

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

CONTINUED FROM LAST ISSUE

Twenty-four years later - i.e. in 1942-3 when the dictatorial period [of Reza Shah's rule] was over - and, as a result of the greater freedom of elections in Tehran, I became a deputy for the capital, I had another encounter with him which is worth mentioning here. I had had no news of the Colonel Fraser since the time of my departure from Shiraz [in 1921] - where he had come to see me, and I had said farewell, and thanked him for the two leather bags full of water which he had given my man¹ - until 3 March, 1944, when I got into an argument with some deputies in the [Fourteenth] Majlis, and left with the intention of not returning.² Next day, Mustafa Fateh, the [Anglo - Iranian] Oil Company's [local] deputy general-manager, rang me to say that the day after (5 March), a group of people would come to take me back to the Majlis. I made no comment and was left wondering why I had a phone call, as well as support from the oil company when I had nothing to do with them; for I had done what I had done solely in the country's interest. That afternoon, Adib (son of Adib al-Mamalik Farahani, the well-known poet) came to see me on Colonel Fraser's behalf with a similar message.³ This surprised me even more, and I was wondering how to respond to people who contact me on behalf of the oil company and the British military attaché in Tehran [i.e. Fraser].

Since we do not have a party system in this country, and the [political] initiative is, in many cases, in the hands of foreign powers, I decided not to go with them to the Majlis if the visitors were connected with foreign [i.e. British] politics. Otherwise, I would not humiliate those people who might come to support me for reasons of social and political sentiments alone.

Next day, a few people [of the former variety] turned up, and I did not pay much attention to them. Then a large crowd of university students as well as others from various walks of life came, saying that the distance between my

house and Nadiri Street [about two miles] was so packed with people that it was difficult to move. Therefore, all of us set out for the Majlis, and the nearer we got to it the larger became the size of the crowd. There were too many people in the car [which was slowly moving in the midst of the crowd], and lack of space made me have a fit. In Baharis-tan Square the crowd took me out of the car and carried me on their shoulders towards the Majlis but the troops closed the Majlis gate. I was still feeling unwell, and they carried me in the same way to the café in the north-east corner of the Square, opposite the Majlis. At this time, Brigadier Gulsha'iyān, the martial law administrator of Tehran, suddenly ordered the troops to open fire. A soldier's bullet, intended for me, missed, and killed instead Reza Khajeh-Nuri. He was a university student who happened to be on the balcony of the upper floor at the time. Even though later in the Majlis I demanded the prosecution of Brigadier Gulsha'iyān, those in charge of the ministry of war were not prepared to put him on trial in a court of law and allow us to discover why all the soldiers had fired in the air except for the one whose bullet killed that student.

I shall now quote a part of my speech in the Majlis on 12 March, 1945, extracted from Minutes of Majlis Debates, No. 25, p. 142:

I put the question to the government, why Brigadier Gulsha'iyān, the martial law administrator, was first relieved of his post, and then the army Deuxieme Bureau (which had no jurisdiction in the case) acquitted him without any recourse to witnesses and informed sources. Later, he was sacked because he had not responded to a blow to his face by a Majlis deputy. I suggest to this and the ensuing government that the Brigadier must be tried in a court under reputable judges, or it will be difficult for me to continue my service to the Majlis.

The event [of the oil company's apparent intervention on my behalf] was interpreted in two different ways. Some of my compatriots thought that the tragedy of 13 March

had been planned by the oil company, whereas others believed that the company had in fact wanted to show its appreciation for my opposition to Kaftaradze's proposal, as well as my bill which banned further grants of oil concessions.⁴ This interpretation is nearer the truth, for if the company had wanted me destroyed, a company official [i.e. Mustafa Fateh] would not have telephoned me, and the British embassy's military attaché would not have informed me about the people's intention to come and take me back to the Majlis. However, since my opposition to Kaftaradze's proposal had been interpreted by my opponents [i.e. the Tudeh party] as support for British policy, it is necessary to explain my position here.

My speech in the [Majlis] meeting of 5 October, and my bill in the meeting of 9 October [1944] had nothing to do with any foreign interest, and, like everything I have ever said, it was based on the country's interest. If Kaftaradze had succeeded in obtaining the North-Iranian Oil Concession, the common oil interest of Britain and Russia would have made it impossible for the Iranian people ever to speak of freedom and independence. As it happened, the case of Kaftaradze's proposal was one over which we had both agreements and disagreements with Britain.

The coincidence of our interests was in the fact that neither we nor Britain wanted the Soviet government to use Iranian oil. That was why my bill, which had the support of almost all pro-British deputies, passed through the Majlis so quickly. On the other hand, our difference with Britain on the matter was that the British government wanted, sometime in the future, to benefit from North

Iranian oil as well; whereas we were hoping that the Iranian people would, one day, exclusively benefit from their own oil, and no foreign government would be able to tamper with their independence in order to ensure its continued exploitation of Iranian oil. That was the day when the nationalisation of the Iranian oil industry was passed through parliament.

I have been somewhat diverted from my memoirs of the Fars province which I shall now continue from the point when I was awaiting a reply to my resignation cable to the shah. The longer it took the more likely it seemed that he would not accept it, and I would remain in Fars.

Nevertheless, some agents of foreign powers in Shiraz were planning to create instability in the province, and some of my colleagues came up with various suggestions for preventing it. I shall quote verbatim one of these views which had been put in writing.

14 March, 1921. Since some disorder has been observed in the province, with highway robbers misbehaving themselves, and as adventurers may seize the opportunity to establish the disorder, it is necessary to control all the telegrams sent through the telegraph office. Therefore, we beg you to instruct the central telegraph office not to communicate any telegrams before members of your excellency's staff have checked them, and refuse to send those which contravene the order and interest of the realm. Abulqasim Nasir al-Mulk, Mu'ayyid alMulk, Mohammad Baqir, Lutf'ali Nuri, Fazl'ali (prefect of the police), and three more illegible signatures.⁵

The suggestion was put into effect, and a couple of days later Major Meade, the British consul, came to see me saying that Messrs SardarFakhir Hikmat's and Mushar al-Dawleh Hikmat's telegram from Tehran to Shiraz had not yet been received by its addressee. I said the head of the telegraph office had been told to check only the outgoing telegrams from Shiraz, not the incoming ones to the city, and that the latter should be sent to its addressee without delay. He must have been convinced by what I told him, because he sent me the following letter.

Your worship,

I am genuinely sorry to trouble your nobility, but I have no choice but to say that (as I told your excellency a few days ago), His Excellency the British chargé d'affaires had said that Messrs Sardar Fakhir and Mushar al-Dawleh were supposed to send a telegram to His Excellency Hishmat al-Mulk, but the latter told me he had not received it. A few days later I heard from a source that the telegraph office had in fact received that telegram, but had not sent it to the said gentleman. Now the chargé is again asking whether or not that telegram has been received. What answer shall I give him? If in some quarters they have prevented its delivery to its owner it will be difficult for me to answer the chargé. What shall I do?

Yours sincerely, Major Meade

In the end it never became clear what these gentle-

men's telegram was all about that had stopped its delivery, or what benefit its delivery would have brought the foreigners, which had prompted the British consul to write the above letter.

There were only a few days left before the Persian New Year when some of my colleagues expressed the view that there had been a definite change in the British attitude towards Iranian politics since I had first been appointed governor of the province. Chief among these was Nasir al-Mulk, who had previously spent some time in prison on the charge of opposition to British influence, and had been released when Farmanfarma was governor-general. Their argument was that, previously, the circumstances required a politician such as Mushir al-Dawleh to be at the helm, but now the government was in the hands of individuals whose British connections were open to everyone's view. Then, the governor of Fars would not conduct a [formal] correspondence with the SPR, whereas now the prime minister himself had granted them recognition, and had asked them to send a platoon together with artillery to Tehran.

Hence, to refuse to hold the official new year ceremonies at the Government House in order to avoid the participation of the SPR in them would be viewed as a confrontation with Britain. It would be better to observe the new year formalities; for, if it was attended by the SPR, it would not go against precedent as they used to attend official functions when Farmanfarma was governor.

This was the suggestion of one of my colleagues, and it was supported by a few others. If I was certain that the shah would not accept my resignation I would not have agreed to it, but in fact it was unclear what decision the shah would take, and I therefore agreed, hoping that this might make the shah refuse my resignation, and my colleagues would not get into trouble [by my fall from office]. Besides, there are no important and influential political parties in this country whose leadership would take a decision, and relieve the membership of personal responsibility by giving them a decision to abide by. When political activity is not bound up with a party system, the position of those involved is not the same in matters concerning intelligence, patriotism, obligations and emotions. In fact it varies considerably: there are those who would even be ready to forfeit their lives, and those who would give up at

the slightest loss.

The official ceremony was indeed held, and brought some of my colleagues, especially Mohammad-Taqi Khan Mu'ayyid al-Mulk to tears [on account of the presence of the SPR officers]. However, before long I received the following cable from the shah in reply to my resignation telegram:

23 March, [1921]

Your resignation from governorship of Fars was accepted on the approval of His Excellency the Prime Minister. Please put the Office in Qavam al-Mulk's care and leave immediately.

Shah

The text of the telegram shows that the shah wanted to look like a constitutional monarch and merely inform me of his prime minister's decision. So I decided to leave Shiraz on 26 March, 1921. The day before my departure Qavam al-Mulk came to see me, and brought me a cheque, because I had not asked him for money while I was governor. But I did not accept it, and - as I needed money for travel - I borrowed 1,600 tomans from Mirza Mohammad Baqir Khan Dihqan which I paid back on arrival in Tehran.

FOOTNOTES

1. There were not many cars in Iran at the time, and - in line with the practice of the South Persia Rifles - travellers in Fars used to take a bag-full of water for the car radiator in case water was scarce. These were special bags imported by the South Persia Rifles, and each of them could take a few litres of water. When my man had gone to buy two of these bags from the SPR, the Colonel had learned about it and told him 'Your employer is no longer in [an official] position and unable to accept [a gift of] two leather bags.' Hence, on his orders, the SPR had given my man two of these bags free of charge.
2. See further, Husain Kay-Ustuvan, *Siyasat-i Murazeneh-yi Manfi*, [Tehran, 1949], vol. 1, pp. 282341.
3. Adib al-Mamalik had been a friend of mine, but until 30 October, 1925, when I opposed the single-point bill for the establishment of the temporary regime [of Reza Shah, pending the decision of a constituent assembly], I had not known that he had a son in the army. That night I heard a loud voice from the [terraced] roof of the house next door, saying: 'You should take care tonight'. Later it turned out that it was the younger Adib's house, who, at the time, was Major-General Karim Aqa Buzarjume'hi's aide de camp.
4. Tr. See further, Introduction.
5. Quoted from the *Dunya Yearbook*, vol.9, p. 40.

HAFIZ MONTHLY

A PERIODICAL OF IRANIAN STUDIES

Issue : 44

September 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
E-Mail:hafizmonthly@hotmail.com

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.
 In-House Manager : Akram Heydari
 Production Manager : 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, ex-ministers, 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: ۵۰ یورو (معادل ریالی نیز پذیرفته می‌شود.)
۱- برای اشتراک درون مرزی، وجه اشتراک (اشخاص حقیقی ۱۲۰۰۰ ریال / اشخاص حقوقی ۱۵۰۰۰۰ ریال) را به حساب سیبا، شماره حساب ۰۱۰۲۰۰۱۸۴۳۰۰۸ نزد بانک ملی، شعبه‌ی دانشگاه تهران کد ۸۷ به نام حجّت حیدری واریز فرمایید.
۲- برای اشتراک برون مرزی، وجه اشتراک را (۵۰۰۰۰۰ ریال / معادل تقریبی ۵۰ یورو) به حساب سیبای بالا به نام حجّت حیدری واریز فرمایید.
۳- برگ اشتراک (فتوکیبی 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 نشریه‌ی حافظ

نام و نام خانوادگی متقاضی:

در صورت تمدید 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