۸۷ به نام حجت‌حیدری واریز فرمایید.
۲- برای اشتراک برون مرزی، وجه اشتراک را (۵۰۰۰۰۰ ریال / معادل تقریبی ۶۰ دلار به حساب سیبای بالا به نام حجت‌حیدری واریز فرمایید.
۳- برگ اشتراک (فتوکپی فرم زیر و یا نامه‌ی جداگانه) را همراه رسید بانکی به نشانی مجله ارسال فرمایید:

تهران- تقاطع فلسطین و انقلاب - ساختمان مهر - شماره‌ی ۲ - دایرة‌المعارف ایران شناسی - کدپستی: ۱۴۱۶۸

برگ درخواست اشتراک ماهنامه‌ی حافظ

نام و نام خانوادگی متقاضی:
در صورت تمديد اشتراک شماره‌ی اشتراک موجود:
آدرس پستی برای ارسال مجله: استان: شهر:
خیابان: کوچه: پلاک:
کدپستی: تلفن (در صورت علاقه‌مندی):

دعوت به اشتراک نشریه‌ی داخلی دوستداران حافظ