



## FIRUZ, MARYAM

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**FIRUZ** (Farmānfarmā'īān), **MARYAM** (b. Kermanshah, 1292/1913; d. Tehran, 12 March 2008; [Figure 1](#)), political activist, feminist activist, and author. She was also a leading member of the Tudeh party of Iran and was arrested by the Islamic Republic security forces in 1983.

Firuz was born into the royal Qajar family. Her father was 'Abd-al-Ḥosayn Mirzā Farmānfarmā (q.v.), the second son of Firuz Mirzā Noṣrat-al-Dawla Farmānfarmā, the sixteenth son of 'Abbās Mirzā (q.v.), son and the crown prince of Fath-'Ali Shah (q.v.), the second Qajar king (Āqeli, p. 1091). 'Abd-al-Ḥosayn Mirzā was an influential political figure in early 20th-century Iran and served in various official functions, including governor, minister, and briefly prime minister. Her mother, Batul Aḥšāmi, was from a prominent family from Kermanshah. When it became a requirement for all Iranians to choose a last name, 'Abd-al-Ḥosayn Mirzā chose Farmānfarmā, his royal title, which he had inherited from his father, as his last name. Most of the rest of the family used Farmānfarmā as last name, but a number of them, including Maryam and some of her half-brothers and paternal cousins, chose the family name Firuz, their grandfather's name. Nevertheless, she sometimes used both last names.

Firuz received her early education in Iran and graduated from the Jeanne d'Arc (Žāndārk) School, which had been established in Tehran by Alliance Française (see [FRANCE xv. FRENCH SCHOOLS IN PERSIA](#)), and she became fluent in French and Arabic as well as her native Persian. She earned her Ph.D. in French literature during her exile years in the German Democratic Republic in the 1960s.



In 1931, at the insistence of her father, she reluctantly married 'Abbāsqli Esfandiāri, a French-educated colonel in the Iranian army, who was a member of a prominent family but twenty-seven years her senior. They had two daughters named Afsāna and Afsar. She separated from her husband upon her father's death in 1939 and divorced him in 1943 (Amini; Kiānuri, p. 203).

With the occupation of Iran by the Allied forces in the summer of 1941, a period of unprecedented, open political and social activities began, and the country's pro-Soviet Tudeh party was established in the same year. The party initially refused to take female members, but it opened its doors to women in 1943, and Firuz was one of those who joined. Even before becoming a member of the Tudeh party, she had joined the Tudeh-affiliated Woman's Democratic Organization (*Taškilāt-e demokrātik-e zanān*), which was founded earlier in 1943, and she had been elected its secretary (Kiānuri, p. 203). Firuz would maintain a life-long affiliation with this organization, and her activities in the party would be mostly related to woman's rights issues. In the 1940s she befriended many of Iran's top literary and artistic figures. She met fellow party member Nur-al-Din Kiānuri through her brother and married him in 1944. Kiānuri, would soon become one of the most influential members of the Tudeh leadership until its repression in 1983.

In 1948, during the party's second congress, she was elected to none-voting member of the central committee. From this point on Firuz's life became closely linked to the fortunes and misfortunes of the Tudeh party and in particular her husband's position in the party. When in 1949 the Tudeh was declared illegal following an attempt on the life of Moḥammad-Rezā Shah, most of the Tudeh leadership, Kiānuri included, were arrested, and Firuz had to go underground. She used her contacts with the household of her cousin, Premier Moḥammad Moṣaddeq, to facilitate communicate to and from the party until the last days of the nationalist government (Kiānuri, p. 264; Amirḳosravi, 1996, p. 512). Three years after the coup d'état of 1953 (q.v.), Firuz fled Iran with her husband and eventually settled in East Germany (Amini) During the party's fourth plenum in 1956, the first post-coup gathering in exile, Kiānuri came under heavy factional attack for his responsibility during the coup; Firuz was attacked too and her membership in the party questioned (Amirḳosravi, p. 2008). During the late 1950s and early 1960s, Kiānuri's position in exile and in factional infighting with other Tudeh members resulted in his isolation, which inevitably affected Firuz, who, now free from party responsibilities, devoted her time to continuing her education



(Behrooz, pp. 37-43). The pair used this period to attend to more personal aspects of their lives in exile, which included work and education. When, in 1975, Kiānuri made a comeback as a powerful leader of the party, Firuz was elected to the party's central committee, an important but ceremonial position.

After the fall of the monarchy with the Revolution of 1979, the Tudeh party was reconstituted in Iran, and Firuz and the rest of the party leadership returned from exile. The Tudeh policy toward the revolution and its leadership, from its reconstitution inside Iran until its dismantling by the security forces of the Islamic Republic of Iran in 1983, was support for the more radical and anti-West elements in the government and the encouragement of closer relations with the Soviet Union (Behrooz, pp. 124-30). Kiānuri was the key architect of this policy. Firuz became a member of the party's most important decision-making body, the politburo, only a few months before the party was attacked and dismantled in 1983 (Amirḳosravi, 2008). It is not clear how heavily she was involved in the decision-making processes of the party, but as a Tudeh leadership member, the leader of the party's Women's Democratic Organization, and Kiānuri's wife and arguably closest ally, she must have played a significant role in executing party's policy.

The Tudeh party was attacked and its members and leaders arrested in 1983 (Behrooz, pp. 128-30). Firuz and her husband were arrested and endured heavy torture and many years of imprisonment. After cooperating with security officials, they were both eventually released and allowed to live in Tehran, where Kiānuri died in 1999 and Firuz passed away at the age of ninety-four, on 12 March 2008 (22 Esfand 1386 Š.). She was buried in Behešt-e Zahrā Cemetery in Tehran..

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