



FORŪĠĪ, MOḤAMMAD-‘ALĪ DOKĀ’-AL-MOLK

FORŪĠĪ, MOḤAMMAD-‘ALĪ DOKĀ’-AL-MOLK, statesman, scholar, and man of letters (b. Jomādā II 1294 /July1877; d. 5 Ādar 1321 Š./26 November 1942; Figure 1).

i. Biography.

ii. Literary Works.

i. Biography

Born in Tehran into a family of Isfahani merchant origin, Forūġī was the oldest child of Moḥammad-Ḥosayn Khan Dokā’-al-Molk (Forūġī), a Qajar writer, poet, translator and official. The young Forūġī received his early education under the supervision of his father, learnt French, began to study English, and pursued medical studies at the Dār al-fonūn (q.v.) until his interests shifted to literature and philosophy (Forūġī, I, Introduction; Varedi, pp. 52-55). In 1312/1894, he was employed at the Translation Bureau (Dār al-tarjama), which was headed by his father. He also taught a variety of subjects in a number of schools, contributed to the literary paper *Tarbīat* founded by his father, and, in 1316/1899, began to work and later to teach at the College of Political Science (Madrasa-ye ‘olūm-e siāsī; See [FACULTIES OF THE UNIVERSITY OF TEHRAN iii](#)), where his father was a teacher and subsequently director. Forūġī would later come to consider education in its broad sense



(*tarbiyat*) to be the prerequisite not only of civilization (*tamadon*), but of the very survival of nations in the modern world (Forūġī, 1974-76, II, pp. 54 ff.).

After his father’s death in 1325/1907, Forūġī inherited his title, Ḍokā’-al-Molk, and succeeded him as director of the College of Political Science. He also married into the family of Neẓām-al-Saltāna Māfi, his wife bearing him four sons and two daughters before dying of tuberculosis at the age of thirty-two in the spring of 1339/1921 (Forūġī, letter to Taqīzāda, 15 Šawwāl 1339/21 June 1921, in *Āyanda* 19, 1372 Š./1993, p. 162). Forūġī never remarried.

With the establishment of the constitution in 1906, Forūġī was asked to help set up the parliament’s secretariat; he had in the meantime entered reformist politics by joining semi-secret or secret societies such as Jāme‘-e ādamīyat (Society of Humanity; see *Ādamīyat*, p. 242), and the Masonic lodge Bīdārī-e Īrān (Awakening of Persia; see *‘Erfān*, p. 548; *Rā’in*, I, p. 642, II, pp. 49, 112; *Varedi*, pp. 59-63). At the age of 32 he was elected a deputy for Tehran in the second Majles (1909-11), and was soon chosen as speaker. Resigning this position, he later became deputy speaker, but on 6 Āḍar 1290 Š./27 November 1911, prior to the forced dissolution of the second Majles (December 1911), Forūġī became minister of finance (*mālīya*). Soon after, he assumed the portfolio of justice (*‘adlīya*), which he retained until 14 Ḳordād 1291 Š./4 June 1912, before becoming president of the High Court of Appeal (Dīvān-e ‘ālī-e tamīz).

In this capacity, or as minister of justice in 1293 Š./1914 and again briefly in 1294 Š./1915, Forūġī endeavored to implement reforms in the procedures and conduct of the courts. By cooperating with legal reformers such as Ḥasan Pīrnā (Mošīr-al-Dawla) and Sayyed Naṣr-Allāh Taqawī Aḳawī, Forūġī tried to institute legal reforms which helped to put the Persian judiciary on a new footing. In 1298 Š./1919 he was a member of the Persian delegation which attempted unsuccessfully to take part in the Paris peace conference, an experience which further embittered him about the political situation in Persia (Letter from Forūġī, *Rāhnemā-ye ketāb* 15, 1351 Š./1972, pp. 843-45). Returning to Persia in late Bahman 1299 Š./February 1921, Forūġī resumed his position as president of the Court of Appeal. In Bahman 1301 Š./January 1923, he became foreign minister and on 24 Ḳordād 1302 Š./14 June 1923 finance minister. Deeply disaffected with the existing political situation in Persia (Forūġī, letter to Taqīzāda, 16 Ābān 1300 Š./6 November 1921, in *Āyanda* 19, 1372 Š./1993, pp.159-162), Forūġī had joined the supporters of the army commander and war minister Reẓā Khan (later Reẓā Shah). The latter’s



assumption of the premiership (Ābān 1302 Š./October 1923), facilitated Forūgī's ministerial career (Entezām, p. 150; K̄vāja-nūrī, p. 149). Forūgī served as foreign minister in two of Reżā Khan's cabinets and as finance minister in two others. He was a supporter of the failed pro-Reżā Khan republican campaign, was acting prime minister during the latter's military operations to end Shaikh K̄az'al's rule in K̄ūzestān, and helped to bring about the end of the Qajar dynasty, the last shah of which (Aḥmad) he had personally tutored. Also as acting prime minister, he helped to organize the Constituent Assembly, which confirmed Reżā Khan as shah (21 Āḍar 1304 Š./12 December 1925).

Soon after, Reżā Shah appointed Forūgī as his first prime minister; he served in this capacity until Tīr 1305 Š./June 1926. On the occasion of the shah's coronation (4 Ordībehešt 1305 Š./24 April 1926), Forūgī delivered a speech extolling him as a worthy successor to a long line of celebrated kings of the past; he also alluded to the expectations which his subjects had of him (text in Makkī, IV, pp. 39-44). Upon resigning the premiership, Forūgī assumed the titular position of minister of war (the ministry itself remained under the direct control of the shah). In the late summer of 1306 Š./1927 he was dispatched as special ambassador to Turkey to resolve border disputes with that country. In Šahrīvar 1307 Š./September 1928, while ambassador in Turkey, he was appointed the first Persian representative at the League of Nations and served as president of the League's Council, a rotating post among member countries (Entezām, pp. 157-58). Recalled from Turkey on 17 Farvardīn 1309 Š./6 April 1930, he was offered the portfolio of the newly created but short-lived Ministry of National Economy, but soon after (23 Ordībehešt 1309 Š./13 May 1930), the Foreign Ministry became his primary responsibility. He also made another trip to the League of Nations and to Turkey, with whose leaders he had developed cordial relations (Šahrīvar-Āḍar 1311 Š./August-November 1932).

Forūgī, like the rest of his cabinet colleagues, was eclipsed by 'Abd-al-Ḥosayn Teymūrtāš, the powerful court minister (Zargar, p. 137 ff.). The fall of Teymūrtāš (Dey 1311 Š./December 1932) increased Forūgī's influence; unlike the former, he was not suspected of harboring far-reaching political ambitions. He also steered a more flexible and accommodating course in foreign policy, particularly in tackling disputes with Britain over Bahrain, other islands in the Persian Gulf, and oil. According to the British Minister in Tehran, Forūgī was the only personality on whose support Britain could count (Public Record Office, Kew, U. K., FO 371/153337, Clive to Henderson, 5 May



1931, quoted in Zargar, p. 270). In the final stage of the oil negotiations, presided over by the shah and leading to the Anglo-Persian oil agreement of 1933, Forūġī, like other senior ministers, played a passive role (Taqīzāda, pp. 231-44; Zargar, pp. 279-326).

In Šahrīvar 1312 Š./September 1933, Forūġī was appointed prime minister, and although he had been an intimate confidant of the shah (Taqīzāda, p. 230), he was forced to resign (Āḍar 1314 Š./December 1935). He had apparently attempted to intercede on behalf of his son-in-law’s father, MoḤammad-Walī Asadī, the keeper of the shrine of the eighth Imam in Mašhad, who had been held responsible for the outbreak of vocal protest in Mašhad (Tīr 1314 Š./July 1935) against the introduction of the new dress code and the *chapeau* and was subsequently executed (Šadr, p. 329; Šadiq, vol. 2, p. 249; but cf. M. Forūġī, 1992, p. 160). Forūġī also resigned the presidency of the Academy of Persian Language (see FARHANGESTĀN) established during his own premiership. Henceforth, he lived in political retirement, devoting himself to literary and cultural pursuits, which he admitted preferring over political assignments (Mīnovī, p. 538).

In Šahrīvar 1320 Š./August 1941, the Anglo-Soviet invasion of Persia forced Rezā Shah, reluctantly and on the insistence of his ministers, to call upon Forūġī to assume the premiership (Golšā’īān, pp. 539, 547-50; ‘Amerī, pp. 23-25, 31). Forūġī accepted, despite his ill-health, attributed by Reader Bullard, British Minister in Tehran, to “*angina pectoris*” (Bullard, p. 73). In addition to his reputation for honesty and integrity, Forūġī was considered to be a principled Anglophile (Ġanī, p. 191). In Bullard’s view, the purpose of Forūġī’s appointment was “to conciliate” the British (Bullard, p. 70).

Forūġī’s immediate task was to tackle the crisis caused by the Allied occupation. The erosion of the government’s authority and the speedy disintegration of the army had rendered Rezā Shah’s position so untenable that he contemplated abdicating and leaving the capital with his family, including the crown prince, and needed to be persuaded to abandon the idea (Golšā’īān, pp. 536 ff.). The British and Soviet officials and their representatives in Tehran had concluded that Rezā Shah should go (Bullard, pp. 78-79). Forūġī for his part “eventually came to the conclusion that reforms which were essential could not be secured under Reza Shah” (India Office Library, London, IOR L/P&S/12/3472A, Bullard to Eden, Annual Political Report for 1941, June 17, 1942). What finally precipitated the abdication was the news, in the early morning of 25 Šahrīvar 1320 Š./16 September 1941, that Soviet forces were



advancing on the capital (Bullard, p. 126). Forūgī favored Reżā Shah's exile from Persia, as he "feared that if he stayed in the country, he would not be able to refrain from interference in the Government" (India Office Library, IOR L/P&S/12/3472A, Bullard to Eden). On the other hand, Forūgī played a significant role in the smooth and speedy transfer of the throne to the crown prince, Moḥammad-Reżā, whom he envisaged acting as a constitutional monarch. In doing so, Forūgī preempted or neutralized alternative schemes, thereby rendering "the greatest service to the Pahlavi dynasty and the person of Moḥammad-Reżā Shah" (Golšā'iyān, p. 603; Entezām, pp. 170-71). The British government agreed that the new shah should be given a "trial subject to good behaviour" (India Office Library, IOR L/P&S/12/3472A, Bullard to Eden).

As prime minister Forūgī sponsored the approval by the Persian parliament of the treaty of alliance between Persia, Britain and the Soviet Union (Bahman 1320 Š./January 1942). The proposal for such an alliance had originated with the British government even before the abdication of Reżā Shah, and had "the personal approval" of Forūgī (India Office Library, IOR L/P&S/12/3472A, Bullard to Eden). The treaty formally ended Persia's neutrality, but specified obligations of the parties, underlined Persia's independence and territorial integrity, and set a time-table for the withdrawal of the occupying forces. Forūgī's efforts to involve the Americans in the treaty were not successful (Pfau, pp. 54-58). On the domestic scene, Forūgī refused on constitutional and pragmatic grounds to nullify the elections for the thirteenth Majles, which had been conducted under Reżā Shah, but his parliamentary majority gradually dwindled away (Azimi, pp. 39-50), for he did not enjoy the backing of a sustained following nor even the full support of the shah (Entezām, pp. 172-73; see also Amīnī, pp. 143-45). He resigned the premiership but was appointed court minister, and in this capacity continued to oversee the conduct of the shah and, as during his premiership, to write or modify the monarch's public speeches.

In addition to being denounced by Nazi propaganda, Forūgī's recent and past conduct had become the subject of increasing press criticism. Even the shah alluded pejoratively to his Masonic links (Entezām, pp. 180-81). Instead of merely procuring his resignation as court minister, the shah agreed to dispatch him to Washington as ambassador. Forūgī turned down this offer, however, as the conditions proved unacceptable (Entezām, pp. 186-87). Shortly afterwards, he died of heart failure (Entezām, pp. 152-53; K̄vāja-nūrī pp.



152-53).

As a statesman, Forūġī’s personal integrity and honesty have rarely been disputed, even by his critics (Moṣaddeq, p. 100; Sanjābī pp. 57-61). Others have, however, blamed him for helping to bring about Reżā Shah’s regime and continuing to serve it despite its blatant misdeeds (Eskandarī, pp. 26-29; Makkī, IV, pp. 20-22). Naṣr-Allāh Entezām (q.v.), who knew Forūġī well, portrayed him as a wise, discerning, dispassionate, pessimistic, and rather shy man who nonetheless enjoyed status and office but lacked leadership qualities; politically a loner, he made no effort to gather around himself a body of friends and supporters (*a’wān o anṣār*; Entezām, pp. 191-95). However, Reżā Shah’s authoritarian rule hardly encouraged such activities in politics.

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ii. Literary Works

Forūgī’s formative years have already been described in the first part of this article; only his literary legacy, including his lectures and translations as well as his part in shaping some of the newly-founded cultural institutions in modern Persia, will be considered here.



Forūgī's first noteworthy contribution to scholarship was perhaps the letter he wrote to the journal *Kāva*, published in the 10 February 1921 issue, about loan-words from western languages (Forūgī, I, pp. 1-11). He had previously given a lecture in French on the same topic on 13 April 1907 at the Alliance (q.v.) school in Tehran; the text was published in Paris in the *Revue Politique et Littéraire* (12 March 1908, pp. 364-68). He also translated the Persian Constitution of 1906-7 into French (see constitutional revolution iii). Forūgī's major articles appeared in the journals *Āyanda*, *Armaġān*, *Mehr*, and *Ta'lim wa Tarbiyat* (qq.v.).

Forūgī was one of the founders of Anjoman-e ātār-e mellī (q.v.), the National Monuments Council of Iran, established in 1301 Š./1922. He initiated the idea of creating the Farhangestān (q.v.), the Academy of Persian Language, in 1314 Š./1935 and became its first president. In an address to the Farhangestān, he gave an authoritative distillation of his deeply felt views on the state of the Persian language and ways of preventing cultural and linguistic decay. It was printed a year later (*Payām-e man ba Farhangestān*, Tehran, 1316 Š./1937; reprint Forūgī, I, pp. 101-69) and subsequently translated, with an introduction, by Henri Massé (*REI* 13, 1939, pp. 15-74). His suggestions for improvements in the state of the Persian language were put into practice in several publications, notably in his philosophical works and translations, where complicated philosophical arguments were expressed in clear, unencumbered prose, proving his contention that the language was malleable enough to absorb imported concepts without losing its own essential qualities or innate coherence. His most important works on cultural history and philosophy in this respect were *Ḥekmat-e Soqrāt ba qalam-e Aflātūn* (tr. from French, Tehran 1304 Š./1925); *Sayr-e ḥekmat dar Orūpā*, his most famous work (3 vols, Tehran, 1310-20 Š./1931-41 and reprinted several times); *Ā'in-e soġanvarī yā fann-e kaṭāba*, on rhetoric and oratory (2 vols., Tehran, 1316-18 Š./1937-39); and *Goftār-e dar raveš-e rāhbordan-e 'aql* (Tehran, 1327 Š./1948), a translation of René Descartes' *Discours de la méthode* first published as an appendix to the first volume of *Sayr-e ḥekmat dar Orūpā*.

Another characteristic of Forūgī's scholarship was his willingness to collaborate with other scholars and seek expert advice. Among the scholars of his own generation, Fāzel Tūnī and Mahdī Āštīānī (qq.v.) assisted him in translating part of Avicenna's *Šefā'* (*Fann-e samā'-e ṭabī' wa āsmān wa jahān wa kawn-e fasād*, Tehran, 1316 Š./1937), and Naṣr-Allāh Taqawī help prepare his anthology of selections from Ḥāfeẓ (*Zobda-ye Ḥāfeẓá*, Tehran, 1316 Š./1937).



Among younger scholars, Qāsem Ġanī collaborated with him in editing the *Robā’īyāt* of ‘Omar Ḳayyām (Tehran, 1320 Š./1941); Mojtabā Mīnovī on the anthology of selections from the *Šāh-nāma* (*Ḳolāša-ye Šāh-nāma*, Tehran, 1313 Š./1934); and Ḥabīb Yaġmā’ī in particular worked with him for eight years on several literary projects including selections from the *Šāh-nāma* (*Montakab-e Šāh-nāma*, Tehran, 1320 Š./1941) and his edition of the works of Sa’dī (Tehran, 1320 Š./1941).

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