

## Rethinking the Legacy of Intellectual-Statesmen in Iran

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One seminal shortcoming of the historiography of Iranian intellectual thought has been its utter inability to objectively assess the legacy of those individuals who can be called “intellectual-statesmen” (*dowltmardan-e Rowshanfekr*). Iran’s intellectual milieu both before and after the revolution has generally frowned upon the notion of “intellectual-statesmen,” and instead has embraced a heroic view of “intellectuals” as those “speaking truth to power.” According to this view, “truth” is only synonymous with criticism, fault-finding and complaining about injustice. Hence, the other side of “truth” as skills and insights on how to properly organize politics, the economy and cultural conditions gets overlooked. Truly, a community that wishes to speak truth to power sometimes needs the courage to criticize two poles of power, the rulers and the masses, and sometimes the sagacity and skills of problem solving and planning. Any reductionist view of intellectuals that emphasizes dissent and downplays the importance of practical wisdom (*hekmat-e amali*) on what can be done to reach a better state of being invariably harms the very notion of truth. If Socrates or Kaveh the Blacksmith<sup>1</sup> are the archetypes of the first type of intellectuals, the astute vizier Nizam al-Mulk<sup>2</sup> embodies the second version of speaking truth to power and hence serves as the archetype for intellectual-statesmen in Iranian culture. This paper argues that the reductionist and narrow definition of intellectuals (a) has led to a distorted view of the landscape of intellectual life; (b) suffers from selection bias; and (c) has done enormous disservice to those individuals who decided to join the machinery of the state for the betterment of society.

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<sup>1</sup> Kaveh the Blacksmith is a mythical figure in Ferdowsi’s *Shahnameh* who spearheads a popular rebellion against the cruel foreign ruler, Zahak.

<sup>2</sup> Nizam al-Mulk (1018-92) was a celebrated vizier of the Seljuq dynasty and the author of a seminal book on how to rule entitled *Siyasat-namah* (Book of Politics).

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In 1955, a renowned forty-one-year-old scholar, poet, and professor of Persian literature delivered the following speech to students at Tehran University's faculty of literature:

Your congratulatory messages are a slander. A slander implying that I chose the lure of this office over being a teacher. All who know me recognize that this is not the case. I have been an academic for more than twenty years and have gone from being a teacher to a professor and have devoted the best years of my youth to this profession...

A few months ago, I encountered one of your friends who had graduated from the university the previous year and was ready to serve his country. I found out that he was unemployed because [an official] had asked for a bribe to hire him.... I left him in distress, but my sorrowfulness did not make me lose hope. It only made me hold a grudge. Frustration is tantamount to death, whereas resentment is a sign of life...

I have never been involved in politics, but I have a friend who is honest and an able statesman. I have frequently shared the secrets of my heart with him and always found him to be compassionate. One day he asked for my help and said that this is a testing time for Iran and you too need to be involved. I said that my occupation is as a teacher, but he said you need to do more... He asked me to be his undersecretary at the ministry of interior. I accepted so that others would not say that I was only a man of words and no action.

He took me to see the Shah who said to me: 'The time for service is now. The onus is on all who can perform a service.' I obeyed since I have never had any wish but to serve Iran... I realized that the Shah understood how the internal enemy — endemic corruption — can annihilate Iran and was asking all of Iran's children to help destroy that enemy. This was my wish as well. For Iran to remain free and prosper there is no other option than the efforts of its children. It is an act of cowardliness to see the danger but refrain from doing something about it...

In countries where things are tidy, the duty of each person, each youth, is to properly render their ordinary service. Nothing more is required of them. However, in the case of Iran's youth, the duty does not end there. One must try more and work as much as one can. One has to make sacrifices. Working for a wage is not bad but you are not doing anyone a favor by performing your job. Iran's youth, if they have any patriotic zeal, should work for more than mere pay. They should know that there is a huge burden hanging on their shoulders.

We have been sluggish for two or three centuries. Our fathers did not perform their duties as they should have had. What are we, the sons, going to do? Will we accept the shame and revulsion directed toward our fathers? There is no pride in

doing that. Should we not try to compensate for their failures?... This is why I have accepted this position. If I manage to render Iran any service by doing it then this will be nothing but an honor for me. And if I fail in the task, at least I have tried. I will then return to full-time teaching and discussion. Either way, I will be proud of the fact that I had no other intentions than serving Iran and that I gave it my best.<sup>3</sup>

That professor was Parviz Natel-Khanlari (1914-90), and he went on to become a senator (1957-78), minister of education (1962-64), executive director of Iran Culture Foundation (1964), and secretary-general of the National Committee on Combatting Illiteracy (1967-70). He is credited with introducing educational reforms including developing the idea of the Literacy Corps,<sup>4</sup> and editing the influential *Sokhan* magazine for over three decades (1943-1978). He was also appreciated for having lived a modest and honest life. The friend that Natel-Khanlari referenced was no other than Amir-Assadollah Alam (1919-78) who served as a powerful interior minister (1954-1962), prime minister (1962-64), and court minister (1966-78). The timing of the speech was exactly two years after the 1953 coup that had overthrown Prime Minister Mohammad Mosaddeq. As Abbas Milani has pointed out, Natel-Khanlari was trying to explain his political foray to a critical audience.<sup>5</sup>

Natel-Khanlari's case is emblematic of the choice that has confronted countless Iranian intellectuals. Should they play any official role in the political machinery of the state in a developing society like Iran? Is it beneath their dignity as intellectuals to dirty their hands with the affairs of statecraft no matter what the state of the country's politics or the condition of the

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<sup>3</sup> Parviz Natel-Khanlari, "Be Dostan-e Javanam [To my Young Friends]," *Sokhan* 6, no. 4 (Khordad 1334/1955).

<sup>4</sup> This program allowed male high school graduates to serve as teachers in villages in lieu of their mandatory two-year military service.

<sup>5</sup> Abbas Milani, "Parviz Natel Khanlari," in *The Eminent Persians: The Men and Women Who Made Modern Iran, 1941-1979* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2008), pp. 971-77.

masses? What are the ethical considerations when they decide to join states that are not democratic? Nattel-Khanlari's insistence that what motivated him was not the lure of high office but rather the obligation to serve, reminds one of what Plato had written centuries ago:

The greatest punishment, if one isn't willing to rule, is to be ruled by someone worse than oneself. And I think it is fear of this that makes decent people rule when they do. They approach ruling not as something good or something to be enjoyed, but as something necessary, since it can't be entrusted to anyone better than – or even as good as – themselves.<sup>6</sup>

So why is it that modern Iranian intellectual history is so infertile when one looks for thoughtful answers to the above set of questions? We do know that intellectuals fall into two grand clusters. There are “socially engaged visionaries” who use critical discourse to echo and instigate demands, to question and criticize social problems, and, finally, to lead and represent the discontented masses. However, there is also a second cluster of intellectuals, the “techno-bureaucratic functionaries.” Since the ruling elites have an ever-present need to obtain the services and, more importantly, the approbation of intellectuals — as the masterminds of social and political reforms, shapers of public opinion, and as such enhancers of the legitimacy of the state —they often turn to this second strata. These intellectual stage-managers use their administrative talents and pragmatic realism to oversee the process of gradual and orderly change and in the process lend legitimacy to the authority of those above them.

Iran's intellectual milieu both before and after the 1979 revolution has generally frowned upon this second stratum of intellectuals by embracing a heroic view of “intellectuals” as those “speaking truth to power.” Indeed, those intellectuals who join the government are often referred to with derogatory terms such as *ajir* (hired hand), *amel-eh zolm* (servile agent of cruelty), *forsat-talab* (opportunist), *gholam-e halq-e bekosh-e estebdad* (bond slave of dictatorship),

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<sup>6</sup> Plato, *Republic*, Book 1, 347: b to e.

*kha'en* (traitor), *khod foroush* (sellout), *mozdor* (mercenary), and *tojihgar* (justifier). When did this negative assessment become so prevalent and why? Surely, all the way until the end of Qajar rule (1789-1925) this view was not hegemonic. I believe that to a great extent this negative attitude was a handiwork of leftist forces in the twentieth century who exaggerated both the political despotism and reliance on foreign powers of Pahlavi rulers (1925-79), embraced the normative vocabulary of armed struggle and martyrdom, and abandoned the project of social engineering in favor of regime change. Disgruntled Islamists and nationalists also tagged along. As a counter-factual argument, let us assume that the 1953 coup had not happened. Was it not the case that the Tudeh Party was happy with having ministers in Prime Minister Mosaddeq's cabinet? Also, the cooperation of the Tudeh Party and Fedaiyan-e Khalq – Majority with the Islamic regime in the aftermath of the 1979 revolution indicates that their opposition to being intellectual-statesmen was solely based on their view of the nature of the state.

Alas, this selectively narrow and romantic definition of intellectuals' role has led to a distorted view of the landscape of intellectual life and has done enormous disservice to those individuals who have decided to join the machinery of the state for the betterment of their society. This discourse is incapable of answering the following type of questions: Is it not true that intellectuals can have a restraining effect on power or influence the direction of public policy? Doesn't "freedom" for the intellectual strata also mean the freedom to take part in the governing of the country?<sup>7</sup> Don't intellectuals need the power of the state machinery to push through their reform agendas and advance society? Is it not immoral, for example, for a

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<sup>7</sup> In Europe, such intellectuals as French novelist and art theorist André Malraux (1901-76) served as minister of information (1945-46) and minister of cultural affairs (1959-69), and the writer Václav Havel (1936-2011) served as the last President of Czechoslovakia (1989-92) and after the dissolution of Czechoslovakia as president of the Czech Republic (1993-2003).

competent economist to refuse to lead the ministry of economy or the Central Bank and thereby allow these vital institutions to flounder and people to suffer?

It is ironic that the modern advocacy of separation of intellectuals from power holders has become entrenched in a country whose famed viziers and counselors saw it as their obligation to tutor rulers.<sup>8</sup> For centuries, the Persian advice treatise (*Nasihāt al-Molok*) developed with the expressed goal to instruct monarchs, addressing their intellectual weaknesses and offering them practical counsel to deal with crises at hand.<sup>9</sup> The advice literature combined practical methods of solving political difficulties with sagacious words of advice on ethical rule. This literature, which perhaps reached its pinnacle with *Siyasat-namah* (Book of Politics) of Nizam al-Mulk, also emphasized the need to staff the state bureaucracy with men of great intellectual abilities.<sup>10</sup>

### Qajar Era

The tradition of *Nasihāt al-Molok* was very much in vogue during the Qajar era. A caste of viziers, private tutors, *mostowfis* (government accountants), and *monshiyān* (scribes) put their considerable abilities at the service of rulers. Speaking of Abbas Mirza (1789-1833), the governor of Azerbaijan and Crown Prince who brought the first printing press to Persia, undertook military reforms, and send students to Europe, Abbas Amanat writes, “Thanks to his

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<sup>8</sup> A young Iranian thinker has written: “We should not expect political work from intellectuals and intellectual work from politicians.” See Soroush Dabagh, “E’tedal Yani Barabari-Talabi va Rafe’ Tabeyz [Moderation Means Seeking Equality and Rejecting Discrimination],” <https://bit.ly/2JEcQTg>

<sup>9</sup> For analysis of this genre, see Mehrzad Boroujerdi (ed.), *Mirror for the Muslim Prince: Islam and Theory of Statecraft* (Syracuse University Press, 2013), and Neguin Yavari, *Advice for the Sultan: Prophetic Voices and Secular Politics in Medieval Islam* (Oxford University Press, 2014).

<sup>10</sup> See Neguin Yavari, *The Future of Iran’s Past: Nizam al-Mulk Remembered* (Oxford University Press, 2018).

small corps of advisers who schooled him in Persian history and literature, he entertained a sense of indigenous state-centered identity.”<sup>11</sup>

The model intellectual-statesmen of the Qajar era is no doubt Mirza Taqi Khan Farahani, better known as Amir-Kabir (1807-52).<sup>12</sup> He was a long-time tutor to Naser al-Din Shah (1831-96) before serving as his prime minister (1848-51). Amir Kabir is credited among other things with establishing a new governmental order, negotiating the Perso-Ottoman boundary, publishing Iran’s first government gazette (*Vaqaye’-e Ettafaqiyeh*), and establishing the polytechnic academy known as *Dar al-Fonun* (abode of skills) in 1851, marking the beginning of modern education in Persia.

Another important intellectual-statesman of the late Qajar period was Hasan Pirnia Moshir al-Dowleh (1872-1935). Having served as Persia’s minister to the Russian court, he returned to Iran and with the help of his father, who was foreign minister, managed to convince Mozaffar al-Din Shah (1853-1907) to establish the School of Political Science in 1899. Dar al-Fonun and the School of Political Science helped to train such intellectual-statesmen of the future as Mohammad-Ali Foroughi, Ali-Akbar Dekhoda, Ali-Akbar Davar, Abbas Eqbal-Ashtiyani, Ghasem Ghani, Seyyed Valiollah Nasr, and Isa Sadiq. Pirnia also went on to play a role in drafting the 1906 Constitution, co-founding the Society for the National Heritage of Iran, serving as minister and prime minister (four times), and authoring the three-volume *Tarikh-e Iran-e Bastan* (History of Ancient Iran).

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<sup>11</sup> Abbas Amanat, *Iran: A Modern History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2018), p. 218.

<sup>12</sup> Other notable statesmen of this era were prime ministers Mirza Abolqasem Qa'em-Maqam (d. 1835), Mirza Hoseyn Khan Sepahsalar (1826-81), and Persia’s counsel in Tbilisi and chargé de affaires in Paris Yusef Khan Mostashar al-Dowleh (d. 1895).

## Intellectual-Statesmen of the Reza Shah Period

If there is one period in Iran's modern history when the role of intellectual-statesmen was more crucial than any other it was during the reign of Reza Shah (1925-41). As the new ruler embarked on the task of creating a new state machinery after the tumultuous events of the Constitutional Revolution and World War I, he came to rely on the skills of capable men of letters and politics to celebrate, concoct, and revive national myths while emblemizing national identity. Reza Shah had also realized that carrying out formidable tasks such as creating a modern judicial system was not possible without the cooperation of intellectual-statesmen. On the other side, in the ambiance of the post-Constitutional era, many secular intellectuals were willing to abandon the paradigm of dissent and liberty in favor of service and security. These men did not join Reza Shah out of careerism or opportunism but rather based on a "call to duty" rooted in the belief that Iran needed to be made safe before it could prosper.<sup>13</sup> They were also cognizant of the fact that reducing the power of the clerical establishment in all facets of public life was not possible without the backing of the state. Let us look at the contributions of three intellectual-statesmen who continued the tradition of learned viziers.

Mohammad-Ali Foroughi (1877-1942), often referred to by his title of Zoka' al-Molk, is the quintessential intellectual-statesman of his era. He was a private tutor to Ahmad Shah Qajar (d. 1930), served as first and last prime minister under Reza Shah, and first prime minister under Mohammad Reza Shah. Appointed as the director of the School of Political Science (1907-09) at the age of thirty, the erudite Foroughi went on to spend the remaining three decades of his life

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<sup>13</sup> I have elaborated on this argument in Mehrzad Boroujerdi, "Triumphs and Travails of Authoritarian Modernization in Iran," in Stephanie Cronin, ed., *The Making of Modern Iran: State and Society under Riza Shah, 1921-1941* (Routledge, 2003), pp. 146-54.



holding high-level political posts.<sup>14</sup> He served as Majles deputy (1909-11), minister of finance (11/1911-12/1911, 6/1923-25), minister of justice (12/1911-6/1912 and 8/1914-4/1915), president of the High Court of Appeals (6/1912-8/1914 and 1921-22), Persia's representative to the Paris Peace Conference (1919) and the League of Nations (1928-), foreign minister (1/1923-5/1923, 5/1930-9/1933), prime minister (1925-6/1926, 9/1933-12/1935, 8/1941-42), minister of war (6/1926-28), ambassador to Turkey (1928-4/1930), minister of national economy (4/1930-5/1930), and court minister (1942). It was Forughī who convinced Reza Shah to travel to Turkey to see the extent of Atatürk's reforms. He was the one who came up with the idea of establishing the Academy of Persian Language, which was founded in 1935, and he served as its first president. In addition, he drafted the law on cultural heritage, wrote the bylaws for the first Majles, and negotiated in 1941, under trying circumstances, with the British and Soviets over the terms of Reza Shah's abdication. Parallel to his political work, Forughī continued his scholarly work including writing "the first general history of Western philosophy in Persian, a seminal text not only in offering the Iranian readers an insightful treatment of Greek and Western thought but also in pioneering a technical prose that would become the hallmark of modern Persian scholarship for decades to come."<sup>15</sup> He also established himself as a leading expert on celebrated Persian poets Sa`di and Omar Khayyam.

Ali-Akbar Davar (1885-1937) has been described as "the most capable public administrator of the Pahlavi era."<sup>16</sup> After graduating from Dar al-Fonun (1909), he became

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<sup>14</sup> Another important director of the School of Political Science who held the post from 1924 to 1941 was Ali-Akbar Dehkhoda. For a short biography on Dehkhoda and all other intellectuals mentioned in this chapter see the Appendix.

<sup>15</sup> Amanat, *Iran: A Modern History*, pp. 475-76. The three volumes of *Seyr-e Hekmat dar Orupa* (History of Philosophy in Europe) were respectively published in 1931, 1939 and 1941.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 451.

district attorney for Tehran in 1910 while writing articles for the radical newspaper *Sharq* (East). Davar then went to Switzerland where he earned a Bachelor of Law degree from the Université de Genève (1920), but he abandoned his doctoral studies in law to return to Iran after the 1921 coup. Back in Tehran, he founded the Radical Party (1922), published the newspaper *Mard-e Azad* (1923-24), and held such posts as director-general of the ministry of education (1921), Majles deputy (1922-27), member of the Constituent Assembly (1925), minister of public utilities and trade (appointed 12/1925), minister of justice (2/1927-33), and minister of finance (9/1933-37).

Davar proved to be an institution-builder. As justice minister, he is credited with establishing Iran's modern judicial system, compiling a new legal code (that led to the termination of capitulations<sup>17</sup> in 1928), drafting various laws including the marriage and divorce law, drafting rules and regulations for prosecutors, and training new judges. As finance minister, he also helped to consolidate Iran's public finances. In February 1932, it was Davar who successfully defended Iran's case in the League of Nations after the British had filed a complaint against Iran for abrogating the Anglo-Persian Oil Company. In addition, Davar founded *Madrassa-ye Tejarat* (School of Business) in 1926, combined the School of Political Science and the School of Law to form the Higher School of Law and Political Science (*Madrassa-ye Ali-ye hoquq va Olum-e Siyasi*) in 1927,<sup>18</sup> founded *Hey'at-e Taftishiyeh-ye Mamlekati* (early

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<sup>17</sup> Capitulation refers to a practice whereby foreign individuals are subject to the laws of their countries of which they are a citizen rather than the country in which they reside. In Persia, this right was granted in the Nineteenth century and was long considered as an embarrassing violation of the country's sovereignty.

<sup>18</sup> In the post-constitutional period, as the Iranian judicial system came under the increasing influence of various European legal systems, the need for establishing a school of law become obvious. In 1920-21, *Madrassa-ye Ali-ye Hoquq*, a free-standing school within the Ministry of Justice was established. In 1935,

incarnation of the State General Inspectorate Organization) in 1929 and *Daftar-e Asnad-e Rasmi* (Registry of Official Documents) in 1932, and finally laid the foundations for Iran's chamber of commerce.<sup>19</sup>

Ali-Asghar Hekmat (1893-1980) is regarded as “the chief architect of the modernization of the educational system” in Iran.<sup>20</sup> A graduate of the American College and the Sorbonne, this scholar and professor whose name appears on over thirty books as author, editor, or translator also held the following high-level posts under both Reza Shah and Mohammad-Reza Shah: minister of education (1933-38), interior (1939-40), arts and crafts (1941), health (1943), interior, justice (1943), foreign affairs (1948-49, 1958–59); minister without portfolio (1947, 1949-50); and ambassador to India (1953-58). Like his Radical Party colleague Davar, Hekmat was also an institution builder. He was the minister who came up with the idea of the *pisahangi* (Boy Scouts) in 1934, and who suggested the establishment of Tehran University to Reza Shah, serving as its first rector (1935-38). He was the force driving the construction of Amjadiye Stadium (1936), the National Library building (1937), the National Archeological Museum (1937), and mausoleums for Ferdowsi, Hafez, and Sa‘di, as well as revitalizing the National Association of Physical Education.

Foroughi and Hekmat along with such other cultivated men as Seyyed Hasan Taqizadeh, Malek al-Sho`ara Mohammad-Taqi Bahar, and Seyyed Fakhroddin Shadman were representative

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the Higher School of Law and Political Science became Tehran University's School of Law and Political Science.

<sup>19</sup> See “Ali-Akbar Davar,” in *Daneshnameh-ye Jahan-e Islam* [Encyclopedia of the Islamic World] <http://rch.ac.ir/article/Details/9063>. Accessed May 22, 2019.

<sup>20</sup> “Hekmat, ‘Ali-Asghar,” *Encyclopedia Iranica* <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/hekmat-ali-asghar>. Accessed May 22, 2019.

of a generation of intellectual-statesmen who were politically active under both Pahlavi monarchs.

### Mohammad-Reza Shah Period

During the reign of Mohammad-Reza Shah (1941-79), the corps of intellectual-statesmen serving as ministers, courtiers, senators, and diplomats expanded even more. Intellectuals serving as ministers included Ali-Naqi Alikhani, Ghasem Ghani, Daryush Homayun, Abdolmajid Majidi, Mohammad Mosaddeq, Houshang Nahavandi, Farrokrou Parsa, Majid Rahnama, Gholam-Hoseyn Sadiqi, Isa Sadiq, and Ali-Akbar Siyasi. The rank of ambassador included such figures as Fereydun Adamiyyat, Jahangir Amuzegar, Fereydun Hoveyda, Seyyed Morteza Moshfeq-Kazemi, Gholam-Ali Radi-Azarakshi, and Zeinolabedin Rahnama. Cultural attachés included the likes of Reza Alavi, Abbas Eqbal-Ashtiyani, Nasrollah Falsafi, Mas'ud Farzad, Seyyed Abolhasan Jalili, Hoseyn Khadiv-Jam, Mojtaba Minovi, and Mahmud Sana'i. The ranks of Majles and Senate deputies included the likes of Mozaffar Baqa'i, Khanbaba Bayani, Ali Dashti, and Mehdi Malekzadeh.

More broadly, considering the centralized nature of the economy, many other intellectuals decided to work for such state-sponsored institutions as the Center for Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults,<sup>21</sup> the Central Bank,<sup>22</sup> the National Iranian Oil

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<sup>21</sup> For example, Ahmad-Reza Ahmadi, Firuz Shirvanlu, Abbas Kiarostami, and Sirius Tahbaz.

<sup>22</sup> For example, Mehdi Samii, Khodadad Farmanfarmayan, Hashem Pesaran, Hasan-Ali Mehran, and Mohammad Yeganeh.

Company,<sup>23</sup> the National Museum, National Radio & TV,<sup>24</sup> the Plan and Budget Organization,<sup>25</sup> as well as various universities, research institutions, and libraries.<sup>26</sup> This was similar to what their predecessors had done under Reza Shah when they affiliated with such institutions as academies, banks, *Kanoun-e Parvaresh-e Afkar* (Society for Public Guidance), *Anjoman-e Asar-e Melli* (The National Monuments Council of Iran), and *Showra-ye Ali-ye Maaref* (High Council of Education).

### The Ethical Challenge

The cooperation of intellectual classes with authoritarian states is not unproblematic. Rulers often want the intellectual classes to unequivocally accept the present order of things and remain loyal and docile functionaries. As Mohammad Reza Shah once put it to an American interlocutor, intellectuals can voice “constructive criticisms,” but should not commit “treason” against the state.<sup>27</sup> In other words, rulers are chiefly interested in an instrumental relationship with intellectuals and distrust the latter’s culture of critical inquiry. Moreover, it is possible to say that intellectuals help to consolidate authoritarian rule when they acquiesce to state atrocities. For example, as justice minister Ali-Akbar Davar had to oversee the trial and imprisonment of his former colleague Abdolhoseyn Teymurtash and many ministers and university rectors during

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<sup>23</sup> Ebrahim Golestan made documentary films for NIOC.

<sup>24</sup> For example, Reza Qotbi and Hushang Ebtehaj.

<sup>25</sup> For example, Abolhasan Ebtehaj, Abdolmajid Majidi, and Ahmad Ashraf.

<sup>26</sup> For example, such figures as Iraj Afshar, Mehdi Bayani, and Yahya Zoka’ worked in the National Library while Abbas Zaryab-Kho’i worked in the Majles and Senate libraries.

<sup>27</sup> See E. A. Bayne, “Intellectuals and Kingship,” *Persica*, no. 5 (1970-71), p. 123.

the Pahlavi reign had to tolerate censorship, expulsion of students, and even the execution of political prisoners. However, intellectuals by their very nature are not generally fond of tutelary rule, heavy-handedness, corruption, censorship, and the benevolent despotism of the rulers.

More importantly, we often take the state, its existence, and its traditions for granted. However, the state is a socially constructed entity and not a natural one. As Natel-Khanlari had mentioned in his 1955 lecture, the survival of the state requires a national effort, and the engagement and the sacrifice of its best and the brightest in all fields of endeavor. Hence, what we should be frowning upon is detachment/non-participation and not the act of participation. In other words, the job of an intellectual is not just “talking truth to power” but also realizing that there is “truth in power.” The truth of courageously tackling political problems, offering practical advice to rulers, accepting responsibilities and implementing scientific plans that bore results. These are the other ways where intellectuals demonstrate their loyalty to the notion of truth. In the realm of intellectual life, truth sometimes presents itself in the bitter words of justice seeking Socrates or Farrokhi Yazdi, sometimes in the sweet words of advice offered by Sa`di to kings, and sometimes in the wise political counsel offered by such vizier as Nizam al-Mulk, Mirza Mehdi Astarabadi,<sup>28</sup> Amir-Kabir, and Mohammad-Ali Foroughi.

Without a doubt, the well-being of citizens is dependent on the freedom and courage of intellectuals to articulate and implement both notions of truth without sacrificing one or the other. Both types of intellectuals are involved with politics and concerned with truth. Where there is no justice, freedom or prosperity one bravely calls for them and the other tries to open the door for all three.

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<sup>28</sup> Astarabadi (d. circa 1766), was a historian and chief secretary to King Nader Shah Afshar (r. 1736-1747) and the author of *Tarikh-e Jahangoshay-e Naderi*.

Questions as to how in any historical conjuncture one needs to fight the establishment or how and under what circumstances should one join the state do not have apriori and ahistorical answers. A big part of intellectual work is indeed the courage and wisdom to make these decisions in the difficult circumstances that one finds himself or herself in.

In this essay and the following appendix, we have highlighted the contributions of some of Iran's modern intellectual-statesmen whose participation in power benefited the country.

### Appendix: Short Biographies of Intellectual-Statesmen

Adamiyyat, Fereydun (1893-1989): A well-known historian (Ph.D., University of London, 1949) who served for many years in Iran's ministry of foreign affairs including as ambassador to the Philippines and India and representative in the International Court of Justice in the Hague.

Afshar, Iraj (1925-2011): Noted bibliographer, historian, editor, and librarian. Having served as the librarian of Tehran University's Faculty of Law and later Central Library (1965-79), head of Teachers College's Library and head of the National Library, he was a leading expert on Persian manuscripts.

Ahmadi, Ahmad-Reza (b. 1940): An avant-garde poet, he was affiliated with the Center for Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults as a writer, manager of the sound recording production section, and editor from 1970 to 1994.

Alavi, Reza (1935-2012): Educated at Harvard and Oxford universities, Alavi was an expert on Indian languages and history. He served as cultural attaché to India in the 1970s as well as advisor to ministers of science and culture.

Alikhani, Ali-Naqi (1929-2019): A French-educated economist, he served as minister of economy in three cabinets (1963-69) and rector of Tehran University (1969-71).

Amuzegar, Jahangir (1920-2018): Having earned his doctorate in economics from UCLA, he served as minister of commerce and minister of finance and chairman of the National Iranian Oil Company before becoming Iran's ambassador at large to the United States (1963-79) and a member of the board of the International Monetary Fund.

Ashraf, Ahmad (b. 1934): A sociologist (Ph.D., New School for Social Research, 1971), editor and scholar, he worked at the Plan and Budget Organization before the revolution and was affiliated with *Encyclopaedia Iranica* at Columbia University for many years.

Bahar, Malek al-Sho`ara Mohammad-Taqi (1886-1951): An erudite poet, scholar, journalist and professor, he also served as Majles deputy (various times between 1921 and 1928) and briefly in 1946 as minister of culture.

Baqai, Mozaffar (1912-87): He earned his doctorate in philosophy from the University of Paris in 1935 and served as a politician, founder and head of Hezb-e Zahmatkeshan-e Mellat-e Iran (Iran's Toilers' Party), and Majles deputy.

Bayani, Khanbaba (1909-99): He earned his doctorate in history from France and served as founding rector of Tabriz University (1942-50), deputy prime minister, senator, and head of Foreign Ministry's archives.

Bayani, Mehdi (1906-68): Having earned his doctorate in Persian literature at Tehran University (1945), he was considered a pioneer in Persian librarianship and a specialist in Persian



manuscripts and calligraphy. Bayani was head of the ministry of education's public library (1933-37), founder of the National Library, and as the director of the Royal Library (1956-68) served as the chief imperial librarian.

Dashti, Ali (1895-1982): A writer, journalist and scholar, he served as a Majles deputy, ambassador to Egypt (1948-51) and Lebanon (1963), and a senator (1953-79).

Dehkhoda, Ali-Akbar (1877-1956): Renowned etymologist, encyclopedist, poet, and social critic. Dehkhoda had previously served in such capacities as secretary to the Persian ambassador to the Balkans, Majles deputy, head of the secretariat of the ministry of education, and head of the office of investigation in the ministry of justice.

Ebtehaj, Abolhasan (1899-1999): He served as governor of Bank Melli (1942-50), ambassador to France (1950-52), advisor to the International Monetary Fund (1952-54), and head of the Plan & Budget Organization (1954-58). Ebtehaj has been described as "one of the most important and powerful figures in the economic history of Iran during the middle decades of the 20th ... He exercised a major influence on the development of the Iranian banking system, and became a pioneer of economic planning in the country, earning international recognition for his vision and administrative competence." Encyclopaedia Iranica <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/ebtehaj-abolhassan>.

Ebtehaj, Hushang (b. 1928): Writing under the penname of H. E. Sayeh, he has been one of Iran's leading contemporary poets. Before the revolution, he produced a musical program for the national radio.

Eqbal-Ashtiyani, Abbas (1896/7-1956): Professor, etymologist and founding editor of *Yadegar* journal, he was Iran's cultural attaché in Turkey and Italy toward the end of his life.

Falsafi, Nasrollah (1901-81): Tehran University history professor, journalist, translator, and poet, he served for five years as cultural attaché in Italy and Spain.

Farmanfarmayan, Khodadad (1928-2015): The U.S. educated Farmanfarmayan was affiliated with the Institute for Social Studies and Research, and later became governor of the Central Bank of Iran, and head of the Plan and Budget Organization.

Farrokhi Yazdi, Mohammad (1889-1939): Poet, journalist, Majles deputy, and editor of *Tufan* newspaper (1921-28) who was reportedly killed in prison for criticizing Reza Shah.

Farzad, Mas'ud (1906-81): A translator, poet and university professor, Farzad served as a cultural attaché in London.

Ghani, Ghasem (1893-1952): Physician (M.D., American University of Beirut, 1919/20), scholar, translator, and expert on Hafez, he served in such capacities as Majles deputy (1935-41), minister of health (1941), minister of education (1944), as well as ambassador to Egypt (1947) and Turkey (1948-49).

Golstan, Ebrahim (b. 1922): A maverick film director, photographer, translator and writer.

Homayun, Daryush (1928-2011): Journalist, author and founder and editor-in-chief of *Ayandegan* newspaper (1967-77), he served as minister of information and tourism (1977-78). Homayun was a high-level official of Rastakhiz Party before the revolution.

Hoveyda, Fereydun (1924-2006): A French educated international lawyer, writer and film critic who served as Iran's ambassador to the United Nations (1970-1978).

Jalili, Seyyed Abolhasan (1927-2015): A French-educated philosopher with expertise in Greek and German thought, Jalili started teaching at Tehran University in 1955. In the 1970s, he served as dean of faculty of letters and humanities at Tehran University and as a cultural attaché in France.

Khadiv-Jam, Hoseyn (1927-86): Translator and scholar of Persian and Arabic, he served as a cultural attaché in Afghanistan before the revolution.

Kiarostami, Abbas (1940-2016): Painter, poet and film director. Kiarostami was educational film director for the Center for Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults and after the revolution became an internationally acclaimed film director.

Majidi, Abdolmajid (b. 1928): He had a Ph.D. in law from France and served as minister of labor (1969-72), director of the Plan and Budget Organization (1972-77), and director of the Queen Farah Foundation (1977-79).

Malekzadeh, Mehdi (1881-1955): A medical doctor educated in Beirut, he served a total of seven times as a Majles deputy, deputy prime minister and senator (appointed in 1949). Malekzadeh authored a major book on the history of the Constitutional Revolution.

Mehran, Hasan-Ali (b. 1937): He served as governor of Iran's Central Bank (1975-78), vice chair and CEO of National Iranian Oil Company, and minister of finance

Minovi, Mojtaba (1903-77): Professor, scholar and translator, he served from 1957 to 1961 as Iran's cultural attaché in Turkey.

Mosaddeq, Mohammad (1882-1967): A Swiss-educated lawyer, he served as prime minister from 1951 to 1953 and nationalized the Iranian oil industry. He was overthrown in a military coup.

Moshfeq-Kazemi, Seyyed Morteza (1904-78): Author of Iran's first novel entitled *Tehran Makhuf* (Horrible Tehran), and managing editor of *Nama-ye Farangestan*, he served as ambassador to Egypt, Syria and a number of European countries.

Nahavandi, Hushang (b. 1932): A French-educated economist (Ph.D., 1958), who went on to write or translate fourteen books on economic subjects, he was minister of housing and

development (appointed 1963), rector of Pahlavi University and Tehran University, and head of Queen's Office, and minister of higher education.

Nasr, Seyyed Valiollah (1876-1946): Physician, literary scholar, educator, Majles deputy and minister of education. He also served as director of the School of Political Science as well as schools of law, theology and medicine at Tehran University.

Parsa, Farrokrou (1922-80): A physician and advocate for gender equality, she served as Iran's first female cabinet minister from 1968 to 1971 as minister of education.

Pesaran, Hashem (b. 1946): He received his doctorate in Economics from Cambridge University in 1972 and subsequently held such posts as head of the economic research department of the Central Bank of Iran (1974-76) and the under-secretary of the ministry of education (1976-78).

Qotbi, Reza (b. 1938): A former leftist and cousin of Queen Farah, he became the director general of the state-owned National Iranian Radio and Television, and manager of Shiraz Festival.

Radi-Azarakhshi, Gholam-Ali (1909-99): A poet and professor of literature at Tehran University, he served as Iran's permanent representative to UNESCO (1945-63). Radi-Azarakhshi later established the Faculty of Literature and Social Sciences at National University.

Rahnama, Majid (1924-2015): A Tehran University professor, he became ambassador to Switzerland (1965-67), minister of science and higher education (1967-71), and deputy prime minister (1972-77).

Rahnama, Zeinolabedin (1893-1989): Editor of the journal *Rahnama* and *Iran* newspaper, and an expert on Islam, he served as Majles deputy, as well as ambassador to France, Lebanon and Syria. Rahnama was also the head of the Iran Pen Society.

Rezazadeh-Shafaq, Sadeq (1895-1971): Active in the Constitutional Revolution as a fighter and journalist, he went on to earn a doctorate at the University of Berlin in 1928 with a dissertation entitled "Mystische Motive in Fechners Philosophie." Rezazadeh-Shafaq returned to Iran where he served as a professor at Tehran University, literary scholar, Majles deputy (first elected in 1943) and senator (elected in 1950). As a member of the Iranian delegation, he was involved in drafting of the UN constitution in 1945. In 1946, he accompanied Prime Minister Ahmad Qavam in discussions with Stalin that led to the withdrawal of Soviet forces from Azerbaijan.

Sadiq, Isa (1894-1978): Having earned his doctorate at Columbia University (1931), Sadiq returned to Iran and served as a professor and university rector. He also served six terms as minister of education and five terms as a senator between 1940s and 1970s.

Sadiqi, Gholam-Hoseyn (1905-91): After earning his Ph.D. from the University of Paris (1938), he became a professor of sociology at Tehran University. A leading member of the

National Front, he served as minister of interior and later as deputy prime minister under Prime Minister Mosaddeq and was imprisoned after the coup. Sadiqi was one of the founders of the Institute for Social Studies and Research at Tehran University in 1958.

Samii, Mehdi (1918-2010): A banker and man of finance, he is responsible for founding the Industrial and Mining Development Bank and held such other posts as governor of the Central Bank, and president of the Agricultural Development Bank (1973-79).

Sana'i, Mahmud (1919-85): A British-educated psychology, he was Iran's cultural attaché in England (1954-57) before moving on to become deputy minister of education (1959-60), and later founding director of Tehran University's Institute of Psychology (1965-72).

Shadman, Seyyed Fakhroddin (1907-67): Served in such posts as Tehran's deputy public prosecutor, Iran's oil commissioner in the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company (for fourteen years based in London), minister of agriculture, finance, and justice, head of the Plan and Budget Organization's Supreme Council, and vicegerent of Imam Reza Shrine Properties. He was also a member of the Iranian Academy and the Cultural Council of the Imperial Court of Iran, a trustee of Pahlavi Library, and a professor of history at Tehran University (1950-67). Shadman played a huge role in the establishment of the Abadan's Oil College. He is the author of numerous books and novels as well as articles. For his intellectual contributions see Mehrzad Boroujerdi. *Iranian Intellectuals and the West: The Tormented Triumph of Nativism* (Syracuse University Press, 1996), pp. 54-63.

Shirvanlu, Firuz (1938-89): A leftist activist from his student days when he was studying sociology of arts at Leeds University, he was instrumental in the founding of the Center for Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults. Shirvanlu was also a writer and translator and worked in the office of Queen Farah.

Siyasi, Ali-Akbar (1895-1990): Credited with introducing the modern discipline of psychology to Iran, he served as minister of education (1943-44, 1948-50), foreign minister (1950), and rector of Tehran University (1943-55).

Tahbaz, Sirus (1939-99): A writer and translator, he was in charge of the publication unit of the Center for Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults from 1970 to 1978. He also compiled and published two dozen books on the celebrated poet Nima Yushij (1895-1960) and his poetry.

Taqizadeh, Seyyed Hasan (1878-1970): He was a chief protagonist of the Constitutional Revolution. Taqizadeh was fluent in Arabic, English, French, and Turkish and had vast knowledge of Islamic/Iranian history and literature as well as natural sciences. He served as Majles deputy (intermittently between 1906 and 1920, 1924-28, 1947-50), foreign minister (1926), governor of Khorasan (1928-29), minister of roads (1930), finance minister (1930-33), ambassador to France (1933-34), ambassador to United Kingdom (1929, 1941-47), and senator (1949-67 [serving as president 1957-60]). As a seasoned politician, Taqizadeh was the one dispatched to London in 1930 to discourage the British from causing problems among the tribes and sent to New York in 1946 to present Iran's

case against Soviet occupation of Azerbaijan in the UN. A collection of his books, essays and Majles speeches encompassing eighteen volumes has been published (see <https://bit.ly/30EPnaA>).

Teymurtash, Abdolhoseyn (1883-1933): A graduate of a military academy in St. Petersburg, he was involved in the Constitutional Revolution (1905-7). Teymurtash served as Majles deputy, governor of Gilan, and court minister. He developed a reputation as a cultivated statesman and was a leading voice of the nationalist intelligentsia. He was arrested in 1933 on the charge of corruption and killed in prison.

Yeganeh, Mohammad (1923-95): Having earned his MA in economics from Columbia University (1951), Yeganeh went on to serve as vice minister of economy (196?-69), minister of development & housing (1969-70), governor of the Central Bank (1973-75), minister of state (1975-77), minister of state & director of Plan & Budget Organization (1977), minister of economic affairs & finance (1977-78).

Zaryab-Khoei, Abbas (1919-95): Historian, book expert, and translator. With a doctorate from the Johannes Gutenberg University in Mainz, Germany (1960), he taught at Tehran University from 1966 to 1979. He was a librarian in the Majles and Senate libraries for almost two decades.

Zoka', Yahya (1923-2000): Author, professor and art expert, he served as director of the decorative art museum, the anthropology museum, and the National Library (1968-69). He also served as an adviser to minister of culture & art (1970-78).