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FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK 10

COMMENTARY

News 12

An Open Letter to President Obama 13

Neda Agha-Soltan Graduate Scholarship 14

The Very Promising Beginning: An On Scene Report 14

(David Yazdan)

Philosopher King or Supreme Leader 15

(Firooz Yazdi)

Persian American Stats 16

Controversial Iranian Flag 16

THE ARTS & CULTURE

Interview with Brenden Hamilton 17

(Brian H. Appleton)

Tajik Speakers of China 18

Some Information on Shiraz 19

(Cyrus Cooper)

Taking the Capital Out of a City 22

Book Reviews 23

The Axed Persian Identity 24

Beginning of Ski Season at Tochal 25

Morteza Katouzian, the Great Iranian Painter 26

Interview with Leila Taghinia-Milani Heller 29

(Shahrokh Ahkami)

IMPORTANT NOTICE

All written submissions to Persian Heritage with the expectation of publication in the magazine must include the writer's name, address and telephone number.



FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

Another year is ending and we again are thankful to have the opportunity to wish our readers and the world the happiest of Holidays and a healthy happy and prosperous New Year. May the next year be the one when the Iranian people, who have suffered so long under a state of oppression, finally enjoy the fruits of their sacrifice. May this year be one they enjoy the success of their June movement, in defense of justice and freedom and bring them the liberty and freedom they so deserve. I hope the sacrifices of the young, old, men and women, who lost their lives by execution or were imprisoned, will not be in vain.

It is interesting to read the words of Rafsanjani when he stated in a private meeting that “over the last few months the silence has been broken. Three and one half million people poured into the streets and no one will ever be able to put them back to the starting point or stop them any longer.” These words are the strength of the people and are similar to the Persian expression ... *like a glass of water, once the water is lost to the ground it can never be put back into the glass.*

In the last 6 months Iranians in Iran showed the world their need to be separated from the acts and people who run the government. They are individuals. Unfortunately, most of the world has not been able to see this, nor have they seen the real Iranian. This may be due to their lack of interest and ignorance to a world outside their borders or their opinion has been based on propaganda fed to them by their governments and media. The media did a fine job covering the events of June, but as soon as the story failed to bring the audience, it was dropped and so to the education of the masses. I believe if non-Iranians were continually educated on the Iranian accomplishments, history and true makeup of the Iranian they would look at us differently and give us the respect deserved. Perhaps then we would not be the constant subject of ridicule, harassment and discrimination. An example of this happened recently during a basketball game with the Memphis Grizzly's, for which Hamed Haddadi plays. In a few minutes of exchange between veteran announcers Ralph Lawler and Mike Smith, a monumental moment for the first Iranian to play in the NBA turned into an arena of ridicule.

Smith: “Look who’s in.”

Lawler: “Hammad Haddadi. Where’s he from?”

Smith: “He’s the first Iranian to play in the NBA.” (Smith pronounced Iranian as “Eye-ranian,” a pronunciation that offended the viewer who complained.)

Lawler: “There aren’t any Iranian players in the NBA, repeating Smith’s mispronunciation.

Smith: “he’s the only one.”

Lawler: “He’s from Iran?”

Smith: “I guess so.”

Lawler: “That Iran?”

Smith: “I guess so.”

Lawler: “The real Iran?”

Smith: “Yes.”

Lawler: “Wow, Haddadi – that’s H-A-D-D-A-D-I.”

Smith: “You sure it is not Borat’s older brother?”

Smith: “If they ever make a movie about Haddadi, I’m going to get Sacha Baron Cohen to play the part.”

Lawler: “Here’s Haddadi. Nice little back-door pass. I guess those Iranians can pass the ball.”

Smith: “Especially the post players.”

Lawler: “I don’t know about their guards.”

Their ignorant remarks and behavior continued until some brave viewers contacted the station. As a result the two were suspended for 24 hours, hardly sufficient. Many Iranian-Americans protested against their behavior but there were those who took the comments much too lightly, “I am Iranian and the person who complained should get a sense of humor. I don’t even understand what could be offensive. Haddadi is the only Iranian in the NBA. Haddadi does look a little like Sasha Baron Cohen whose mother is of Persian decent,” this was posted by someone on the internet. I do not believe this person understands the significance of these sportscasters’ statements. If times were different and Iranians were no longer struggling for their rightful place in society and in Iran we could all laugh at these statements. But presently spoken, they do nothing but reinforce an image of Iranians we so desperately need to remove. These sportscasters would never have thought to make such statements towards an African-American, Jewish-American, Spanish –American or any other ethnic group with a powerful political support group. Their remarks would not be tolerated and would result in a more severe punishment than a 24-hour suspension and the media would hold onto the story forever.

I naively believe that if these announcers were educated on the impact Iranians have had on the world and their contributions and values given to the United States, that such statements would not have been made. **Are they aware** that between 70-80 Iranian-American scientists work for NASA, 43% of NASA’s researches are of Iranian decent and 11 Iranian-Americans hold the highest professional levels in NASA? (It is interesting to note the reaction of my friend and colleague, Kuorosh Kalhor, in hearing these stats... “I don’t know if I am to be proud of these statistics or sad for the loss of intelligence from Iran’s own soil.”) **Are they aware** that an NPR report put the Iranian population of Beverly Hills at 20% of the total population? **Are they aware** that the majority of the Iranian born has a bachelor’s degree or higher and that according to a 2000 Census, 50.9 % of Iranian immigrants have attained a bachelor’s degree or higher, compared to 24.0% among the total foreign-born population, one in four Iranian-Americans holds a master’s or doctoral degree, the highest rate among 67 ethnic groups studied? **Are they aware** Iranian immigrants are among the top 20 immigrant groups with the highest rate of business ownership, substantially contributing to the U.S. economy? **Are they aware** that almost one in three Iranian-American house-

holds have annual incomes of more than \$100,000 dollars? **Are they aware** that according to a study carried out by MIT, Iranian scientists and engineers in the U.S. own or control around \$880 billion in capital? **Are they aware** that presently there are about 5,000 Iranian physicians working in the U.S. who have their own practices or work with medical institutions? **Are they aware** that in 2001, it was estimated that the total number of Iranian professors who teach and research in higher educational institutions is over 4,000?

With these statistics should the derogatory statements by these sportscasters be blamed on their individual ignorance and lack of education or on the anger and revenge sought against Iranians because of events that occurred over thirty years ago? I believe that if Americans were not constantly reminded of the hostage situation this revenge would have faded. The acts of individuals during the hostage crisis in 1979 were a reaction to angry sentiments and propaganda. Americans are not allowed to forget the images of the hostage crisis. These images are constantly run on television. The circumstances of today are based on actions from years ago, acts of a government in control, one that continues to control and cloud the humanitarian and cultural contributions of Iranians throughout history. Recently a major network, on the anniversary of the hostage crisis, Hostage's Today was aired. It showed savage demonstrations by students and their storming the walls of the U.S. Embassy. It showed the taking as an attack against the U.S. not against the embassy and that every embassy attacked on foreign soil should be equated to an attack against the government. It showed Americans blindfolded and handcuffed. There is no question that these actions by the government were reprehensible. But, should the acts of 444 days, be allowed to continue to cloud the growth of Iranians who were not involved in these acts and who are desperately fighting to reenter society? Should these 444 days of action of a state continue to negatively impact the lives of Iranians all over the world? There was a loss to Iran of 8 to 10 billion dollars in Iranian assets, which were confiscated in the U.S. by the American government. This was punishment enough for the burning of the American flag and "Death to America" slogans. And certainly the eight-year war between Iraq and Iran, that resulted in millions killed or maimed and an economy in turmoil was punishment enough for 444 days.

Maybe when Hamed Haddadi took the court, these sportscasters remembered the images of the hostage crisis and this caused their ridicule of Hamed. Perhaps they were shocked to learn an Iranian had the ability to pass a ball behind his back. Watching this ridicule by the announcers reminded me of an incident some thirty years ago. I was watching a boxing match between an American army boxer and an Iranian army boxer. The Iranian was obviously the superior contender, but the power of his punch was described by the announcer as a savage blow, while the American's punches were described as precise and powerful. This description was followed by words of pride for the American's superiority and bravery. The American did win by a point and the announcer of course was proud to say how great a champion the American was against his savage Iranian competitor. I became extremely upset by the words and prejudice of this announcer's description of the Iranian boxer. I wanted to smash the television to release my frustrations against his words.

Yes, the insults we have heard against Iranians may be the result of anger and revenge against the Iranian government's behavior, but why must this anger be imposed on the innocent people who share nothing with their government? How can we educate

people to separate a government's actions and the actions of its politicians from the innocent citizens?

Are we our worse enemies? Has our coolness and indifference to harassment and ethnic slurs allowed the Iranian community to become easy victims? Are there other ethnic and immigrant groups in the U.S. who control over \$880 billion dollars of American capital, hold 4,000 professorship positions and 43% of NASA research positions? Should we as a group show indifference to these racist remarks Haddadi received just because it was not directed at us individually and therefore would not be our business to interfere? No other ethnic group would react in this manner. A racial slur against the individual is considered a racial slur against their entire community. Remember a few years ago when a member of the Jerry Seinfeld's cast used racial slurs against the Afro-American community in his comedy act? The reaction of Afro-American community and American community that the Afro-Americans have educated against such intolerance resulted in his act being terminated and forced his appearance on a number of television programs to publically apologize. It is only strong reaction to public derogatory statements that will help us gain respect. Insensitivity of individuals is the breeding ground for mass hatred. There were young sports fans watching this game and Haddadi play. They were there to see a new sports hero in the making and oblivious to his ethnicity. They just wanted to see his talent and their new founded idol. Instead they learned in those few simple minutes to describe him as *Eye-ranian* and compare him to the silly character in Borat. What a shame!

Some of you may think I too have over reacted, I believe not. Now is not the time for any of us to take such comments against fellow Iranians here or abroad lightly. To do so is turning a blind eye against the Neda's in Iran who fight every day to be delivered from oppression and worldwide ridicule. Some may say that my severe reaction to such statements goes against the spirit of freedom of speech, fought so hard to achieve. To them I say that freedom of speech does not include discriminating against the innocent. Nothing is gained from such statements like those of the sportscasters, except hatred and the affirmation of our portrayal in media propaganda. I therefore ask all of you, Iranians and non-Iranians who agree, to put aside your indifference and silence and fight future injustices against the Iranian and Iranian-American community. Let us work like a few other Iranian-American organizations that immediately stepped up to the plate and broke their silence in defense of Hamed Haddadi and against a mere 24-hour suspension of the sportscasters.

In order to protect our integrity, as vibrant citizens in America and abroad, we may have to spend money to make media appearances to educate our fellow citizens on the true nature and contributions of Iranians to the world and Iranian-Americans to the U.S. Because of the political climate and the recent animosity against Iran's regime the task will be difficult, but it is a task worthy of our time, dedication and resources. Its' success will yield a brighter future for generations to come, here and abroad. Every day, in every way possible, let us teach our neighbor, coworker and friend that the Iranian is not the government of Iran. In every way we can let's show the world that the Iranian is a peace loving, gifted and talented individual that wants to be defined by their individual accomplishments, groups accomplishments and contributions to society, not by a government who has caused such deep scars in our history and hampered our growth.

I can say no more.

Shahksh Akbari

**IRANIAN SCHOLAR
DECLINES FARABI AWARD**

Source: Radio Zamaneh, 21 November 2009



Mohammadreza Hakimi-Iranian scholar Mohammadreza Hakimi declined the achievement award offered to him by the third Farabi International Award in Iran, in protest to the “poverty and the visible and invisible deprivation” in Iranian society. Mr. Hakimi told Award organizers

that he believes holding such ceremonies when “poverty and deprivation” are rampant in Iran are of the least priority.

Mohammadreza Hakimi is amongst 50 scholars and researchers in the human sciences and Islamic studies who are being commended and awarded by the Farabi Award.

In his letter of refusal, Mr. Hakimi states: “In this Award ceremony, scholars and experts are being honoured for fifty years of service to the human sciences. The question is, are sciences only there to be recorded in books and exist only in the mind or rather to serve humanity and guard human rights in the real world?” He also emphasizes that “we must try to make sure that in our society the two concepts of ‘human’ and ‘humanity’ do not get lost: the first, in the streets and the other,

in books.” Mohammadreza Hakimi is a prominent scholar in Mashad who has written numerous books on religious thought and theosophy.

FARABI INTERNATIONAL AWARD

The International Farabi Award was established three years ago by Iran’s Ministry of Science, Research and Technology to honour scholars and researchers in the field of humanities as well as Iranian and Islamic culture and civilizations both in Iran and all over the world.

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The explosion of Craigslist’s online classifieds. The death of Napster. The “Twitter Revolution” in Iran.

Iranian election protests (2009): When Iran’s power structure announced dubious results from its presidential election, the opposition took to social networking and the “Twitter Revolution” was born. The Web let protesters beam images from the chaotic country at a time when mainstream media outlets had been severely hampered. Twitter became so fundamental in spreading news of the protests that followed that the U.S. State Department asked the company to delay a planned shutdown for maintenance, the Webby’s note. (CNN, November 18, 2009)

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AN OPEN LETTER TO PRESIDENT OBAMA

OCTOBER 11, 2009

by: Arash Hejazi

Mr. President Obama,

It's the Persian Gulf. Please don't step on a nation's dreams. Your Excellency, President Obama, first of all, I would like to seize this opportunity to congratulate you for your Noble Peace Prize. I really hope this prize can get your message through to the hearts and minds that are sealed with hatred and lust for power.

I am Arash Hejazi. You might have heard my name before, as I am the doctor who tried to save Neda Agha-Soltan, the young woman who was shot during the peaceful demonstration against the frauds in the Iranian elections, the same woman you have mentioned twice in your speeches in the last four months.

I am the one who left his country to bear witness to the absolute cruelty and injustice that ended up in the death of that innocent girl who was shot in the chest by an Iranian pro-government militiaman and bled to death under my eyes.

Mr. President,

I was there when Neda died. I made sure that the world saw the look in her eyes just before she died. I testified about the circumstances of her death, so that every tyrant in the world would know that there is always someone watching.

She died for a reason there; she died for a dream at a time when all dreams were shattered.

She died to bring back dignity to a country that was becoming one of the most hated states in the world.

She tried to show the world that

Iran was not about nuclear activities, terrorism and fundamentalism, but about believing in dreams, courage, dignity, unconditional love, and paying any price necessary to get one step closer to freedom.

Her death introduced anew the purity of a three thousand year old nation to the world.

I have lost everything since I bore witness to this crime, I have lost my career, my decent life in Iran, my family security, my safety, my country, and now I am on my own in this large world, without money, without a job, and with a family to support.

But I don't regret what I have done and I would have done it again if the clock turned back; although the world watched that innocent look in Neda's eyes and did nothing.

Millions of people shed tears, but no one did anything. As usual, everybody watched, they cursed the tyrant, they blessed the martyr, but no one took a step to support a nation that has been the homeland to the first declaration of human rights.

Nevertheless, I am not writing this letter because I want you to do something.

No, the people of Iran will fight and gain their freedom without asking for the help of any authority in the world.

What makes me compelled to write to you is that although we don't need anyone's support, we appreciate if the world does not try to distort the truth.

Neda did not die for a country, but for a dream called Iran.

One of the major symbols of Iran in

the hearts of the Iranians is the Persian Gulf, a beautiful gulf in the Middle East that in your speech, you have referred to as 'The Gulf'.

Mr. President,

The Persian Gulf has been called the Persian Gulf BC by Daryus the Great and Herodotus in the fifth century; by Claudius Ptolemaeus in the second century BC and by Quintus Curtius Rufus in the first century AD, and its official name is still the 'Persian Gulf'.

The United Nations has issued two editorial directives in which the states have been asked to only use "Persian Gulf" as the official and standard geographical designation for the body of water.

The implication of Neda in your speech was heart-warming for the Iranian Nation; however, when you omit the word 'Persian' from the Persian Gulf, you are stepping on the dreams of Neda and a nation that have nothing left but their dignity and their dreams.

I am sure that you have no intention of stripping a nation from what is rightfully theirs.

I have lost everything for a dream, and I believe that you Mr. President are one of the few politicians left in the world who still believe in dreams.

I salute you and I wish you the very best in the long journey ahead of you.

I hope you too wish the best for a nation that is struggling towards its dream, for freedom and prosperity, amidst the blood of its loved ones.

Sincerely yours,
Arash Hejazi

Neda Agha-Soltan Graduate Scholarship



Queen's College at the University of Oxford is delighted to announce that, thanks to two generous gifts, it has been able to establish a graduate scholarship in Philosophy in memory of Neda Agha-Soltan, the 27-year-old Iranian philosophy student who was killed in Tehran on June 20th, during the protests over the outcome of the 2009 Iranian presidential election.

Commenting on the scholarship, the Provost, Professor Paul Madden, said, 'Oxford is increasingly losing out to its competitors in the race to recruit top graduate students. Donations such as those that have enabled us to create the Neda Agha-Soltan Scholarship are absolutely vital for us to continue to attract and retain the best young minds.'

The first holder of the scholarship is Arianne Shahvisi, who has just joined the College and is studying for an M.St. in the Philosophy of Physics. Arianne writes that 'It is a great honour to be the first student to receive the scholarship in the memory of Neda Agha-Soltan, which is particularly meaningful to me, being a young woman of Iranian descent, also studying philosophy. In accepting the scholarship, I extend my sincere condolences to the Agha-Soltan family, and hope that in succeeding in my studies at Oxford, I can do justice to the name of their brave and gifted daughter.'

THE VERY PROMISING BEGINNING: AN ON SCENE REPORT

David A. Yazdan

Ladies and Gentleman to say that I was surprised in September, in front of the United Nations, to see the demonstrations against Ahmadinejad, would be an understatement. The area was so crowded it was so hard to get from the sidewalk to the area that we were supposed to make speeches and chant various slogans. However, when I arrived it was very early and we were not due up to the microphone until at least 11 o'clock. I saw a huge picture of Kadofi and the police and security people were all over. Fortunately all that finished by 12:00. Then we had another group right at the beginning of the entrance at First Avenue. This group, the green group who were against Ahmadinejad but in favor of Moosavi, was trying to keep the Islamic Republic in place. This was hard for me to believe, I did not understand how anyone who calls himself Iranian would go half way to rescue our Nation. But anyway, after a while all that finished. but then we had a huge group which was pretty organized which replaced them. These were the MKA or the so-called Mujahedins. This group was more organized and they were well dressed. Their platform was elevated and there was strict discipline in them that very frankly impressed me and several of my friends, unlike what we did in front of them closer to First Avenue. I was very happy to see so many enthusiastic people from all over the world joining us to support of our bereaved nation.

The problem was that each group wanted to have its own microphone and its own time to speak and this was not exactly what we had planned. We had a meeting about this at least a week prior to the event, which in retrospect was not enough time at all. At that meeting we managed to raise some money for our group directed by Mr. Javid to pay for the loud speakers and other equipment, at the same time we had a list of the speakers, about 10. Each were to have four minutes in a 1 1/2 hour time period. Of course, this plan never materialized. There was a lack of discipline all over the place and it was very difficult to hear the speakers because there were simultaneous speaking going on both on our left, right and behind us. As if this was not bad enough, our own people had their own loud speakers and were chanting different slogans. I was appointed as one of the speakers to speak about four minutes, but a few people snuck in before me.

By the time it was my turn I could not get a word in because it was so noisy. There were a couple of other incidences that were quite undesirable and unexpected to see from this very educated group of people. Mr. Javid, who we put in charge of the speech making, had a very unenviable job because our platform was low. He could not keep the people with their signs and posters away from the platform when he went to the left and asks the guy to please step down the other guy from the right goes up and then when he went to the right the guy from the back would come up and it was really a very distressing situation, which is so regrettable.

I believe part of the problem was our fault because the whole thing was not planned according to the magnitude of the event. That platform actually should have been elevated and we should have had at least 8 marshals around it to prevent different people from interfering with the speakers. As if that were not bad enough there were two cameras in front recording the speakers that were being blocked by posters.

Despite the chaos and mistakes I am proud that we had a good showing. We let the people and the world know how we feel about Ahmadinejad and Ali Khamenei. One of the chants and slogans that I liked the most was as follows:

NO MORE AYATOLLAH!! NO MORE HOJJATOLLAH!!
NO MORE AYATOLLAH!! NO MORE HOJJATOLLAH!!

MARG BAR AYATOLLAH!! MARG BAR HOJOTOLLAH!!
MARG BAR AYATOLLAH!! MARG BAR HOJOTOLLAH!!

This parallel could very well be drawn between these two concepts that seem to be inherently different. Let us first see how the Islamic Republic of Iran has captured world's attention in offering a unique form of government in not only the non-Islamic countries but also in the very fundamental Muslim countries. It is known from the study of Koran that the concept of Supreme Leader or "VELAYAT-E'-FAGHIH" does not really exist in Islam and that both prophet Mohammad and prophet Mi encouraged their successors to depend on "BAY-AT" or "people's vote" in order to govern effectively. However, this notion of democratically elected leader was redefined by ayatollah Khomeini during the early years of Iranian revolution back in 1979. Based on his fundamental Islamic belief he had the opinion that democracy results in the people's distrust and disrespect of governments or religious sanctity. The distrust and disrespect pervades to all parts of society whenever and wherever there is seniority and juniority for example between a parent and a child, a teacher and a student. Among Islamic scholars, it is argued that moral decay occurs when there is no longer a respectable leader who sets high moral standards and when a politically free environment creates excessive individuality. Also, when the borderline between thought and Feeling becomes blur and ideas and contemplations become motivations and actions a democratic society is going to experience political insecurity and/or social detriments. Political lobbying is a major problem in forming democratic governments' unpopular decisions, such as USA's policies toward Israel or the support of old Apartheid Regime in South Africa. Pornography, unregulated advocacy for alcohol and tobacco, as well as many other forms of social perversions are prime examples of the so-called "excessive individuality". This was why Ayatollah Khomeini created the term Supreme Leader and defined its qualities as the wisest and noblest man of the society who is the only one eligible to make non-refutable decisions in order to effectively govern. Now, let us examine and search history for the authenticity of his idea of Supreme Leader.

Historically, the first time anyone spoke of "Philosopher King" or "Supreme Leader" or the "Wisest Man" was more than 2500 years ago. It was Cyrus the Great and his Zarathustrian supporters who defined the King of any land to be the wisest and the most supreme man in quality. In fact, the formation of Persian Empire was not coincidental at all for there were three giant and unpopular Empires prior to Cyrus's reign, namely the Egyptian, Assyrian, and Babylonian. All these regimes proved to be based in tyranny and ultimately lead to mobs ruling the societies. In order for a new Empire to emerge it had to be militarily capable and ideologically supreme. The Persians carefully designed their Empire to spread efficiently and be able to sustain the control of new territories. Cyrus created the biggest and shrewdest army of the time by employing more than 10000 soldiers who underwent extreme military training giving rise to the most effective military on this planet. But he also appointed some of the most prominent Zarathustrian theologists to government's positions.

These clergies occupied important posts like administrative and judicial. The so-called Zarathustrian Parsas were visible in Persian Empire on all levels and helped in decision-making and the transfer of power in new territories as best and as fair as possible. In a very organized manner this treatment became the framework for morality and human rights within the Persian Empire by recognizing minority rights as well as religious freedom. Cyrus the Great is truly history's first King Philosopher or Supreme Leader who did not necessarily define himself as a philosopher. This is because the Persians did not have anything called philosophy or "love of wisdom"; instead they had theology or knowing "the way of God". Formal philosophy and its dialectical methodology employed by the Atomists came to existence about 100 years later between 300 and 400 B.C. It was in Plato's "The Republic" written in 380 B.C., under the section called "The dialectical forms of government" that one can find the following: "Plato argues that only Kallipolis, an aristocracy lead by the unwilling philosopher-kings (the wisest men) is a just form of government. The other forms of government place too much focus on lesser virtues, and degenerate into each other from best to worst, starting with Timocracy, which overvalues honor. There then comes Oligarchy, overvaluing wealth, which is followed by Democracy. In Democracy, the oligarchs, or merchant, are unable to wield

their power effectively and the people take over, electing someone who plays on their wishes, by throwing lavish festivals etc. However, the government grants the people too much freedom, and the state degenerates into the fourth form, Tyranny/mob rule. Here I would like to examine Ayatollah Khomeini's state of consciousness with respect to historical past. He belonged to an elite

Muslim society in Qom, Iran, and then he served as an Islamic scholar in Najaf, Iraq, while he was in exile for 15 years. He was active and wrote in the 1960-70s as an intellectual that puts him about 25 centuries ahead of Cyrus and Plato. A scholarly logical conclusion would be that a man of that intellectual stature living in contemporary times must have studied both of these historical figures or at least have been familiar with their ideas. Furthermore, Mr. Khomeini was of Iranian descent that enhanced his access to historical truth in a more direct and rudimentary way. Also, from a politically strategic point of view he could have simply utilized this Old Iranian obsession with Kingdom and the role of its King Philosopher to his benefit for gaining more social support. In most ancient Iranian communities the concept of a King penetrated more than their minds but also their souls and spirits to the point of believing in him as their God. A King being thought of as the Supreme Man or the Wisest Man is a mythological practice dating back to millennia of human struggle for achieving morality. This is why I think that the idea of "Supreme Leader" in a land governed by Islamic law could not be more Iranian than it already uniquely is.

SOURCES

The Republic, Plato; Social History of Iran, Morteza Ravandi

**PHILOSOPHER KING
OR
SUPREME LEADER**

Author: Firooz Yazdi

PERSIAN AMERICANS STATS

According to extrapolated 2000 U.S. Census data and other independent surveys done by Iranian-Americans themselves, there are an estimated 1-1.5 million Iranian-Americans living in the U.S. in 2009, with the largest concentration – about 72,000 people – being in Los Angeles.

An NPR report recently put the Iranian population of Beverly Hills as high as 20% of the total population.

Iranian communities in the U.S. also have varying religious populations among each city.

Other large communities include New York; New Jersey; Washington D.C.; Seattle, Washington; and Houston, Texas.

The majority of the Iranian born had a bachelor's degree or higher.

According to Census 2000, 50.9 percent of Iranian immigrants have attained a bachelor's degree or higher, compared to 24.0 percent among the total foreign-born population.

According to the latest census data available, more than one in four Iranian-Americans holds a master's or doctoral degree, the highest rate among 67 ethnic groups studied.

The Small Business Administration (SBA) recently conducted a study that found Iranian immigrants among the top 20 immigrant groups with the highest rate of business ownership, contributing substantially to the U.S. economy.

Almost one in three Iranian American households have annual incomes of more than \$100K (compared to one in five for the overall U.S. population).

According to a study carried out by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Iranian scientists and engineers in the United States own or control around \$880 billion

At present, there are about 5,000 Iranian physicians working in the United States who have their own practice and/or work in medical institutions.

In 2001, it was estimated that the total number of Iranian professors who teach and research in higher education institutions in the United States was about 4,000.

CONTROVERSIAL IRANIAN FLAG

By Susan Safa

Throughout history national flags have been a sign of a country's pride and place in the world, its origins and its future. The flag of the United States still carries its original 13 red and white stripes representing the original 13 colonies. The large red disc in the center of the Japanese flag dates back to 607 when Prince Shotoku referred to Japan as the land of the rising sun.

Traditionally the flag of Iran is green, white and red with a gold lion and sun gracing its center. The color green symbolizes the beauty of nature, as well as being a sacred color in Islam. White represents peace, friendship and purity from the material world. The red stands for the nation's independence and integrity. The flag's center symbol dates back 2,500 years ago to stone carvings in the walls of Persepolis of a peaceful spirit riding upon a lion as the sun illuminates from behind. The lion symbolizes strength while the sun represents light, warmth and the source of energy. The Shir-eh-khorsid (lion and sun) represent not a government but the great people of Iran.

With the 1979 invasion of the Islamic republic in Iran the lion and sun were ripped from the heart of the flag soon to be replaced with calligraphic Arabic word for "Allah." Iranians now continue to debate over the future of their flag. There is a group that continues to wave the traditional lion adorned flag. Some carry a red, white and green flag without any center design representing a separation from any government. Others carry a solid green flag representing a complete change. If rifts between the flag continue, freedom seeking Iranians will separate into groups thus losing their strength and unity. One Iranian dissident, Farbod, states: "We need more unity. The youth have united against Ahmadinejad and Khamenei but we still need a leader. We need a goal. We need an aim."

England has survived for centuries due largely in part to loyalty from its people. Countrymen put aside their individual passions to support the king. In the United States there are Republicans and Democrats, both groups unite to support the good of their country. If Iranians can't agree to unite under a flag, can they expect to unite as a country? A nation's inheritance is eternally represented through its values and symbols. The Persian lion is a symbol of courage and magnificence, a symbol all Iranians must stand behind and gather strength from.

An Interview with

BRENDEN HAMILTON

Filmmaker and Citizen Diplomat

BY: BRIAN H. APPLETON

PART TWO

When did you shoot this film and how long did it take?

I shot the film in 2006 and it took a couple of years to complete it, including all the editing, narrations... At first I had a rather didactic segment about going into a culture shock upon my return home and the 24-hour news cycle. What I mean by 24-hour news cycle is the way in which old news goes stale in 24 hours and people can't remember what happened last week let alone one, five, or 100 years ago. The media seldom puts anything into historical perspective so people may not have a good idea of why certain events are taking place. In the end, we chose to make the film more subtle and stay out of divisive political rhetoric as much as possible.

I was at your San Jose movie premiere and lucky to get in as there was standing room only. The film made me weep because it did such an effective job of portraying what marvelous humanity exists there which was my experience as well. I was so impressed that I immediately called Jerry Dekker from the parking lot to tell him how great it was and what a star he had been and I e-mailed Farzaneh in Tehran to tell her the same thing when I got back to my lap top. What was your favorite part of the film?

There were so many great moments that I could talk about.

Yes like that segment with everybody riding the donkeys.

That again was completely spontaneous. We saw the donkeys alongside the road and pulled over. The owners let us ride them and then we all ended up having lunch together.

Well I could tell you guys were definitely having fun especially the girls.

One of the ladies on our trip ran over and tried to get on a donkey. She had been studying Farsi in school and her language acquisition really blossomed when she was totally immersed in the culture. The donkey owners had been just taking a lunch break when suddenly out of nowhere this American lady was trying to ride their donkeys. It was really quite hysterical.



Another moment in the film which I found interesting was when you ran into a Jamaican Muslim professor at the holy shrine of Hazrat-e-Masoumeh in Qom, who took it upon himself to represent and explain to your small group, the Shiite political perspective and how they view the motives of the West.

I was particularly impressed by how open he was and also the mullahs there in their willingness to discuss politics and world religions with us. They shared their lunch with us and then acted as our tour guides around the shrine.

What are some other memorable high points from the film for you?

When we got to Takht-e-Suleiman, the old Zoroastrian unofficial archeologist and Takht-e-Suleiman guide, Azzi, who had assisted the German archeologists in the original excavation of the site in the 1930's, really struck a cord with me. The Germans at that time of the Nazi era were obsessed with finding their Aryan roots.

Anyway Azzi was still a practicing Zoroastrian and for some reason I just felt really comfortable talking with him and really enjoyed spending time with him. In fact I would consider meeting him the high point of my trip. I just feel like there was a spiritual connection made between us. I felt that there was something extra sacred about that entire site and a lot of energy was emanating from it. He taught me the fundamental principles of Zoroaster which were: Think Well, Speak Well, Do Well and then all your endeavors will be successful because they have the right motivation. I took these words into my heart and they kept me going during the editing and completion of this film once I returned home.

What a moving experience this has been for you, that the very first monotheistic religion could, thousands of years later, exert such an influence over you. In closing I want to thank you very much from my heart for making this film because the cause is the same one which makes me write. I have a deep love for Iran and for peace. I wish you every success and hope and pray that millions of people get to see this film in the West and in Iran and worldwide and whatever I can do to help you promote this film would be my privilege.

I am very grateful for this interview and, for me, the cause is also the most important thing. Peace was the motivation behind the film but the ultimate message is citizen diplomacy. I am hoping to demonstrate it by this film and to inspire ordinary people of every walk of life and nationality, that they have the ability to empower and represent themselves independently of any government and that essentially humanity shares more in common than what divides it. Ultimately this is all about overcoming our fears through healthy dialogue.

In closing how can our readers obtain a DVD copy of your film or go to a screening in a theatre.

For all up-dates on screenings please go to www.iranthemovie.com. Our plan is to have DVD copies available for purchase through our website and other distribution channels within the next few weeks.



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Tajik Speakers of China: HEIR TO AN ANCIENT TRADITION

Few realize that China is host to a small population of Iranian-speakers who are Tajiks akin to those in Tajikistan and fellow-Iranic peoples in Iran, Afghanistan, Caucasia and the Kurds of Iraq, Turkey and Syria.

More research is required in the study of these peoples in China to help address current misconceptions in this domain. As asserted by Dr. William Saffron:

“There is a group of 26,000 Indo-Iranian speakers in China in the Pamirs near the Karakorum highway ... the Chinese government ... calls them Tajiks ... However Tajik is not spoken in China.”

This claim is contradicted by TV programs in Chinese television which show Chinese Tajiks singing in Tajiki (essentially akin to Persian) - kindly consult U-Tube links below:

Chinese-Tajik girl sings a Persian-Tajiki song at China's Shisu University

Tajikan-Tajiks on Chinese TV from Taj Qurghan of China.

Chinese scholars have provided somewhat more accurate information on these Chinese-Tajiks. One example is Dr.'s Du and Yip who note that:

“Most Tajiks in China speak Tajik ...”

The accent of this particular Chinese-Tajiki is phonologically similar to those Persian vernaculars seen in Afghanistan, parts of eastern Khorasan and of course Tajikistan.

Iran and China have enjoyed cultural links harking back to late Achaemenid times (400s to 330 BC). Chinese archaeologists unearthed evidence that non-Chinese workers of Iranian origins helped build the terracotta army mausoleum (near the north-west city of Xian). This is the resting place of China's first emperor, Qin Shi Huang, who died more than 2,200 years ago.

Professor Tan Jingze, an anthropologist with Fudan University, told the Chinese Xinhua News Agency:

“One sample has typical DNA features commonly owned by the Parsi [Zoroastrians] ... the Kurds ... and the Persians in Iran ...”

These finds are highly significant as this strongly suggests that Iranian craftsmen of the Persepolis tradition were present in Qin China. Earlier studies had suggested that the first Chinese-Iranian contacts had occurred later during Han dynasty (206 BC-220 CE).

Some information on

SHIRAZ

**POSTED BY CYRUS COOPER
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Pārs Province is home to three capitals in Persian history. The massive ruins of the Persian Empire's grand palace Persepolis, about 2500 years old, are about 60 km northeast of Shiraz, as a witness to the ancient glory of the Achaemenid empire. Persepolis, Firouzabad, and Pasargadae are nearby ancient cynosures of this ancient civilization.

We know of Shiraz during the Sassanid era, (2nd to 6th century A.D.) as has been written in p126 of Hudud ul-'alam min al-mashriq ila al-maghrib, where two fire temples and a fortress called "Shahmobaad" are reported. Hamdollah Mostowfi also verifies the existence of pre-Islamic settlements in Shiraz in his Nozhat ol-Qolub, p112. Shirāz as a city however began to grow in the 7th century when the power of the former regional capital Istakhr was broken by the Arabs. The major events during and after the Islamic conquest of Iran are:

640-653: Fārs falls to the Arab armies of Umar. Shiraz in 641. Estakhr in 653.

650-869: Seat of the Arab government of Fārs. Controlled from Baghdad with very limited Persian activity. Other towns in the region decline as Shiraz grows with new immigrants. Turkish tribes are brought to the region to serve as soldiers in the Arab army. Descendents of these tribes form ruling dynasties of the region in the next several centuries.

790: Shiraz scholar Sibawayh publishes his writings. This is the first formal basis of Arabic Grammar.



Arg-e Karim Khan-1901



Shiraz Today

869: Saffarid dynasty leader Yaqub Leis liberates Shiraz. Baghdad Caliphate rule weakened. Many Arabs and Turks in the city are eliminated but a significant number choose to stay in Shiraz, as they have adopted Persian culture.

c870: Amr-o-Leis Saffari (Yaqub's brother) builds a mosque in Shiraz, that is still standing today (Masjed Jaume).

933: Shiraz is Capital of the Buyidid dynasty. Becomes cultural center under Emdad-al-dowleh, first Buyid Amir.

937: Buyids eventually bring down the Caliphate of Baghdad and Shiraz gains international prominence. Literature, science, art and culture are promoted. Religious minorities are treated well. Christians, Jews and Zoroastrians are among the ministers and consultants of the Buyid Amirs.

c950: Subterranean canal made in the mountains to bring fresh water to the city by Rokn-al-dawleh, Emdad's brother. The stream (called Abeh Rokni) still runs today, and is immortalized in poetry of Shiraz.

c1000: First wall built around Shiraz due to attacks by Seljuk Turks, (see also Turkmens). The Seljuks were supported by the Damascuss based remainder of the Caliphate, against the Buyids.

c1010: Over the next 50 years this war, as well as internal feuds among the Buyids destroys much of the city.

1062: City is eventually captured by Seljuks, However, to the dismay of the Caliphate, the new rulers quickly adopt the Persian culture and many settle in Shiraz. The Seljuks actually become great patrons of Persian art and culture, as they build a great empire.

c1075: Shiraz is rebuilt to splendor by Seljuk Attabak Jalal-ed-din and his sons. Development attracts new immigrants from all corners of Persia, as well as Central Asia.

1090: Revolts within the Seljuk army are prompted and supported by Damascuss and Baghdad as the First Crusade weakens the Seljuk military might, and empire. Successful rebels in Shiraz are the Songhorid Turks.

1100: Shiraz becomes capital of the Songhorid dynasty of Turkish origin (Attabak-ane Fars).

1100: Although they promote Sunni Islam on behalf of Baghdad, the Songhorid also eventually become die hard Persians. They settle in and rebuild Shiraz as their home.

1105: A wall is restored to encircle the city with Eight gates. Influence of the Baghdad Caliphate is contained to mostly ceremonial terms.

c1110: Hanafi sect of the Sunni Muslims rule the region from Shiraz. Although Judaism, Christianity and Zoroastrianism

Bahg Takht-1895



are still freely practiced among a large minority in the city and the region. This tolerance promotes another migration wave into the city and the region. Many tribes of Turkish and Cacauss regions move to Shiraz, and surrounding areas. Many still live in the region (Qashqai, Lurs).

c1115: Shiraz is a center of the pious and the Jurists of the nation. Number of religious shrines ae built, many of which are still standing, among them: Masjid Atiq, Masjid Now.

1170: Sheikh Ruzbehan (1128-1209), establishes own Sufi sect in Shiraz.

1150-1195: Decline of Shiraz as dynastic feuds among the various ruling tribes and a famine ruin the city.

1195: Saad ibn Zangi, a local Attabak, establishes rule and restores the city.

c1200 Moaref-al-Din Mosal-leha (1184-1291) chooses the pen name Saadi in the honor of the fair ruler Saad ibn Zangi.

1280 Shiraz saved from Mongol invasion by diplomacy of Abu Bakr ibn Saad. Genghis Khan is so enamored by the Persian ruler that names him Ktlug Khan and considers him a friend.

1281: Grave site of Ahmad-ibn-Musa (son of the 7th imam of the shiites) is identified by Amir Moqarrab-alDin a Vazir of Abu Bakr, during excavation for a palace.

1282: A shrine is built on the grave site. Today it is the holiest Muslim site in the city and the region, (Shah Cheragh).

1284: Decline of Shiraz due to the high Taxes imposed by Mongols. Corruption and feuds resume.

1287: Drought and Famine kills approximately 100,000 people in Shiraz.

1291: Saadi dies and is buried in his garden next to an artesian well. Currently the beautiful gardens are a major tourist attraction, with a still flowing well and stream next to Saadi's tomb.

1297: Measles and Plague kill another 50,000 people in Shiraz and surrounding area.

1297: Female ruler Aubee Khatton and her daughter Kurdujin save lives and the city by their charitable foundations. They were Songhorid matrons who had married into the Mongols.

1304: Injuids dynasty takes over and rebuild Shiraz, but their in-fighting eventually causes more destruction..

1325: Ilkhanate period. Their rule is marked by warfare and destruction.

1353: Muzaffarids rulers captures Shiraz. Once again Shiraz is the capital for Persia.

c1350: Traveler Ibn Battuta visits Shiraz and documents a great city, rich with gardens, streams, bazzars, and cleanly clothed people.

1357: Muzaffarid Shah Shuja takes reign and revives the city.

1360: Hafez (1310-1380) is patronized by Shah Shuja and settles in Bage-Mossalla where he establishes a great following. His tomb in the same garden is a revered and major tourist attraction for world travelers and Iranians alike.

1382: Shah Shuja gives Timur's army with gifts and saves the city from Pillage again.*1384: After the death of Shah Shuja in-fighting flares up among the Muzaffarids and leads to several battles in Shiraz and eventual city decline.

1387: Shiraz is occupied for a short period by Timur.

1393: Timur occupies Shiraz for the second time. He appoints his grandson who has adopted the Persian culture as governor. Rebuilding of the city resumes.

1400: Shiraz is known as the city of SAADI and HAFEZ. Their tombs, still intact today, become shrines.

1410: Shiraz prospers with a population of 200,000. For a few years it is the capital of the Turkmen Aq Qoyunlu rulers.

1470: Mongols and Turkmen, the invaders, are soon ousted from the city.

1503: Saffavid ruler Shah Ismaeel captures Shiraz and kills or exiles most Sunni leaders to promote Shiism.

1550: Allah-verdi Khan and his son Emam-Qoli-Khan governors of the Saffavid rebuild city.

1575: Shiite followers grow in numbers, schools and shrines are built. Many are still standing, Madrese Khan.

c1590: Period of relative prosperity. Arts flourish. Shiraz artists and craftsmen are famous and utilized worldwide. See Taj Mahal

c1600: Shiraz wine discovered by the British and reported to be one of the best in the world.

1621: British and French merchants frequent the city. Grapes are taken to Europe.

1630: A flood destroys large parts of the town.

1634: Mulla Sadra, a well known philosopher from Shiraz is prosecuted for heretical writings and opinions. He promotes the idea of a free thinking Moslem and writes against the prac-

Zand Street, 1911



tice of blindly following the edicts of the clergy (Thaghlid).

1668: Another flood hits Shirāz.

1724: Sunni Militia from rebellious province of Herat in Eastern Iran (now part of Afghanistan) march towards the Capital of Isfahan. Young Zoroastrians from Kerman accompany them to revenge the massacre of Zoroastrians of Isfahan at the hands of Sultan Hussain, the last King of the Safavid dynasty. Isfahan falls, and Hussain is beheaded. Then the Afghans accompanied by Zoroastrians from Kerman march on Shirāz and take the city.

1744: Nader Shah of the Afsharid dynasty captures Shiraz. Large sections of the city destroyed during wars.

1747-1800: Three way power struggle in Iran between Afsharid dynasty, Zand, and the Qajars

1760: Karim Khan Zand moves to Shiraz and takes the title People's Representative, (Vakil-ol-Roaya). He establishes the Zand Dynasty.

1766: Shirāz becomes capital of the Zand dynasty. City is rebuilt. Structured into 11 quarters (10 Muslim and one Jewish). Huge moat and wall surround the city, with six gates. Culture, Arts and minorities flourish.

1791: End of the Zand dynasty, and Shirāz' status as capital.

1794: Shiraz captured by Agha Mohammad Khan Qajar, pillaged and destroyed.

1800: Decline of the city under the Qajar dynasty

1822: Plague and Cholera epidemics kill thousands.

1824: An earthquake destroys parts of the town.

1830: Plague of locusts destroys the crops, local agriculture and creates famine. Tens of thousands die and many more move out of the city. Population decreases to only about 19000 by diseases and outmigration.

1844: A young merchant, Sayyid `Alí Muhammad and given the title of 'The Báb' (Arabic, meaning 'The Gate'), declared His Messianic mission and founded the Bábí Faith.

1853: Another major earthquake hits Shirāz.

1860: British influence prevails in southern Iran and Shiraz. The British are actively opposed by the native Qashqai tribes in the mountains outside the city.

1880: Qavam family suppresses local unrests with the help of the British Indian Riflemen.

1883: First official census shows a population of 53,607.

1907: Sur-e Esrafil, a widely circulated newspaper published in Shiraz by Mirza Jahangir Khan Shirazi, supports the Persian Constitutional Revolution. Qashqai leaders support Mirza Jahangir Khan in revolt against the government.

1908: Mirza Jahangir Khan is executed and his paper shut down.

1911: Seyyed Zia'eddin Tabatabaee, a local shiite leader publishes newspaper Banaye-Islam with the help of the British consulate in Shiraz.

1918: Qashqai tribesmen with leader Naser Khan besiege the city. Central government power declines in Iran. British influence increases with the discovery of oil. They help local associates to suppress tribal revolts throughout the region.

1919: Influenza epidemic kills 10,000. Iran is falling apart with Russian and British invasions from the north and south respectively. Shiraz belongs to the British.

1921: Qajar dynasty ends. Reza Shah Pahlavi takes over, with Seyyed Zia'eddin Tabatabaee at his side.

1945: Shirāz University opens.

2005: Census reports show a population of 1,255,955.

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Taking the Capital Out of a City

Is Tehran coming to the end of its days as a capital city?

TAKEN FROM: B.B.C



Iran's rulers are considering plans to relocate the country's capital. They say Tehran is in danger of being struck by a major earthquake. So how easy is it to move a capital out of a city, and where might Iran's go? Penny Spiller reports.

Tehran is a sprawling metropolis at the foot of the Alborz mountain range. It is home to some 12 million people, and is the largest city in the Middle East.

Not only is it the political and economic heart of the country, the city has a cosmopolitan air with its museums, art galleries, parks and universities. It has been Iran's capital since 1795.

But now a powerful state body, the expediency council, has approved plans by Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei to end Tehran's days as a capital. These plans are not new. They are part of a long-term strategy to see the capital moved by 2025, and will need approval from many more government bodies before any relocation begins.

The government is said to be reacting to calls from Iranian seismologists, who have long warned that Tehran lies on at least 100 known fault lines, and would not survive a major quake intact.

The devastating earthquake that killed some 40,000 people in the south-eastern city of Bam in 2003 has certainly concentrated minds on the issue. But the timing of this decision - coming as it does months after some of the worst anti-government riots Tehran has ever seen - is interesting, says Dominic Dudley, Deputy Editor of the London-based Middle East Economic Digest.

Tehran is very much a liberal enclave in Iran, he says - and it was many of those liberals who took to the streets complaining of fraud when conservative incumbent Mahmoud Ahmadinejad was declared winner of June's presidential election.

"It is tempting to view anything going on in Iran these days through the lens of that dispute," Mr Dudley told the BBC. "It certainly wouldn't hurt the government to move away from the big centre of liberal protests and opposition".

BUT WHERE WOULD IT MOVE TO?

Iranian seismologist Professor Bahram Akasheh told the Guardian newspaper that a new capital should be built between the holy city of Qom and Delijan, in Markazi province.

This is an area, he said, that has not seen an earthquake in 2,000 years.

However, Qom is the spiritual home of Iran's conservative Islamic establishment. Moving the capital nearer to Qom could

be seen as a sign of the conservatives stamping their authority, says Mr Dudley.

DISTORTED MARKET

Wherever the capital moves to, and for whatever reasons, the government will have some other important considerations to take into account if creating a capital from scratch, says Andrew Jones of the engineering, planning and architectural design firm AECOM. One of the things about a new capital is that it tends to insulate the government from the pressures and influences of the big city

It is all very well moving government buildings and staff, but the new city will flounder if it has no cultural life and its economy is solely driven by the government.

"Generally, our capital cities are economic powerhouses as well as seats of government. That takes a long time to bed in," he told the BBC.

"A new city generally takes 10 to 20 years to build, it takes a century or more to mature into something that is an attractive and self-sustaining place."

Brazil's capital, Brasilia, might be an interesting example for the Iranian authorities to study.

It was built because the coastal location of the old seat of power, Rio de Janeiro, was deemed too far from large swathes of the country. So the new capital was unveiled in a remote part of central Brazil in 1961.

Claudio de Magalhaes, senior lecturer in planning and urban regeneration at the University College of London, said this location suited the military government that came to power three years later. "One of the things about a new capital is that it tends to insulate the government from the pressures and influences of the big city," he said.

"The military government found it very convenient to have the political class away from the city. You don't have any demonstrations on your doorstep. It's very easy to close the airport and access to the city whenever you see fit, which happened in the early days of the government."

In the beginning, Brasilia was inhabited mostly by people whose livelihoods depended on the government. But over the years it grew, and grew, and grew - confounding the planners' expectations.

"What no-one had predicted was the growth in the satellite areas around the city. These were places peopled by construc-

tion workers, cleaners for government buildings, mechanics for employees' cars," Mr Magalhaes told the BBC.

In the early days, land in the centre of Brasilia - known as the pilot plan and now a Unesco heritage site - was compulsory purchased and given to government ministries who were then able to offer homes to staff. But as these assets were sold off, they reaped huge profits for the buyers as increasing numbers of people moving to the city sought to live in that area, Mr Magalhaes said.

"It distorted the market. And you had this strange situation whereby large houses with swimming pools outside Brasilia were much cheaper than a small flat in the centre," he said.



REMAKE ITSELF

The total cost of moving Brazil's capital from Rio to Brasilia is so huge it has never really all been accounted for, Mr Magalaeas believes. Even 20 years after Brasilia was created, the government was still having pay premiums to get people to move there, he adds. Losing its capital status also had a huge effect on Rio, which had already seen its economy suffer as businesses migrated to Sao Paulo. "Local politics became very low level and was dominated by its relationship with the drug lords," Mr Magalaeas said.

Andrew Jones of AECOM believes Tehran will also have a tough period of adjustment if it goes the same way as Rio.

"Although the underlying character of the city will stay, it will lose the added extras that come with being home to the seat of government. It will start to lose cultural institutions and some other components that make it a powerful place," he said.

"But I think Tehran will survive. It has been a major city for thousands of years, so it will recover and remake itself."

PASSING

It is with sadness that we announce the passing of Mr. Kinh Tran this past December at the age of 91, in River Edge, New Jersey. Mr. Tran is survived by four children, seven grandchildren and three great-grand children which include Bi Tran of Geneva, Dr. Louis and Isabel Haller of Belgium, Thomas and Debra Tran of New York, and Saeed and Mai Manii of New Jersey.

Mr. Kinh Tran was a judge and former governor of Hai Phong, Mayor of Saigon, Vice Minister of Department Labor. He moved to the United States after the fall of Vietnam in 1975.

BOOK REVIEWS

YOUR LOVER'S BELOVED 51 GHAZALS, HAFEZ

Translated by:
Mahmoud Karimi – Hakak and Bill Wolak

Once gain this twosome have delivered something special to us in this new translation of Hafez poems.

They often describe Hafez's poems as "pleasing magical wine that can intoxicate you." This is precisely the feeling achieved in reading their translations.

The book begins with a concise introduction to Hafez and knowledge about their interest in him and the historical personal history of Hafez, the man. They also explain his reasons for the way he writes and the choice of his subject matter.

This is followed by the translated poems. Each is more beautiful than the next. At the end it is not difficult to understand the reason Hafez is compared to a good wine that can intoxicate your soul.



DESTINY'S WALTZ: IN STEP WITH GIANTS,

Robert de Warren

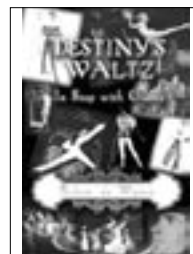
(2009)

This book details the years the author spent as the director of the National Ballet of Iran. During that time, he researched the mystic, tribal and ceremonial dances of the country.

He founded the National Folklore Society of Iran and the *Mahalli* Dancers of Iran, who became ambassadors of Iranian culture, and under his supervision and direction, toured many other countries in the world, including the United States and Washington, D.C.

Robert de Warren still today is recognized as a master of the art of Persian dance.

Earlier this month he was honored at a Festival of International Dance held in Salt Lake City, Utah for his continuing interest and work in the field of Persian dance.



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Poems by
Shahzad Kavooosi Farzad



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THE AXED PERSIAN IDENTITY

PART THREE

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**PASHTUNISATION,
A STALINIST METHOD**

As mentioned earlier, Pashtunisation in Afghanistan is a mirror image of Uzbekisation in vast areas of Central Asia with a mere difference in subjects involved in the two processes. Uzbekisation accompanied by a strong element of Russification had been designed to weaken the Persian language of Central Asia and alienate it from other Persian-speakers on the other side of the border. Whereas Pashtunisation is led by speakers of another less developed eastern Iranian language (Pashto) at the expense of other languages spoken in Afghanistan, primarily Persian that has remained as the *lingua franca* of the country, spoken and understood in all but the remotest settlements.

According to I.M. Oranski (1977), Persian was the only official language of Afghanistan until 1933, “but during the 1930s, a movement for promoting the status of Pashto to the official level began to take hold.” (Ulrich Ammon, *Sociolinguistics*).

Musahiban pioneers of Pashtunisation have sought to elevate their vernacular Pashto to the status of a vehicular language by downgrading the main language of the country – Persian. Their far-fledged ideas have been hindered by impossibility of developing Pashto into a comprehensive self-sufficient language in short term.

But they have to some extent succeeded in damaging and mutilating some Persian linguistic norms in Afghanistan. Tajikistanweb has provided the details of the process earlier based on declassified American documents. Here some more details and observations will be added to complete the picture by drawing parallels between the two anti-Persian movements on both sides of the Oxus.

The Pashtun King Zahir Shah of Afghanistan (1933-1973) had similar concerns as the Soviets in 1920s. He was anxious about the rise of Iranian cultural and political influence in the region as well what prompted him to rename Per-

sian to *Dari* (a medieval literary synonym for Persian meaning ‘the language of Court’) in 1964.

The process of segregation was finally accomplished to bring about the most contradictory linguistic fact of the modern world: three nations speak three ‘languages’ under different names (Persian, Tajiki, Dari) but nevertheless comprehend each other perfectly. In the same spirit administrative measures were put in place with the target of publishing 50% of written material in Pashto.

As in the Tajikistani case, the process of linguistic alienation in Afghanistan is being nourished by non-Tajik elements.

Even the latest incident of punishing journalists for using Persian words brought a Pashtun minister (Abdul Karim Khurram) into the limelight. Khurram was nervous about the ‘un-Islamic’ influence of Persian over ‘Dari’, while authentic speakers of Persian in Afghanistan raised their voices to emphasize the oneness of ‘Dari’ and the Persian of Iran. Thus, non-Persians, namely Pashtuns, renamed a language that does not natively belong to them and are still trying to enforce their own version of Persian in the country. The picture is reminiscent of what had happened in Soviet Central Asia.

**PASHTO
‘UNIVERSAL’ TERMS**

Going back to 1960s, Mehdi Marashi writes in his “Persian Studies in North America”:

“Although literacy in Pashto was still negligible at the time and still lags behind Persian within Afghanistan, a number of institutions were given Pashto names to be used irrespective of language, such as “*pohantun*” for university, making official *dari* immediately divergent from *farsi*.”

‘Universal’ Pashto terms like *pohantun*, *pohanzay* (faculty), *saranwali* (prosecutor-general’s office), *roghtun* (hospital) and others had been coined by an institution called *Pashto Tulana*

(the Pashto Academy). The Academy established in 1936 wielded an exceptional power in imposing words and terms on all languages spoken in Afghanistan, while their equivalents already existed in languages like Persian. One of its main tasks was to artificially distinguish ‘Dari’ from the Persian of Iran. In the same year Pashto was imposed as the language of education with a little success.

“A further problem was that the intelligentsia and the court spoke and wrote in Persian, the traditional language of culture. King Zahir himself had only rudimentary Pushtu” (Gilles Dorronoro, *Afghanistan: Revolution Unending, 1979-2002*).

According to Amin Saikal, “in the mid 1960s, feverish attempts were made to hammer out a literary Pashtu based on its southern (Paktiya) dialect. A flurry of publications in the influential journal of the Afghan Academy, *Kabul*, authored mainly by an inveterate Pashtun chauvinist Rishtin (the head of *Pashto Tulana* – twc), extolled Pashtu as the language that had matured on the territory of Afghanistan long before the advent of Islam, but was subsequently suppressed by various conquerors and despots” (Amin Saikal, *Modern Afghanistan: A History of Struggle and Survival*). Similar allegations have been made in Central Asia against the Persian.

The apartheid Pashtunisation policy had a far-stretching agenda. During 1950s and 1960s the Afghan army recruited mainly Ghilzai and eastern Pashtuns into the military colleges as the government wished to use it as a tool for the Pashtunisation of the country. By 1970s the overwhelming majority of young officers were Pashtun. Hazaras and Uzbeks were actually excluded from military.

During a more aggressive phase of the process in 1970s radio broadcasts in many vernacular languages were cancelled.

By the mid 1970s, 70 percent of top and middle-level positions in Afghanistan’s civil and military hierarchies were occupied by Pashtuns (Amin Saikal, *Modern Afghanistan: A History of Struggle and Survival*).

In a multiethnic country like Afghanistan the chauvinistic policy of Pashtunisation certainly contributed to the exacerbation of ethnic tensions. As put by a Soviet writer, “The policy of Pashtunisation... gave definite advantages first of all to Pashtuns, and then to those who had

mastered the language.”

Seemingly, the process has revived under the Karzai administration and the Afghan Culture Ministry has replaced *Pashto Tulana* as a vehicle of further Pashtunisation in the country.

PERSIAN, STILL PERSIAN

However, enormous efforts by colonial and chauvinistic forces have failed to practically divide the Persian language into three separate linguistic branches. Persian remains the main language for all public purposes in all three Persian-speaking countries. Native speakers pay a little significance to the idea of a separate identity in “Dari” and “Tajiki.”

The world media refers to the three countries as the ‘Persian-speaking community’. Persian continues to be a community language for millions more in other parts of Central Asia, South-West Asia and the Persian Gulf. And it is one of the main sources of word-building in other languages of the area.

Mehdi Marashi believes that the language is still known mostly as ‘Persian’ (*farsi, persi*). But now as Tajikistani Persians “become aware of the significance

of their unexpected independence and renew relations with their Persophone neighbours, they are faced with a new dilemma. Should they keep the Cyrillic alphabet, in which they were educated (either in *tojiki* or, in the case of many of the intelligentsia, in Russian), or switch back to the Perso-Arabic alphabet?

To stay with Cyrillic would defeat their purpose of rejoining their historical community, the only community fully open to them. But if they switch and the neighbouring republics do not, they will have cut themselves off from the *tojiki*-speakers of Samarqand, Bokhara, and the rest of Central Asia. There are no reliable census figures for these other Central Asian Persian-speakers, but they could easily equal the Persian-speakers of Tajikistan in number!” (Mehdi Marashi, “*Persian Studies in North America*”).

Within Tajikistan itself academics have called for return to Perso-Arabic script blaming the cultural crisis of the country on the Cyrillic alphabet that has restricted Tajiks’ access to Persian writings published abroad. It seems as the only feasible and inevitable way to

protect and develop the Persian of Central Asia by bringing it out of prolonged isolation.

The recent Persophone foreign ministers’ meeting in Dushanbe and their plans to establish a union of Persian-speaking countries have triggered some concern in Russia. “Iran considers Tajikistan a part of ‘the Greater Iran’, writes Moscow’s *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*. “Dushanbe’s aspiration toward Tehran could be explained by the geopolitical law of the weaker’s inclination to the stronger. Furthermore, they are kinfolks with a common language, shared culture and history.”

As Lena Jonson suggests in her book *Vladimir Putin and Central Asia* (2004), Tajikistan’s reorientation towards its ethnic kinfolk in future seems completely logical:

“Nonetheless, with a Persian language, in contrast to the other Turkic-speaking Central Asian states, and with a large group of ethnic kinfolk in northern Afghanistan, Tajikistan also seemed to have the potential for a future foreign policy reorientation away from Russia.”■

Beginning of Ski Season at Tochal Ski Resort, Tehran

PHOTOS BY MEHDI GHASEMI, ISNA

The ski season commenced at Tehran’s Tochal Ski resort on November 13, and the ski lovers rushed to the resort to take advantage of the fresh air and the inviting snow.

Mount Tochal is a mountain in the Alborz range and adjacent to metropolitan Tehran, Iran. The mountain has a 12 km long ridgeline. The highest peak, also called Mount Tochal, is at an elevation of 3,964 m (13,005 feet). A gondola lift runs from Tehran to the Tochal Ski Resort and a modern hotel. Tochal is a popular recreational region for Tehran’s residents.



Some Works by the Great Iranian Painter Morteza Katouzian

Morteza Katouzian was born on July 3, 1943 into a middle-class, art-loving family. He loved painting since childhood and spent all his time learning art without any teacher.

In 1960 he started graphics and painting work professionally. In graphics, he created several posters, logos, book covers and brochures. In 1974, he accepted the responsibility of holding Tehran International Graphics Exhibition named "African Starvelings" sponsored by I.A.A. International Organization. He won the prize of "Poster of Integration". He was one of the founders of the Graphic Artists' syndicate before the revolution and was head of its board for 2 years. During the past years, he attended several collective exhibitions and held four solo exhibitions. All of them were the most visited exhibitions in the history of art in Iran due to the high quality of exhibited works and the affectionate look at humans and issues related to their lives were presented in these paintings.

At his last exhibition in June 2008 which was held by 94 works at Saad-Abad Cultural-Historical Complex, on Wednesday June 18, 2008 he was awarded UNESCO's citation in respect of his 50 years

of activities in the field of painting and his 30 years of unfeigned teaching to Iranian youth. In these 30 years of teaching painting, dozens of painters have been presented to the society of art from his small studio. To introduce and encourage his students he held 3 collective exhibitions for them and attended one exhibition along with them at Museum of Contemporary Arts. Through his endeavors, a book of the paintings of his students was published in 2005 which was welcomed by public.

Four books of Morteza Katouzian's paintings have already been published and many of his works have been presented as posters. Five of his paintings are in Tehran Museum of Contemporary Arts and a big number of them are in the collections of Iranian and foreign collectors.

In his youth, he spent his free time playing and in 1970, he was the first person to receive the Karate black belt in Iran. During the following years he trained competent trainees in this field. Now holding Black Belt Dan 7 from the Karate Federation of the Islamic Republic of Iran.



The Beginning of the End.(1983)

The Beginning of the End is the reminder of the day when the human being and the civilization resulted from his efforts are destroyed man-mades.



Self-Portrait., Morteza Katouzian



Untitled-2006

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INTERVIEW WITH

LEILA TAGHINIA-MILANI HELLER**A Famous Museum Curator****BY: SHAHROKH AHKAMI**

Thank you for giving Persian Heritage the opportunity to interview you. I have been following your career in the art field for some time. I was first introduced to you at Columbia University at an Iranian art exhibition. When and how did your interest in art begin?

First I want to thank you for the opportunity to be in one of the most prestigious Iranian magazines. I am truly honored that you value my contributions to society enough to interview me. My mother exposed me to the arts, all forms, at a very early age. I never thought of making it a career until well into my college years. I was actually an economics major and Persian literature minor at Brown. After the Revolution my father owned several banks in Iran. It was his expectation that I would complete my education and return to Iran to run one of the banks. But I went to a Monet exhibition and lecture on Impressionism and Mondrian. The lecture was riveting and so began my interest of making art a career.

You can imagine my father's disappointment when I told him that I was changing my major to study art, but, there was a fortunate turn for me. In the summer of 1975, I returned to Iran for a visit and met with the Empress Farah. She asked me what I was studying, and I explained that I was majoring in art history and studying Western art. She was pleased to hear this and informed me of her intention to build an art museum in Iran. She suggested that I possibly become a curator for the museum. Of course, that fueled my hunger for my new major.

After completing my studies at Brown, I received my Masters from the Sotheby's Institute in London. From there, I traveled to Washington, D.C. where I received a Masters in Art History and Museum Management. I then worked at the Hirshorne Museum for one year in preparation for my return to Iran to get a job as a curator. Unfortunately, the Revolution began during my last year of graduate school. I had no passport so I could not return to Iran. I moved to New York in 1978 and worked at the Guggenheim Museum. In order for me to stay in the United States I needed to get a work visa. I was lucky and got an investment bank to be my sponsor. My position was as a curator for their investors.

When I procured my visa I made the decision to open up a gallery on Madison



Wife, mother and museum curator best describes Leila Taghinia Milani-Heller. Despite her success as a curator for western artists Ms. Heller's dedication and attachment to her Iranian roots has been instrumental in Iranian artists success.

Avenue and 72nd Street, where I stayed for the next ten years. I showed Andy Warhol and other American artists and then I showed Iranian artists such as Charles Hossein Zenderoudi, Shirin Neshat, Darrakhshani, Negar Ahkami, Y.Z. Kami and Nicky Nodjoui.

Fortunately my shows quickly gained a wonderful reputation and the openings were considered a “happening.” People would line up in the streets to get in and I am happy to say that remains the case.

It became time to start a family so I closed the gallery but I remained active in the art field. When my oldest child turned eleven I made the decision to reopen the gallery and that was almost seven years ago.

You mentioned the names of very prominent Iranian artists. I must stop and tell you how grateful they and the Iranian community should be to you for giving these artists an opportunity to show their work. How did you get involved with Iranian artists?

Thank you for the compliment. After the Revolution these artists, because of the prejudice against Iranians in the U.S., were unable to get their work into galleries. I believe one should never forget from where it is they came. During the Revolution I also suffered from the prejudices and stereotyping of Iranian-Americans, so I felt for these artists. As a businesswoman, however, I had to be careful not to become known as only an Iranian gallery because I did not want to stereotype myself in that way because it would limit my artists’ development. So I found a happy medium and would have two to three Iranian artist shows per year and the other seven were other artists that were American and European.

What I created from this was an Eastern and Western dialogue. Because the gallery was set up in salon style and created an atmosphere where artists, curators, musicians, and writers could have a constant dialogue with one another, I began to get the reputation of a mini cultural embassy, a home away from home for these individuals.

What were the obstacles along your way in building the gallery?

The biggest obstacle was financial,

because the Iranian artists did not bring in money for the gallery. People were not interested in buying Iranian artists because of what was going on. So the gallery was basically supported on what I brought in from the Western artists. Then things changed. Today with all that is happening politically and the growing interest in Dubai, Persian artists are gaining the interest of major collectors. I also think with a president like Mr. Obama people are no longer looking at Iranians as terrorists. It is opening a new cultural dialogue and doors for people to walk through. Iran is being once again seen as a civilized and cultured nation. People are finally being reintroduced to Persian art, past and present, and understanding that Persia/Iran has delivered some of the best artistry in the world. For almost three decades generations were not exposed to the greatness of the Iranian culture: the crafts, architecture gardens, painting, sculpture, literature and music. Most people do not know about the 2,500-year history of Persian culture. In every century Persia/Iran has produced some of the best artists in the world. Presently the censorship Persian artists are now dealing with has thwarted their ability to put their emotions into their art mediums.

You brought up President Obama’s name as helping the Iranian reputation but do you think that the events of June 22nd and the youth demonstrations contributed to the new image the West has of Iranians?

Most definitely and one should also give credit to the women of Iran who stood up in defiance of their conditions. I was with the Empress one day and asked her if this could be called the “Iranian Lipstick Revolution.” She replied, “No, it is the Diamond Revolution. They tried to destroy and crush the Iranian woman and instead turned them into diamonds.”

By your conversation, thus far, it seems that the Empress Farah was very interested in art. Does she continue to be?

Yes, she is constantly asking me about the artists and has nonstop conversations with them through twittering or personal meetings. She has always been a patron of the arts and should be given credit for bringing up the level of art in Iran in the

1960’s and 1970’s to museum quality and international recognition. People continue to admire her for the museums she built and for the art she brought to Iran. Today she continues to collect, and when she visits New York, she is always anxious to meet new artists.

If we could take a break from the art for a moment, I would like you to tell us a bit about your family. I understand your father and mother were a great support for you.

Yes both were, but I have to give my mother the biggest thanks for exposure to the arts. As a child she wanted to dance, but her father balked at the idea. As a result she wanted all doors to be open to me. As a child we traveled all through Iran and visited museums. She also exposed me to the wonderful architecture in Iran. When we went aboard we never missed a museum. I think she took me to see the Mona Lisa at least four times.

Do you feel she was pushing you into an art career?

No, she never directed my studies but encouraged me to pursue whatever career I wanted. In fact, when I took to leave from the gallery to raise my children, she was always asking me when I was going to reopen it. She believed that even if you were married, women should be independent emotionally and financially. She was always my courage and pushed me to do greater things. When things got financially tough with the gallery, she would always tell me to hang in and do whatever I needed to do to keep it open.

Was your father also supportive after he got over the disappointment of you not working with him?

My father was an incredible man. He suffered with his family through the Russian and Bolshevik revolutions. Prior to that time they owned the largest tea factory. When the Bolsheviks came through my grandparents fled to Shanghai where his brother lived and where they had business. The remainder of the family moved from place to place in hiding. Unfortunately my grandfather died on his way back in Afghanistan.

For ten years after the Bolshevik

Revolution the family moved together to Meshed where another family member was living. My oldest uncle who at the time was seventeen, went to the University of Moscow, and then later worked at the Russian Consulate in Meshed. The two younger brothers, one of which was my father, moved to the United States. He studied at Cornell and UCLA then moved to New York. They started a company together trading in cotton with their other brother in Tehran. When he was 32 he returned to Iran and met my mother and settled there.

What about your children and husband are they very supportive of you and your business interest?

Yes all of my children are supportive as well as my husband. My oldest son worked at the museum in the summer. He writes articles for me and manages my web page. I believe that behind every success in business there is a successful family member, whether it is a spouse, parents or children.

You have become an international figure in the world of art. Besides the United States what other regions or countries are you trying to introduce your artists?

They are building museums in the Gulf regions so I frequently visit Abu Dhabi and Dubai. Recently, however, I became enamored by Turkey so I am thinking about opening a gallery there. It is a very sophisticated place with beautiful museums and a number of excellent collectors. In Dubai the market is saturated with galleries, while in Turkey, Iranian artists have little or no presence. I might also add that the Turkish artists are very good. I will be in Turkey in December for Art Turkey which follows Art Dubai opened through November in Dubai.

Do Iranian artists have a place in the West?

Yes, most definitely. Western collectors are rushing to collect these artists. The artists are finding their way to important galleries and also into the catalogues of Sotheby's, Christie's etc.

This is a giant step for these artists, and as I mentioned

earlier, you need to be given so much credit and praise by these artists as well as the Iranian community for paving the way for their success.

Thank you again for your compliment. To do this for Iranian artists has been a great achievement but to date on the business side of my life my greatest achievement has been to show them at the Chelsea Museum in New York this summer. For some time I was trying to get an American museum interested in Iranian artists. Because of politics and the image of The Axis of Evil they were fearful of the repercussions and shied away from the offer. The Chelsea Museum, however, while in America, is a European funded foundation. They therefore were more open to the prospect of this show and demonstrated interest. The exhibit went from New York to Chicago and then will travel to Dubai.

The first day of the opening at Chelsea the line was four blocks long. I was overwhelmed by your success.

Thank you yet again. This was a very important opening. Because the museum did not have the funds to put on the exhibit I had to raise the necessary funds on my own. We raised \$250,000 from the Iranian community in New York, Dubai and Europe.

Tell us your thoughts on the young Iranian artists in Iran.

I am sad for those who cannot return to Iran because of the subject matter of their work or their political involvement. They are in places like Dubai. Having said that, we must always admire their work, perseverance, achievements and talents. These artists are dealing with so many elements, including their safety and of course censorship. What is amazing is how they are still able to get to show their work in symbols and metaphors. What is important is to hope that all Iranian artists do not become stereotyped with their work. The artists living here have freedom of expression but show their works in stereotyped exhibits such as the veil. This can stagnate them.

Perhaps your next task is to give them the courage your mother provided to you?

I try all the time because it is sad for

me to see any artist not fully express himself or herself because of fear.

What is the future for these artists?

Sometimes I am worried about this sudden interest in Iranian artists. I don't want their market to be ruined, and hope that a group of investors will not come and speculate in order to get their prices up and then dump them into auctions. That is a very dangerous practice and is what happened to Chinese art.

So I will try very hard to work with the younger artists and control their market hoping that I can persuade those who are looking to not speculate but to invest. When someone purchases a piece through me I have them sign a contract that they will hold the piece for 3-5 years before they put it in an auction.

Do you have any advice for young Iranians here and abroad?

My biggest piece of advice is for them to be true to themselves, go with their guts and emotions from deep inside. They should not let fear affect them because fear is the killer of dreams and success. They should not put limitations on themselves. I also believe that they should always be original, never copy another artist unless it is for educational purposes. And finally try never to let their work become commercial.

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