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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

With the arrival of spring and Norooz, I once again have the opportunity to extend my thanks to our readers. It is hard to believe we are entering our 15th year. Like other years this one was filled with a mixture of emotions for Iranians throughout the world: joy, turmoil, hope and disappointment. We can only hope that in this New Year, Iranians will finally have a window of opportunity to realize their deserved freedom and equality. The brave men and women in Iran continue to stay on their course for the future stability of their country and their lives. They rushed to the voting polls with hope, but instead the joy in casting a ballot was met with beatings, jailing, bullets and death. This was a heavy price to pay, but one they are willing to make.

Most of us believed that the turn of events last year in Iran would open the prison doors freeing those who fought for their beliefs. We naively believed that writers once again will freely write, painters freely paint and politicians freely debate without the fear of negative repercussions. That is not what unfolded, instead the prisons swallowed even more of Iran's citizens.

A subtle change, however, has developed in the way the west sees Iran. After witnessing the determination and struggle of the Iranian people, the west has finally begun to separate the people of Iran from their government. Finally the west recognized that those who made sacrifices for the future of their children and Iran are not terrorists or the same as the individuals during the hostage taking. The news continuously reminds us of the intention of the 5 plus 1 countries to impose additional sanctions against Iran and a possible military invasion. The discourse and behavior of the present Iranian rulers is facilitating these decisions, and closing positive opportunities for its citizens.

Turkey, who is persisting to be recognized as part of the civilized world, has removed its medieval practices and lessened their executions to facilitate the process. Note that Iran is second to China in the number of executions and the first in juvenile executions. How can they justify the beating, jailing, torture and defenseless trials of its citizens young and old?

The world is now in an economic depression and in order to save it countries are uniting. Look for a moment at Greece, who on the verge of collapse, was bailed out by the "Euro Zone" members. Iran on the other hand continues to close its doors to outside economic assistance and is moving closer to an economic collapse. Internal industry and agriculture has severely diminished making

Iran more and more dependant on imports from China and even Israel. The population's addiction and homelessness has reached a new high. All these during a time when Iran's people are struggling to make their way back into civilization and obtain their human rights. How can the Iranian government and the world ignore them?

According to a recent statement there are over 1 1/2 million Iranians living in the United States. Twenty-five percent have a master's degree or higher, which is the highest percentage among 67 ethnic groups. They have the highest ownership of business within twenty immigrant groups and one in three American-Iranians have a household income of over \$100,000, compared to one in five overall in the US. And, as I stated in my last editorial MIT announced that Iranian scientists and engineers are in control of over 880 billion dollars. The Iranian community is represented by 5,000 physicians and 4,000 professors. In spite of so many obstacles these statistics have been achieved in a very short period of time.

Recently, Norooz was officially accepted by the United Nations, the US Senate and Congress. This was a result of the efforts of prominent Iranian American groups. I thank them. Unfortunately, this achievement brought a wasteful debate within the Iranian community on the subject of the spelling of Norooz. The spelling used in the official proclamations was the Afghani spelling, "Nowruz." It is interesting to me that during a time when Iran itself and its citizens are fighting for the preservation and future of Iran and fighting for its and their individual survival, that so much time, effort, words and anger are spent arguing over the spelling of a word. How can a spelling of a word, trump the quest for the continued sovereignty of Iran? This misuse of time reminds me of a poem by Rumi. A Persian, Arab and Turk are discussing what to call a GRAPE. Because they speak different languages "GRAPE" has different spellings, but regardless of its spelling it will always be a GRAPE!

I also have difficulty understanding a new movement within the United States by the Iranian community regarding the US Census. Perhaps the attention of this new effort is to distract us from the daily turmoil in Iran. Why do we want to classify ourselves as a minority? Minority in the US means people of color from South America, the Indian subcontinent, Africa, China, etc.. Based on this minority classification the group will receive interest free loans and other financial and social benefits. Why does the Iranian immigrant continue to want to place themselves in this category?

FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

Recently I heard a prominent Iranian American community leader tell his audience that we as a group should write to Congress and tell them that the white gene of an Iranian is different from the white gene of other Caucasians, therefore the Iranian immigrant should qualify for minority benefits! Another professed that the Iranian immigrant in America has missed out on billions of dollars of minority benefits because we were classified as Caucasians. What an outrage! With our achievements and successes is seeking minority status something we really need to consider?

Maybe being so classed as a minority is the easier way, but do we need to take the easier path? I find this way of thinking frightening. During my immigration period, our group would have been embarrassed to go outside of their own community for help. We came from a proud country with a wonderful productive and impressive history. We struggled to make our way here and provide, as best we could for our children. The results have been tremendous. We have left an impression on our new home far grander than had we come with hands extended.

Why then is there this movement to "write in" under the category of race, the word "other" or "Iranian American?" (Some say it is because they believe that this will give the government a better account on the number of Iranians residing in the US. Do you think the US government needs our help to determine such numbers?)

I ask those responsible for this movement the following question, "If we mark "other" how do we continue to make the claim that we are from the Aryan race and had a king called the "Shah en Shah," "King of Kings", Arya Mehr, "The Light of Aryans?" "And do you think that immigrants to America from Turkey, Iraq, Lebanon etc., in order to show their numbers in the US, will write in their country rather than race?"

By falling into this "booby trap" to get minority aid you are betraying your heritage, your children and grandchildren. The US government knows Iranians are Caucasian just like the population in eastern European countries and most of the Middle East. The US knows our numbers, achievements and statistics. They do not need this renegade movement to help them. Concentrate your time and efforts on things that matter, the education of our children and the building on these beautiful statistics and achievements. Educate them on their culture and how proud they should be of the sacrifices made by their parents. Concentrate your efforts on making the Iranian community even more respected for their ability to achieve without minority status and their successful assimilation into a new land.

Iranian Americans who were forced to leave Iran suffered emotionally, financially and socially much like other non-minority immigrants. But, we held our heads high through the struggle and as a result are respected and admired. I now plead to all of the Iranian American organizations to continue your movements but direct those in ways that will benefit our community not embarrass us. We need to learn from the Jewish, Armenian

and Bahai communities and like them create community centers for our youth, the needy and the elderly. There is a tremendous amount of wealth within our community. We should all be willing to reach into our pockets to support our community. Millions of dollars have been donated to educational institutions in this country, by our wealthy Iranian Americans. I hope that some of this has been earmarked to benefit our own.

Let us educate our children on their culture and history but not argue over the spelling of a holiday, Norooz. Fight to maintain our world heritage in continuing the existence of The Persian Gulf, but not belittle ourselves by identifying ourselves as "other." May we, as a new immigrant community within the United States, be proud of our achievements and the nation we now call home. Always remember that we have reached these heights because of our integrity and our determination. If we continue on the path of challenges rather than the path of ease, future generations of Iranian Americans will enjoy a bright and prominent tomorrow.

Shahrokh Alavi



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A CORRECTION

In the Winter 2009 edition of the magazine there was a typo in the article "Philosopher King or Supreme Leader", by Firooz Yazdi, in the first paragraph there is the spelling "Mi" which should read "Ali"

PERSIAN HERITAGE MONTHLY

Happy New Year, I wish you the best for your hard work and endeavors in the new year. I hope you will be as successful as you have been in the past.

For the last three or four months I have not received the *Persian Heritage Monthly* newspaper. I cannot tell you how disappointed I am when I don't find it in my mailbox. I really look forward to reading it.

In your past editorials, you have mentioned your difficulties in publishing this paper, and I can only imagine how much hard work and effort must go into putting this paper out. Even though I understand this, I am still so disappointed!

I could tell you without any exaggeration, I read your monthly newspaper and magazine cover to cover, and many articles are quite informative and invaluable to me.

I hope you can overcome any difficulties which prevent you for publishing both of these wonderful publications. I look forward to receiving them both on a regular basis.

Wishing you the best,

A. Hassan Panahandeh M.D.

A VERY GENEROUS COMPLIMENT

Many thanks for your very generous and complimentary article and giving me the honor of placing me on the cover of your prestigious magazine. I cannot thank you enough and I am most touched and humbled by such a wonderful article.

We both have the same goal in life and that is to help our fellow countrymen and expose their talents and give legitimacy to their brilliant minds.

I am truly indebted to you for giving such a great exposure to my gallery and helping me promote Iranian artists by bringing attention to your fabulous art.

With deep appreciation and gratitude.

Warm regards,

Leila Taghinia-Milani Heller Gallery

APPRECIATION

I must take this opportunity to express my admiration for your tireless efforts enhancing the light of the Persian cultural and literary movement.

F. Hejazi

THE WINTER ISSUE WAS INTERESTING

Again the winter issue contained many interesting articles and I would like to make a few brief comments about several of them. On page 13 of the winter issue regarding President Obama I believe this article was very good up to a point. Mr. Hejazi, however, does not realize that this President is an accidental President and is controlled indirectly by the British and the British Government is supporting the government of Iran therefore, he will not do anything unless the British approves it ahead of time.

This is a tragedy that he doesn't have the guts to come out and say that the Government of Iran is illegitimate and we do not recognize it. He still thinks he can sing the Yausin to the ear

of a Donkey namely to talk to them, yes, good luck.

Next, the picture of the beautiful Neda on page 14 was very revealing and in fact every time I look at that beautiful face my eyes fill with tears. I own pleased about the scholarship in her name in Oxford and I will definitely contribute to that and I will encourage all the Iranians to do the same.

Now on page 15 regarding Mr. Yazdi's article about the supreme leader, there is no question about the fact that these groups took over the country and created a Khaliphate. Of course, they call it the so-called Velayat-e-Faghih. Thin in a good metaphor for the Velayat-e-Faghih.

Next, on page 113 the column by Ms. Safa regarding the controversial Iranian flag. Dear Ms. Safa there is absolutely nothing controversial about our flag. This goes back, as you said, over 2500 years ago and the only change that the Islamic kings could do was to add a sword in the hand of the lion. Therefore, the only change I would make on the flag would be removing the sword and replacing it with the Declaration of Human Rights by Cyrus the Great.

David Yazdan

AFTER 5 YEARS!

In the Summer issue of the Persian Heritage Magazine of 2005 I wrote an article under the title of, Very Painful Commentary. After almost 5 years I have realized that there are some inaccuracies in that article, which need to be addressed.

Before I address the inaccuracies I would like to give beautiful tidings to all our readers and the Persian Iranian Community because the parade has eventually united. In fact, the meeting of the two boards transpired and there was a unanimous agreement that we will have one set of bylaws, one board of trustees, one executive board and one treasury with a bank account that everyone should contribute to.

As you recall the parade was instituted by four founders that you all know and there is no need to mention them. The first parade went very well but something happened inadvertently, which created friction.

When the beautiful pictures of the parade, more than ten colored ones were put into the magazines, naturally it cost a great deal of money and had to be compensated by the parade account. The treasurer, very innocently and very correctly reimbursed the magazine with that money without notifying at least two of the founders.

Although this was a very legitimate and also innocent activity, never the less, it snubbed the other two founders and particularly one who was very upset that he wasn't even consulted about it not that he was against it but the fact that he was not consulted created lots of friction.

This friction plus some other personality differences eventually led to the division of our parade, which has taken us almost 4 years to bring back together.

Therefore, at the end of that article I mentioned, the three agreed with that payment, only one disagreed," is inaccurate. I thought it is very important to correct my mistake as I have done before in the magazine so we have everything clear and straight.

I also would like to thank the publisher because under very difficult political and financial circumstances, has been able to continue to publish this beautiful magazine. I encourage everyone to make as much contributions as they can to the magazine. Thank you.

David Yazdan

To My Beloved Brother,

Massih Hakami

us from being with you.

Massih we will all miss you tremendously. You will hold a big place in my heart forever.

Fairwell my brother

Your loving sister Nahid Ahkami

** * **

I promised myself not to fall apart as I read this and told myself and believe that we should be here celebrating your life, not mourning your death. You are now in a better place, life never understood you.

For the past few years I have seen you suffer so much. I could not take your disease from you and always tried to provide you comfort and hopefully a more deserving life style, at least as much as I could.

You always tried to be independent, always helped others and never asked for help yourself. In life you were a great compassionate person who remained true to himself. I guess it is true when they say nice people suffer more in life than others.

I am happy you will not suffer any longer and I am happy that in your final days you were surrounded by people who love you. Distance never stopped



be missed by his family, friends and Persian Heritage magazine

Dr. Messih Hakami passed away after a long illness this March in California. He was a dedicated physician and scholar in the field of medicine. Dr. Hakami loved the Persian culture particularly literature and often provided translations of his beloved Hafez for *Persian Heritage* magazine.

He was also a humanitarian activist. During his military service he was a Colonel in the army and insisted on serving the rural areas of Iran where healthcare was deficient. His love for Iran gave him hope to return one day to open medical clinics in deprived areas. Always kind and generous Dr. Hakami will

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THE SURPRISE OF COLLEGE BASKETBALL

Ali Farokhmanesh, was in the spot light again when he was featured as the cover story of the March 29th issue of Sports Illustrated. The senior at the University of Northern Iowa dazzled the playoff games making college basketball history with a three-point shot for the record books. With only 50 seconds left in the game David slayed Goliath when he scored winning the game in the playoff against number one seeded University of Kansas.



A CERTAIN HERO

Lorette Pierre, of Haiti and mother of six wasn't sure she would be around to see her children grow up. She had a four pound tumor pressing against her airway and if not removed would have brought her an untimely death. An earlier attempt to remove the tumor was aborted because of excessive bleeding. But, fate intervened. Just as Dr. Vishtas Broumand, who was wearing a t-shirt with his practices name, "Florida Oral and Facial Surgical Association," a doctor approached him. He showed Dr. Broumand the picture of Lorette and asked him if there was anything he could do for him. Saving a life appealed to both him and his associate Dr. John Akers. Their collected efforts of the doctors and that of the hospital and team of Halifax Health Center, Lorette is on her way to recovery and has a new lease on life. Thank God for unspoken heroes.

NO ONE KNOWS ABOUT PERSIAN CATS

A film by Bahman Ghobadi



No One Knows About Persian Cats, screened in the Un Certain Regard section of the Cannes Film Festival 2009, explores the underground music scene in Tehran which, perhaps unexpectedly,

turns out to be a hotbed of rappers, metal bands and rockers who sport Strokes T-shirts and line their rehearsal spaces with Joy Division posters.

The film is directed by Bahman Ghobadi and continues his long-term interest in a kind of political resistance offered by music. It tells the story of a young man and a young woman as they plan to launch a music group shortly after their release from prison. Both characters travel to Tehran, where they meet other underground rock musicians and attempt to convince them to leave Iran. However, without money or passports, their dreams to flee to Europe in order to play music freely seem improbable.

**NEIU TEACHING AWARD-WINNER
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Presentation on "Teaching as Dream Weaving"



CHICAGO – Hamid Akbari, professor and chair, management, at Northeastern Illinois University (NEIU), has been named the winner of the 2009 Audrey Reynolds Distinguished Teaching Award at Northeastern Illinois University. A celebration in his honor and a presentation about teaching by Akbari was held on Wednesday, April 14 at 7 p.m. in the NEIU Recital Hall.

The Audrey Reynolds Distinguished Teaching Award is given annually to a tenured member of the NEIU faculty who best demonstrates distinguished teaching. The award is intended to recognize outstanding teaching by faculty members who have a record of success and also to inspire faculty, especially young and new faculty members, to strive for excellence in teaching.

Akbari, who has been teaching at Northeastern Illinois University for 23 years, will discuss his teaching philosophy in a public lecture titled "Teaching as Dream Weaving." Akbari's teaching philosophy envisions teaching as both a science and an art. He believes that teaching should be methodical, covering both the fundamentals and contemporary developments. In addition,

he utilizes Parker Palmer's principle of having the will to teach from one's heart and inspires his students to challenge their own views, beliefs and assumptions.

At Northeastern, Akbari teaches courses in strategic management, organizational behavior and theory, and management of change. His research mainly focuses on teaching pedagogy and leadership. He has co-authored one book and co-edited two books. He has presented at numerous national and international conferences and published his articles and book reviews in journals and other publications.

He is recipient of several excellence awards in teaching and service from Northeastern Illinois University. In addition to his teaching and administrative responsibilities at the University, Akbari has served as chair of the Faculty Senate and on organizing committees for several international conferences. He is also the director of the Dr. Mohammad Mossadegh Leadership Fund at NEIU.

A native of Iran, Akbari is active in the causes of freedom and democracy in Iran, Burma and other countries of the world. He and his wife founded "About Iran," a human rights and democracy action bulletin. From 2005 to 2007, he was the executive director of the International Society for Iranian Studies, the first and largest academic society for Iranian studies. He received his Ph.D. from the Ohio State University in management and his M.B.A. and M.A. in political science from the University of Toledo.

Iran is at a revolutionary juncture, one of those hinge moments in history when an explosion of actions and debates produce towering outcomes – often unintended – that bend the course of events the way a black hole in space bends a beam of light. In the tumult of these moments, it is almost impossible to know how it will end; only in retrospect does the outcome appear inevitable.

This hinge moment began on 22 Khordad – June 12 on the Western calendar – the date of Iran’s electoral debacle. On that date, all the old rules changed and a new set of rules began to be devised. There is evidence of deep political fissures among the ruling elite and signs of fierce debate. At the moment, Iran’s political leadership finds it convenient to pretend that all is as before. But in fact, there has been a political earthquake and the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps is moving to consolidate its power. Before it is over, we may see a new strongman emerge from the military, as has happened in so many other countries in the Middle East and elsewhere when the political status quo was shattered and everything was in flux.

Iran, of course, has experienced such hinge moments before: notably the 1979 collapse of the shah and the replacement of his monarchy with a revolutionary Islamic government. Its effects extended far beyond the borders of Iran. I was in the White House at the time that Iran invaded the American embassy in Tehran and held its occupants prisoner for 444 days. That action arguably insured the defeat of President Jimmy Carter and the election of Ronald Reagan. It also indelibly imprinted an image of a fanatical, hostile Iran on the psyches of Americans who watched it play out as the first major U.S. foreign policy crisis to be televised live and broadcast into the living rooms of every family in the United States.

Part of the problem that Washington had in attempting to negotiate an end to that deadly dispute was the absence of an address in Iran. We knew that the hostages had been taken by a group of radical students; we knew that the revo-

lutionary regime had thrown its support to the students; we knew that the supreme revolutionary authority was Ayatollah Khomeini, but he would not talk to us, and the Iranians who did talk to us proved to have no real authority.

Today I am experiencing a back-to-the-future moment.

The election debacle on 22 Khordad (June 12 on the Western calendar) was in my view the final, bungled stage of what was intended to be a gentle coup propelling the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps, the pasdaran, into a position of unassailable power behind the scenes. The amazing rise of the Green Movement, under the almost accidental leadership of Mir Hossein Moussavi and later Mehdi Karroubi, threatened to upset these plans, and panicked efforts to prevent it brought the pasdaran out of

Revolutionary Guard Corps is now rapidly becoming the dominant force in Iranian politics – greater than President Ahmadinejad, and greater even than Ayatollah Khamene’i himself, though the pasdaran and others continue to pay lip service to his “leadership.” I base this judgment, among other things, on the fact that senior leaders of the pasdaran no longer have any compunction about taking positions that differ from those of the President or the Supreme Leader; yet neither the President nor the Supreme Leader ever dare disagree with the pasdaran. But if that is true, who exactly is calling the shots?

The political decision-making apparatus of the pasdaran is totally opaque. It is possible to conjecture a circle of dogmatic officers together with a narrow faction of clerical advisers who share a belief in the divine right of rulers. But it is impossible to give a list of the members of this circle, let alone the process by which they arrive at policy positions.

This uncertainty is what reminds me of the days of the revolution and the murky operations of what was then the Revolutionary Council. The U.S. government spent a tremendous amount of time and effort during the hostage crisis trying to identify the key members of the Revolutionary Council and to develop channels for communicating with this central policy-making body.

The results were less than satisfactory, partly no doubt because the group was itself a mirror image of the political chaos after the Iranian revolution. The Council had a fairly well established membership, but influence on specific policies varied from one moment to the next according to the shifting political winds, and there was no reliable process by which decisions were taken and implemented. There was, in short, no reliable address where a U.S. initiative might be registered and acted on.

It is 30 years later, and we have arrived at another hinge moment in history. And the Obama administration has a serious problem, scarcely discussed but eerily familiar. How do you engage with Iran when there is no reliable address in Tehran?

IRAN: BACK TO THE FUTURE

GARY SICK

IN THE DAILY, NOVEMBER 27, 2009

the shadows and into the full glare of international attention.

The pasdaran had begun playing an overtly political role a full decade earlier. Its insinuation into the economy of Iran had been widely observed for years. It also controlled the nationwide paramilitary force known as the basij. Its association with a radical faction of Iranian clerics, led by Ayatollah Mesbah Yazdi, who preached that the word of the Supreme Leader in Islamic Iran was absolute – the very voice of God – was well known. But the election of 22 Khordad propelled the pasdaran into an active role in domestic politics, just as it forced Ayatollah Khamene’i, the Supreme Leader who is supposed to remain above politics, to align himself with a specific political faction and thereby sacrifice his legitimacy as an objective arbiter.

I am personally convinced that the

I know we have not quite finished The Fate of the Emod Moghnyeh, but it behooves us to take a glance of the decade, which was past. This decade was exciting and at the same time experienced dismal events, which are important to mention them. When you look back before the decade in 1999 everything looked promising and remarkable. The cold war had ended and communism had been defeated. The Internet had conquered the distance, melted borders and offered a cure for ignorance.

There was an aura of great prosperity to the extent that the people essentially thought that the business cycle had become obsolete and a sense that the government had become superfluous. They were dreaming that the Dow Jones industrial average would reach \$36,000.00. Then at the turn of the century and as the millennium had turned, reality set in. No it did not happen at the midnight of Y2K, as the alarmist had feared, it began soon there after. In March 2000 the Internet bubble had burst, destroying trillions of dollars of wealth and awakening us from the technology induced dream. Then it came, an unthinkable disaster, September 2001 the terrorist attack the Twin Towers. Indeed, all of us have short memories, we go back to '93 when they first tried to go after the World Trade Center and it failed because they miscalculated the strength of the Towers.

By pulling a truckload of explosives in the basement they hoped that one building would topple over the other. Ramsey, who is now in jail was in charge and was the leader of those terrorist groups who were all successfully arrested and tried and put in jail. But the entire essence of that episode was totally lost by both the intelligence community and Home Land Security. The year of 2000 started with a major attack on one of our biggest mis-

sile-carrying destroyers, the USS Cole in Yemen. This terror act was done when the terrorists managed to fill up the skiff full of explosives and approached the Cole waving to the sailors as if they were happy to see them. Next thing you know a seventeen-foot hole was put outside of the Cole and many of our sailors died or were wounded. I was hoping that Bill Clinton, then President would do something, after all, in the decade of the '90's from the eight years that he was in office we had several terrorist attacks and the Cole was the last of them. Before that there was the attack of the Khyber Tower in Saudi Arabia which also killed 19 Americans and wounded hundreds also arranged by Emod Moghnyeh. Let us not forget the bombing of our two embassies in Kenya, Tanzania. 1998 was not exactly a quiet year, it was an Olympic year, an election year and also as you recall was the crash of the TWA 800. The event of September 11, 2001 changed the Presidency of George W. Bush, and for the first time in God knows how many years, there was a bipartisan support and a national unity and address for him to take action, which he did by partially removing the Taliban from Afghanistan. Unfortunately, he did not follow-up and finish them. The biggest mistake of his Presidency was of

course, in 2003 when he invaded Iraq. That event by the way did not come without the help and encouragement of British Government Tony Blair. The problem was that he invaded the wrong country. It is true that Saddam Hussein was responsible for killing millions particularly in the Iranian war when he used chemical weapons. But Saddam Hussein was no threat to the United States whereas the Mullahs in Iran are the threat to our entire world particularly Americans and Israelis. Is it possible that this was another effort by the British to prevent us from going and getting the Mullahs? This is something, which has been bothering me quit a bit because it was the British Government that brought Khomeini into power in the first place. It is true that he freed the Iraqi people from the tyranny of Saddam Hussein. But that country even after eight years is still in turmoil. One wonders does it require a beast like Saddam Hussein to really take care of that unruly country? As if this was not bad enough Saddam Hussein was a threat to the Mullahs and we should have used him to get rid of them instead, we removed one of the biggest enemies of the Mullahs and they were celebrating and they won. Then they started to support the insurgents and the terrorists to kill and mame both the American

soldiers and also the Iraqi's. This by the way has continued until now and from there they have switched to Afghanistan were they are supporting the Taliban and Al Qaeda.

The destruction of the US Cole and the calamity of 911 was just the beginning. In 2002 they attacked Bali in Indonesia where 200 people died and several hundred were badly wounded. The people keep telling me that it is the problem between the Palestinians and Israelis which is the cause of all the prob-

lems but that can hardly explain the attack in Bali, Indonesia which was followed by the terrorist action in 2004 at the train station in Madrid and in 2005 the terrorist attack in the London subways. It continued until 2008 in Mumbai, India.

I do not see how these events have anything to do with Israeli and Palestinian problems. One can think of course, that Israel may have a cause to be what they are to prevent the suicide bombing. But how can they explain when an explosive loaded car in Pakistan goes into an area where kids are playing volleyball? There are no Americans in Pakistan although we were just helping them to get rid of the cancer. How one would really explain that is beyond me. From all the discussion I have had both with Palestinian and Syrian colleagues in the hospital, they have no answer for this. Indeed, I don't recall in all these years of terrorist activity's by Osama Bin Laden, he had not spent one penny for the Palestinians, what so ever.

The decade was also inflated by soaring economic growth enriching hundreds of millions of people all across China, India and also our here. The Americans reacted to the reality of the new decade by going on shopping sprees using an inflated value of their houses to fund the profligacy. Ingenious financier

HISTORY OF TERRORISM

PART XVII

A DECADE OF TERROR AND EXTRAVAGANCE

DAVID YAZDAN

The difference between the covetous man and the prodigal, is that the former never has money and the latter will have none Shortly.
— Ben Johnson

turned houses in debt to an array of complex new instruments that provided a shaky foundation for financial colossus that straddled the globe. Inevitably, the foundation gave way and colossus collapsed. The extravagance was so pervasive that a video clip of Dennis Koslowski's company financed a birthday party for his second wife on the Island of Sardinia, with half naked gods and goddesses serving hors d'oeuvres and an ice sculpture of Michael Angelo's David spewing vodka from its member became a symbol of corporate excess. Inevitably of course, everything collapsed old firms like Bear Stern, Lehman Brothers, Merrill Lynch, Wachovia were gone and sold to rivals and others had been thrown into the arms of the government. A great recession ensued and the world's faith in the free market was shaken profoundly.

Unlike the Hollywood script a decade that preceded this, this one turned out to be more like the reality television show that proliferated during its span. It showed us that not everyone can sing, not everyone can dance, not everyone can stay on the Island and not every faded tale romance leads to happily ever after. The real world after all, is made of real human beings, and the human institution and our history is inevitably infected with their weaknesses, which are greed, envy, hatred, ignorance, corruption and these are all part of the same game. Then again this game was characterized by great development and invention from the arise of google and the emergence of Wikipedia to the creation of the elegant I-Phone. In the US it will be celebrated as the decade in which the nation took a huge step towards the breaking tree of its legacy of slavery and civil war by electing an African American. President. George W. Bush's invasion of Iraq led to a dismal result in his popularity, which spilled over to the election year and practically destroyed John McCain's chances. One of the other surprising things about this election was 78 percent of the Jews voted for Obama. This is quite interesting because the support of Obama towards Israel was luke warm whereas McCain was very very strong. So then why did he get most of the Jewish votes? The answer to this is from most of the Jewish colleagues they say that Jews are liberal. Why are they liberal is also another mystery. One of the biggest mistakes of Obama's is of course, is his socialist ideations and the collosus which is called «Health Care» for the Americans. I remember Reagan came up with a very nice statement, he said yes, we have 35 to 40 million people who are uninsured, but the other 250 million are quite happy. But what Obama has done has made everyone unhappy, now those other 250 million are very unhappy. This guy does not realize that you cannot enrich the poor by punishing the rich. He is not Robin Hood. Besides, there is not such a thing in the US Constitution that says, you are entitled to have a free lunch.

In my 40 years of practice I do not recall turning away anyone from the Emergency Room. We always treated everyone and that goes for everyone that I know. Personally, I operated on these people who had nothing, so this is a fallacy to say that these 35 million suffered or that they couldn't get health care. As it has happened now, I have never seen so many depressed physicians and surgeons in my life when I go to the hospital. Fortunately, I am semi-retired and I am not operating anymore because it just does not pay and I cannot afford the expenses.

Last but not least, are the events in Iran following the phony election which put Ahmadinejad into the office of Presidency. The atrocities which were committed by those in power are only second to 9/11 calamity.

PAPERS REVEAL BRITAIN'S ANXIETY OVER IRANIAN SHAH



Britain dispatched an undercover diplomat on a covert mission to the Bahamas to convince the deposed Shah of Iran not to seek to settle in the UK.

The revelation comes in official archive documents made public 30 years after they were written.

The 1979 papers reveal that the British government was very concerned that Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi, then in exile, would seek to live in England.

But Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher was upset she could not help the Shah.

Mrs. Thatcher told her foreign minister she was "deeply unhappy" not to be able to offer refuge to the Shah whom she said had been a "firm and helpful friend to the UK". She somewhat unwillingly accepted the advice of the foreign office that to allow the Shah to settle on his estate in the countryside just outside London would generate security problems and put the staff at the British embassy in Tehran at risk.

Prime Minister James Callaghan, who was defeated by Mrs. Thatcher at elections in 1979, made the decision while still in office, writing: "He is an immensely controversial figure in Iran and we must consider our future with that country. He will need to make interim arrangements".

A retired former ambassador to Iran was chosen to travel to the Bahamas, where the Shah had taken up residence at the Ocean Club to pass on the message.

Sir Denis Wright traveled to Paradise Island and, disguised as an old friend, succeeded in passing on the British government's message, though the details of the meeting itself are considered too sensitive to be made public.

Several months after the Shah arrived in the US for cancer treatment in late 1979, students took 63 hostages at the US embassy demanding that he be returned to the country to stand trial.

THE FATE OF HUMAN RIGHTS WORLD-WIDE

Mehrtash Rastegar

On the 13th May, 2010, the fate of the protection of human rights world-wide shall be determined. The world's second worst human rights transgressor, the Islamic Republic of Iran (IRI), will witness whether their campaign to win the election for membership of the United Nations Human Rights Council (the Council) will come into fruition.

The 192 member states of the UN General Assembly will cast their votes by secret ballot on the 13 May, 2010, in New York, USA. Membership of the Council is divided into 5 regions: i) African States, ii) Asian States, iii) Eastern European States, iv) Latin-American and Caribbean States, and v) Western European and other States. The IRI is candidate to representing the Asian states at the Council. There are at present thirteen Asian states who are members, in which four seats are soon to become vacant. Five Asian states have submitted themselves as candidates: Maldives, Thailand, Malaysia, Qatar, and the Islamic Republic of Iran. Four of such will be elected to sit on the Council; however, one state will not have this honour. Such a state must be the IRI.

States who are candidates for membership of Council are required to draft a 'pledge' illustrating their commitment to human rights. On page 7 of the IRI pledge, it has been argued that the IRI

"is fully convinced that politicization, selective approach and application of double standards significantly impede the genuine promotion of human rights... and should be avoided".

This could be argued at the IRI in reminding them not to involve their political agendas in issues concerning human rights; the IRI authorities use politics, law and religion to perpetrate their heinous violations of human rights. They enforce harsh and oppressive enforcement measures, which mostly violate international human rights laws, under the very wide umbrella justification of preserving 'national security', and for punishing those who 'insult God or the holy sanctities'. The IRI have national laws that call for fair trials and non-discriminatory treatment of minorities; they call for the protection and promotion of human rights world-wide when presenting at the Council's 7th session in its Universal Periodic Review of the situation of human rights in the IRI, 2010 (UPR).

However, their conduct is unequivocal in demonstrating a blatant disregard for any provision and mechanism of human rights, both nationally and inter-

nationally. The Bahai minority have endured decades of persecution and summary executions, simply for following a different line of religion to the ruling elites. Other minority groups, such as Kurds, Azeris, Baloch and Ahwaz Arabs have been subject to unfair and harsh human rights abuses. Women are heavily subjugated by the Civil and Penal Code of the IRI, for example, under the Penal Code a husband may execute his wife if he finds she has committed adultery; however, if a wife kills her cheating husband the state executes her for murder. The rate of child executions rival China's gross human rights record – in 2009, 160 juveniles were on death-row. Dissenting voices are silenced by the sound of the tightening of the noose as the IRI execute their brutal clamp-down on academics, poets, writers and journalists for even remotely questioning any arm of the government. The UN recommendation to release such illegally detained persons (Austria) was rejected by the IRI authorities at the Council's 2010 UPR. Such is a compelling rationale for why the IRI should not be elected.

Since the Council's establishment, and following the Council's UPR on the IRI in its 7th Session, there has not been, nor even adopted a single resolution condemning Iran. The Council has failed to hold a single special session on the human rights crisis in the IRI. Furthermore, it has failed to mandate any investigation into the purported human rights violations before, and most importantly, after the disputed presidential election of June 12, 2009. The best the UN human rights bodies issued were recommendations in their 'concluding observations'.

This may give rise to the serious concern that the Council has become a political tool not just for the 'west', but also in favour of religious extremism and the hidden agendas of their governments. This tool will become sharper, equipping the IRI to wield it as a weapon should they become elected members of the Council; such begs the questions what drastic action would the IRI stir against non-Islamic states, such as Israel or 'the west'; or what misuses, and abuses, of power would the IRI endorse if they were to be elected in May, 2010? Could this be an opportunity for the IRI to infiltrate the Council and infect other members with its fanaticism?

As futile as it may appear, the embassies of the countries that form the UN General Assembly must be lobbied in illustrating the serious discontent and concern people around the world have towards the IRI gaining membership to such an international human rights platform. This may be undertaken in the form of letters; demonstrations outside relevant embassies; petitions and media attention.

What hope will there be for human rights if a key transgressor sits on a crucial international human rights body?

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Islamic Regime and America's Elites

by Manda Zand-Ervin

The Islamic regime in Iran has a pool of defenders among the American “elite” media, political analysts, activists, and academia.

They are invited to and welcomed in Iran, assigned to a “handler” who makes sure the honored guests are dined (not wined), taken to the assigned places and given approved talking points. Gifts of Persian carpets and cans of the best caviar at the airport normally seal the deal.

These American elites never mingle with the “real” people of Iran, and never talk to their Iranian counterparts. They visit the universities, but never walk the campuses alone or privately exchange opinions with students and professors. They never visit the Evin or Kahrizak prisons, nor do they ever even pass by them to see the crowds of people waiting to hear one word about their loved ones inside.

These visitors never look at the documents – long lists of inhumane laws against women and children, photos of tortured and stoned women, hanging teenagers, strangled men accused of the crime of homosexuality.

They never study Iranian/American relations and history, and never learn about how the Iranian people have struggled for more than a hundred years against the Shiite clergy, fighting for modernity and separation of religion from government.

These elites never want to talk to the Iranian American human rights activists to get the facts or at least hear the other, true, side of the story.

The Islamic regime in Iran is a gender-apartheid regime. It is a cruel, misogynistic government whose members suffocate women politically, socially, privately, publicly and legally. They never say that 86% of Iranian women are unemployed. They never talk about Iranian laws which say women are the property of men, that men can treat women as they wish, that men can “marry” as many wives as they want, divorce them anytime they want, take their children away, and discard them with nothing. They never mention that according to the sharia laws of Iran, women cannot do anything without the husband’s permission, even step out of the house.

European and American “elite” apologists for the regime have the attitude of cultural imperialists, and have apparently decided that since the Iranian people are a bunch of Moslems who live in the Middle East, they do not have a desire for democracy, prosperity and the pursuit of happiness, and that they volunteer to have their children tortured, oppressed and denigrated.

The apologists never refer to the fact that there are over a quarter of a million street children in Iran who do not officially exist. They have no identity, no birth certificates. They are born and raised on the streets and are the products of “temporary marriage,” a law which codifies exploitative sex that is not only legal, but encouraged and pushed by the regime.

In their desire to maintain the all-important “status quo,” they do not fact-check

their talking points to see if they are lies; to see that in 1979, the people of Iran rose up because they wanted more freedom, not an Islamic theocracy.

The Western supporters of the Iranian regime even ridiculously refer to University of Tehran polls, and swear by their fairness and accuracy. They do not know or do not care, or both, that Iranian universities are run by an uneducated Shiite clergy appointed by the “supreme leader.” They do not know or do not care, or both, that paramilitary forces are in control of the university campuses around the country, and that plainclothes guardsmen have been in every hallway and every classroom since the 1998 nationwide student uprisings.

Are they deliberately trying to mislead Americans?

(This article appeared in www.hudsonny.org on March 26, 2010)

These are the same people who support liberal groups like the ACLU, which exploit freedom to take advantage of its privileges – but when it comes to Iran’s theocracy, oppression is totally acceptable. These are the same people who protested against George W. Bush, decrying that he damaged the image and reputation of the United States of America in the world— but they do not grant the privilege to protest to the Iranians who have lost human dignity as the result of the actions of a group of illiterate thieves and hoodlums.

Shame and guilt require awareness of choice. You do not have to be a member of the elite to know that.

THE IRANIAN STRUGGLE FOR FREEDOM FROM TYRANNY IS A CONSTITUTIONAL MANDATE

SOUSAN ALEMANSOUR, ATTORNEY AT LAW, APRIL 13, 2010

The February 2010 travel of *Ali Ardeshir Larjani*, the Speaker of the Parliament of the Islamic Republic of Iran, to Japan for discussions about Iran's nuclear enrichment program received moderate media attention. To the Iranian nationals, however, more interesting than the overseas trip and the resulting Japanese offer, was the delegation accompanying the Speaker. Reportedly, *Mr. Larjani's* delegation included, among others, the Head of the Parliament's National Security and Foreign Policy Committee and a female Parliament Member *Dr. Zohreh Elahian*. For those who follow the shift in the internal policies of Iran from exclusion to cautionary inclusion of women, the Eighth Session of the Parliament is of interest as it has eight female members each serving different committees. In the interim: the attendance of two of Iran's female MPs at the March 2010 UN Commission on the Status of Women; Iran's appointment of a female cabinet member as the Minister of Health and Safety; and, the appointment of madam *Bedaghi* as Deputy General Counsel to the Islamic Republic is also noteworthy. Two of the eight parliament members, second term madam *Alia* and first term madam *Elahian*, serve on the powerful Committee of National Security and Foreign Policy. Of the twenty seven members of the Committee on National Security and Foreign Policy, *Elahian* is the 5th ranking official after the Speaker.

Dr. Zohreh Elahian represents the districts of Tehran, Rey¹, Shemiranat and Eslamshahr. She is a member of *Osulgarayan*, those claiming devotion to the strict principles of the Islamic revolution. She is a member of committees on foreign relations with Japan, Uruguay and Nicaragua.

An active member of the Committee on National Security and Foreign Policy, a bespectacled principalist, fiercely loyal to *the Islamic Order*, *Elahian* accepts her *chadour* as second skin without hindrance. Her public comments on Iran's foreign and domestic policies are crisp, unminced and nationalistic. On issues relating to foreign policy, *Elahian* is outspoken and authoritative. Her support of related legislation is perhaps as fierce and direct as her words, with an apparent fine honed sense of rectitude and righteousness that keeps her committed to the principles.

Recently, in an interview with *IRNA* regarding Iran's *Jamaran Destroyer*, MP *Elahian* expressed her belief that the building of *Jamaran* is a sign of Islamic Republic's expansive military mobilization capabilities stating that "... *Jamaran's* presence is instrumental in Middle East's defensive maneuvers." When asked about the concerns of neighboring Arab countries over Iran's *Jamaran*, MP *Elahian* stated that "... in fact the neighboring countries should feel safe as *Jamaran's* defensive maneuvers will play a major role in the security and stability of the region." She reiterated that "... Iran has never violated the rights of other Middle Eastern countries and *Jamaran* will give the message to the West that sanctions are without effect and their offensive positions are not the answer." These nationalistic comments came on the coat-tails of her support of the proposed legislation of *Shahrivar 1388* (number 8343) entitled "Revelation of violation of human rights by America in today's world". The proposed legislation states, in

part, that, "... despite its claim of protection of human rights and campaign against terrorism, the United States of America engages in acts of interference and intermeddling in internal affairs of other countries, and engages in military operations which in effect increases and expands and strengthens terrorism thereby causing severe security problems for regional countries." Accordingly, "... to counter these and implement protective measures, an amount equal to 20 million dollars is earmarked for this purpose."

The constitutional support for the passage of this legislation may lay in Articles Seventy One (Parliament's Power to Legislate), or in One Hundred Fifty Two (Foreign Policies of the Islamic Republic are based on rejection and negation of colonization, protection of independence and geographic boundaries of the country, protection of the rights of all Muslims and mutual peaceful relations with non combative states) or in One Hundred Fifty Four (the Islamic Republic of Iran recognizes the rights, freedom ... of all humans and while it will not interfere with internal affairs of other countries, it will protect the rights of the aggrieved). It is, however, unclear which constitutional provision allows the ear mark of the twenty million dollars for such act. Nonetheless, *Elahian* continues to press ahead and recently urged the government to provide the tools and equipment needed for eye-scanning and fingerprinting of foreign nationals upon arrival in Iran – an anti terrorism concern revealing her policies along the party line. On the domestic front, MP *Elahian* is direct. In line with Article Twenty Seven of the Constitution that guarantees to the citizens the right to peaceful unarmed association, she publicly blasted the controversial former chief prosecutor of the Islamic Revolutionary Court *Saeed Mortasavi* (involving the *Kahrizak* murders) stating "... Those who were transferred to *Kahrizak* were not hooligans ... they were just a group of youth and university students who were protesting at the country's situation ..." *Saeed Mortazavi* has since been demoted.

However, *Elahian's* most ultra conservative and loyalist posturing are directed at the domestic *Green Movement*. Article Twenty Six of the Republic's Constitution guarantees association of "parties, ... political assemblies and Islamic associations or religious minorities, conditioned that they do not violate doctrines of independence, freedom, national unity and constitution of the Islamic Republic ..." But, *Elahian's* recent public criticism of the *Green Movement* is aimed at the heart of that establishment. "Unfortunately," she said "we have not seen clarification of the *Green Movement's* position respecting the Republic's sworn enemies, The U.S. and Israel. We are aware of the rhetoric used by the *Green Movement* at the *Ghods Walkathon*, which rhetoric was in direct contravention of the teachings of the *imam* (Khomeini). So, in my opinion we cannot consider the *Green Movement* an insider unless other events occur." MP *Elahian's* support of domestic legislation relating to the rights of women, children and the disabled is, however, an indication of her more liberal social views. A proposed legislation is aimed at supplementing provisions 1 and 7 of law passed in 1364 (25 years ago - it is now 1389) relating to Article 21 of the Constitution concerning the government's duty to pro-

tect the rights of mothers and the protection of widows and elder women without guardians. This proposed legislation is intended to allow mothers of disabled children, with the permission of the highest ranking official of their division, to work part time and yet be able to enjoy rights relating to their retirement pension and retirement pay.

Elahian did not publicly state how the proposed legislation stands in compliance with the prescriptions of Article Twenty of the Constitution that guarantees to all citizens, whether man or woman, the equal protection of the laws. And so, perhaps in the future MP *Elahian* will have to determine whether an unequal legislation can be equally applied. It is common knowledge that the uncompromising position adopted by the Islamic Republic against the demands of women and minorities for equality of rights is neither supported by its constitution, nor by its religious laws. While the Muslim countries of Jordan, Syria and Pakistan maintain a legal framework for advancement of female judicial officers, history will remember the execution of *Farroukh Rou Parsa*, the demotion of *Judge Shirin Ebadi*, and the stoning of women by leaders whose designation is intended to guarantee against institutional corruption - Article one hundred seven. But, the western media's concerns with *Sarah Palin's* "handwritten" notes will divert attention from the systematic violation of citizens' rights of peaceful assembly and freedom of expression guaranteed by Articles Twenty Seven and Twenty Three of the Islamic Republic's Constitution.

While the Islamic Republic continues to re-create itself, perhaps more for self preservation than for any other reason, the interests of the United States will be served if its concentration on the Iranian affairs involves issues other than the nuclear enrichment program. It is so because the democratic interests of the Iranians and those of the international community are, in the words of *Mehdi Khalaji*, in confluence. Even though the Constitution of the Islamic Republic expressly guarantees protection against tyranny of thought, of the people, and of economic monopoly, the reality remains otherwise. Therefore, if the Judeo-Christian G8 continues to emphasize one single issue to the exclusion of other political and social issues, liberal newspapers will continue to be closed by ultra conservative in violation of the freedom of press guaranteed by Article Twenty Four of Iran's Constitution.

And so, while the New York Times believes that Iran's nuclear program is "one of the world's most polarizing issues," and Secretary of State Clinton deems it appropriate to engage in a public clash with the Russian Sergy Lavrov, a closer view of the gradual shift in Iran's internal policies toward women reveals a need for a drastically different approach by the Obama administration to issues concerning Iranians. The currently dysfunctional approach of threats, punishment and retribution will simply strengthen the anti-West sentiments. Washington's approach must necessarily become inclusionary of the Iranian population, assisting the everyday citizen with access to information, the internet and news, and facilitating travel to the U.S. and European countries.

In the interim, *Zohreh Elahian* remains a notable political figure. For that, go no further than her recent comments about the use of the phrase *rejal-e siasi* (distinguished political men) as set forth in article One Hundred Fifteen of the Constitution. Reportedly, MP *Elahian* asked The Speaker of the Parliament if one's status as *rejal-e siasi* is a prerequisite to the office of the presidency. She asked whether the phrase in fact meant that women are thus precluded from seeking that office. If anyone assumes her perfunctory, stand corrected, she may surprise you.

1: 1975-1979, the author's father was an appointed Governor of Rey.

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IRANIAN 9/11 HERO: STEP ACT A MISTAKE

Arsalan Barmand

When Shahram Hashemi saw an airplane fly into the second World Trade Center building and smoke spewing from the first tower, he knew it wasn't an accident. So Shahram, a young Iranian university student who had only been in the U.S. for three years, made a remarkable decision. As others fled the scene, Shahram found himself running toward the epicenter of the worst terrorist attack ever seen on American soil.

"A few minutes after the first tower collapsed, I found myself in a war zone," Shahram said. In the middle of the chaos, he began helping move shocked and confused people away from the towers to a safe place.

Seeing him in his business suit, a local fire chief threw his heavy coat over Shahram's shoulders and handed him a mask. Just then, the second tower began to buckle and he sought refuge in the nearby AmEx Building. Emerging from the building, Shahram joined a group of civilian volunteers to extinguish fires and clear rubble for the search and rescue teams. All day he worked until the soot, dust and exhaustion took hold of him.

That day, Shahram helped save over

a dozen lives - while here in America on a student visa. Less than a year later, Shahram was distressed when he saw Congress consider the Enhanced Border Security and Visa Entry Reform Act of 2002, which imposed new burdens on Iranians seeking visas. "The massive hardship that this possible legislation will have on Iran's young generation and families is simply beyond measure," he wrote to President Bush and Members of Congress. "Denying future students visas and families the right to visit their loved ones here are certainly not steps in the right direction."

The number of visas issued to Iranians was almost cut in half in 2003, after the Act became law. Eight years later, Shahram is even more disturbed by another piece of legislation in Congress. Congressman Gresham Barrett's (R-SC) Stop Terrorist Entry Program (STEP) Act aims to deny any and all individuals from countries designated as sponsors of terrorism - and Yemen - entry into the US, with possible exceptions for asylum and emergency medical cases. Had the STEP Act been enacted a decade ago, Shahram would have never been admitted into the US, and would not have been here on September 11 to save those lives and help put out those fires.

And again, Shahram refuses to be silent. Only now he has a megaphone. As Treasurer and Board Member of Amnesty International USA, Shahram is part of the group that oversees the organization's work to "protect people wherever justice, freedom, truth and dignity are denied."

As such, Shahram - who is here on an H1 work visa - stresses the dangers of

legislation like the STEP Act, and views it as a "mistake, through and through." Shahram calls the Act "patently insulting" to both the citizens of the countries affected and American values. He also argues the Act is "ineffectual from a policy perspective, as it would only create the illusion of security."

But the broader message is important too, he says. "Iranian students, the core of the Green Movement, are currently shedding blood and tears to secure their civil liberties, with enormous implications for the entire Middle East. At this critical historic juncture, these noble advocates of non-violent resistance need to see America's outstretched arms rather than her cold shoulder."

Since Iranians are only given single-entry visas, Shahram hasn't been able to return to his native country for 10 years. But in that time, Shahram has fought to create a better world, from the burning, twisted metal of the World Trade Center nine years ago to the Board of one of the world's most respected human rights organizations. In his example, we can all find inspiration.

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THE PERSIANS

Most civilizations come to maturity after a long period of cultural and military development, but Iran entered world history with dramatic madder about 547 BC. In that year Cyrus, king of the small Iranian state of Anshan, reached the climax of his career. After 13 years or war he united the several Iranian (Aryan) kingdoms of Media and Persia under his leadership. His domain extended from Asia Minor and the black Sea to the Gulf of Uman.

The Akhaemenid dynasty that Cyrus founded was to last only two centuries, but it came to rule the largest empire in the world. The old territories of Sumerians, Egyptians, Indus Valley people, Babylonians, Hittietes, Phoenicians and Assyrians, were all absorbed into the Persian empire by about 400 BC. Parts of Ethiopia, the Balkans and central Asia also came under Iranian Rule. At its height, the Iranian empire was as big as present-day Europe without Russia.

Iranians generally built upon the achievements of their predecessors and improved them. They brought peace, stability and prosperity to the regions under their rule.

“MIXED NUTZ”

The Kids from Dyvercity are on!

The creators of Mixed Nutz announced the show was launched March 6th, 2010 across more than 28 PBS stations in North America. Broadcasts covered major cities such as Chicago, San Francisco, Los Angeles and Washington DC. This comes after successful debuts on LA's KOCE PBS station and Shaw TV in British Columbia.

Mixed Nutz is an independent new series with an updated Peanuts feel to it. It showcases five friends from different places who are struggling to fit in. We follow characters like Babak, a typical 9-year-old, who is afraid to tell people he is from Iran. The complete opposite of Babak is the colorful and sarcastic Sanjay who just came from Mumbai and loves everything Bollywood. Adele, a half-Austrian girl also just moved to Dyvercity is world traveler and has forgotten how to make friends. Jae, whose parents came from Korea, has aspirations to become a great golf player. Despite his father's encouragement, he has trouble dealing with the pressure of the game. Briana, Sousanne, Miss Pickleberry and the parents round out this fun cast. The show is simple in style but has a strong message for people of all ages.

Big Bad Boo is working with local PBS stations as well as public broadcasting giant MHz Networks, a globally minded TV station that has welcomed culturally sensitive programming. “MHz Networks is thrilled to have Mixed Nutz headline our international children's block of programming. Mixed Nutz brings a light-hearted, global perspective to Saturday morning cartoons,” said Elizabeth Pringle, Education Director at MHz Networks.

“We're delighted with the response to Mixed Nutz. Kids are enjoying the show as entertainment and parents love the multicultural cast of characters,” says Aly Jetha. “We were very lucky to have had such an amazing team working on the series”, he added.

Getting the show on various other platforms such as iTunes is in the works so stay tuned for more news.

SUSAN LINES DOWLATSHAHI



Susan Lines's day job is production design and interior design and she does this because of her love for creating spaces and environments... telling a visual story. Additionally she is on the faculty of The School of Visual

Arts where she teaches Real World Production Design

While she had the ambition to sore she never expected her career in such a short time would reach the level she enjoys today. The ride to the top took determination, strict work ethics and a great deal of time and dedication. But when you love what you do and believe in yourself, as Susan does, you stay focused because you love it. Today her established firm Susan Linss Designs is considered to be creative and on the cutting edge. Her journey began with her education at the School of Visual Arts and continued with an internship, Production Designer, Music Video director, commercial and residential interior designer, designing and managing multi-million dollar projects that stretch across the globe. She has worked with a variety of household names directors with such as Brett Ratner, Doug Limon, Hype Williams and Paul Hunter. She graced America's corporate world working with Levi's, Bergdorf Goodman, Hewlett Packard, Target, Neiman Marcus and others. In the music world she worked with Kanye West, Rihanna and Mariah Carey.

TROGLODYTE VILLAGE IN IRAN 700 YEARS OLD

In the northeast of Iran at the foot of Mount Sahand in Kandovan, the villagers live in cave homes carved out from the volcanic rock. The age of some houses is more than 700 years. One of the most extraordinary sights in Iran must be a visit to the troglodyte village of Kandovan, where people live in cave dwellings as their predecessors did over 1,600 years ago. Historians have recently quoted specific geographical references in the book of Genesis as evidence that link the area surrounding Kandovan with the Garden of Eden. It naturally follows that the village of Noqdi, to the east of this Eden, must be the biblical land of Nod.



BOOK REVIEWS

**DEAR REGIME,
LETTERS TO THE ISLAMIC REPUBLIC**

Roger Sedarat

(2008 Ohio University Press, Athens, Ohio)

In reading this book of poetry I was moved by the emotions of this young man. Through his particular license of poetry he introduces his politics. Each word and sentence are precise with a definitive meaning into his feelings about Iran and the hopes of its future.



He allows us to look through his eyes and hear through his words the turbulence so many of us feel in watching events unfold in Iran. He is different from us because he is unafraid to speak his mind and show his emotion. The first part of the book titled, As If Change Were Possible, opens with Ghost Story

*By the time said country gets the bomb
My infant son will read the news.
For now I merely crackle each page
Of the paper before him, if only
To shake myself from reality.*

This sets the stage for what follows. Each poem grabs your heart, fills your eyes with tears or angers you. You will feel compassion, fear, sadness and perhaps a little hope. The following poem is one that completely sums the plight of so many Iranians.

Flying to Persia

*This is no nation for an activist.
Burned effigies of the colonizer
Assimilate into the incensed air.
The native language, having existed*

*Through centuries of invasions, survives
Demands for change as well as those clichés
Rewritten in a global marketplace.
When classic poems have been memorized*

*By generations, carrying a sign
Through the bazaar can only tire one's arm,
And so, as Yeats sailed to Byzantium,
I flew to this aesthetic land resigned*

*To see my life displaced beyond my will,
Transfixed within a universal scheme
Invented by forefathers; what I mean
Is what I read with so much time to kill.*

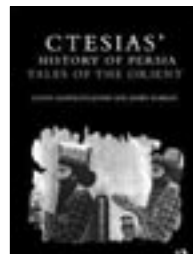
*A single couplet can retell my story,
A man paralyzed by parataxis,
Inhabiting that moment when fact is
Somehow surrendered into mystery*

This is a must have for the modern Iranian regardless of your political or religious beliefs for it tells the story of people who shared their intelligence, love and desire for peace with the world and continue to fight, without hesitation, to come back to that place once again.

**CTESIAS' "HISTORY OF PERSIA,
TALES OF THE ORIEN**

Lloyd Llewellyn-Jones, James Robson
(Published by: Routledge, 2009)

Towards the end of the fifth century BC Ctesias of Cnidus wrote his twenty-third book History of Persia. Ctesias is a remarkable figure: he lived and worked in the Persian court and, as a doctor, tended to the world's most powerful kings and queens. His position gave him special insight into the workings of Persian court life and access to the gossip and scandal surrounding Persian history and court politics, past and present. His History of Persia was completed at a time when the Greeks were fascinated by Persia and seems very much to cater to contemporary interest in Persian wealth and opulence, powerful Persian women, the institution of the harem, kings and queens, eunuchs and secret plots.

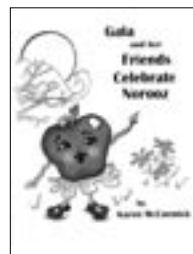


GALA AND HER FRIENDS CELEBRATE NOROOZ

Karen McCormick

Benthose Books 2009

Precious is the perfect word to describe this beautiful and simple children's book on Norooz. Each of the characters represents one of the components of the Norooz, So-freh-e Haft Seen making it more memorable than just learning them as part of the celebration. As her story develops so does the excitement of the holiday preparations, and then, the finished product! This book is a great educational resource book for parents, as it gives them explanations about the celebration of Norooz and the reasons for each item. There is one criticism, however, and that is the author's use of the word Farsi in lieu of Persian. Perhaps the reprints can be corrected.



PARADISE LOST: PERSIA FROM ABOVE,

George Gerster

(Phaidon, February 2009)

"Paradise Lost" is a stunning archive of aerial photographs from the 1970s, Paradise Lost: Persia from Above. It provides a unique look at a beautiful landscape and fascinating culture few people have seen for themselves. In 1976 and 1978, Georg Gerster, the pioneer of aerial photography who has influenced every aerial photographer working today, had the rare opportunity to record the landscape of Iran on over 100 flights and 300 flying hours. This unique photographic project resulted in a near complete documentation of the major archaeological sites and important landscapes in the region.



This book vividly brings to life a place, time and culture that few people outside Iran are able to witness. The book includes spectacular images of ancient citadels, desert ruins and rice fields spreading like a vast patchwork in a river delta, along with many unexpected sights, such as the bird's eye view of a crowded ski resort in the Alborz Mountains, within easy reach of Tehran. Persia's densely packed cities are elegantly captured by Gerster and

look so very different from Western European or North American cities of the same period. Their complex, interlocking flat-roofed buildings are both timeless and timely, with architecture that has stood unchanged for thousands of years.”

KETAB:

A Short Film by Ana Lily Amirpour Is Going to Tribeca

Payvand, Iran News, 12/29/09



Ana Lily Amirpour is working on her next project: a short film called KETAB, about a lonely young guy in Tehran who goes to buy a book. On the surface, it appears to be a very basic story, but as it unfolds, a much more intricate world is revealed, one that touches on the current dichotomies faced by Tehrani youth and their fight for basic freedoms. The film will star Sam Golzari who debuted as the star of

American Dream and 21. Co-stars include exciting up-and-coming Persian talent like comedian Max Amini and actress Sheila Vand, as well as veteran Iranian actor Marshall Manesh who has appeared in dozens of films and television shows including Year One, True Lies, How I Met Your Mother, Will and Grace and Entourage, among many others.

“KETAB is actually a scene from my feature script THE STONES. I plan to use this short film to show the industry that a foreign film about Iranian youth is not just important and topical, it’s also be an entertaining journey... with what’s going on in Iran today, it’s never felt more necessary to tell these types of stories.” Last year the feature script for THE STONES went to Tribeca Film Festival’s All Access program where it won the prestigious Adrienne Shelly Fellowship. This award and the continued support from Tribeca Film Institute has allowed her to keep moving forward with her project.

CD REVIEW: THE LITWIN-MARKIW DUO

NEW HAVEN, CT 2010

With Elysian Elegance

By: David Yeagley

“Rare is the virtuosic blend of talent and temperament,” reads the opening statement on the booklet accompanying the newly released CD, The Litwin-Markiw Duo, a recently formed musical collaboration of coloratura soprano Jennifer Litwin and pianist Victor Markiw. Rarer still is the taste and intelligence that went into the very selection of songs recorded on their first album. This newly recorded collection is an extraordinary event, and promises to be one of the most popular classical albums of the new decade.



From the very first sound of the album, an arpeggiated chord in the first song (Obradors’ “La Mi Sola Laureola”), pianist Victor Markiw assures us of transcendent command and a compassionate, generous order with felicity, grandeur, and wealth for all. From Markiw’s hands, the mere arpeggiated chord is a dramatic melody. What follows from the piano is every whit as vocal as the soprano with whom Markiw shares the music. Markiw is a true and compelling artist.

Litwin’s voice is pure silver so polished that she seems to reflect the very soul of each different composer she sings. Her

voice embodies a refulgence of scintillating variety. Completely liquid, lavishing, and lyrical beyond description, Litwin is a living ambassador of every composer’s dream.

An Elysian elegance transpires as the two poets recite. The musical intimacy is seemingly miraculous, so that when the album is finished, one immediately yearns for more. This is a most unusual effect. Indeed, the musicians make music of their own—something beyond the score. It is virtually necromantic. Such is the rhapsodic nature of this new album.

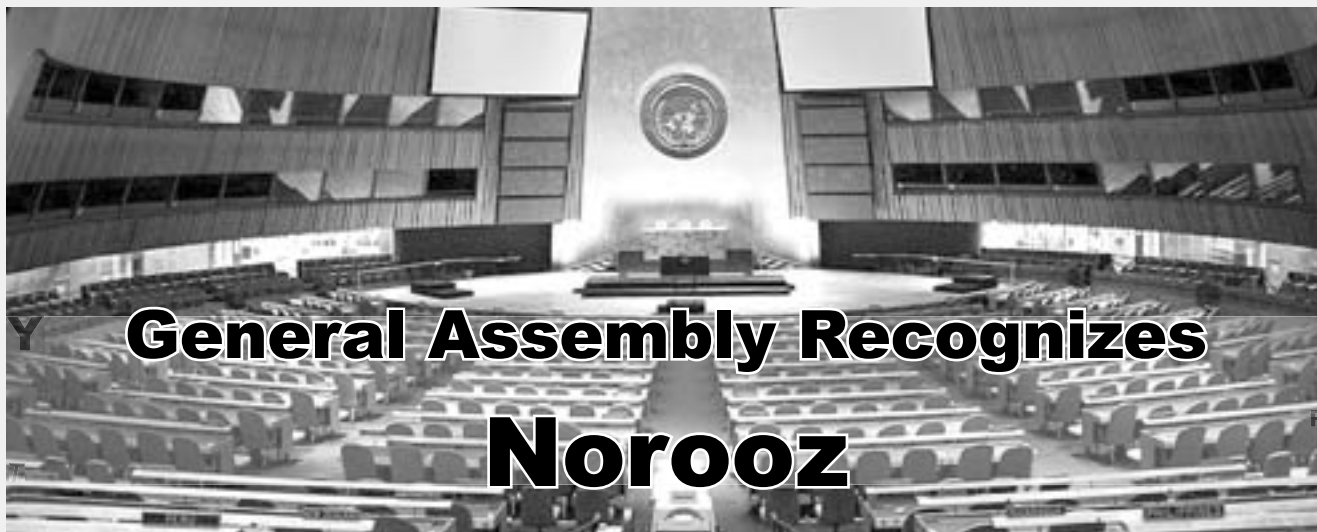
There is significant artistry even in the selection and ordered arrangement of the art songs on the album. We begin with Fernando Obradors, the Spanish poet, conductor, and composer. His songs are all irresistible, and performed with an ensorcelling power. They are each innocent enchantments, yet consciously convincing. They are followed by moments of Germanic and Italian fantasy, from another time, from another world long passed: Franz Schubert’s “Der Hirt auf dem Felsen” (The Shepherd on the Rock) and Franz Liszt’s “Pace non trovo” (I Find No Peace). The Liszt song, with lyrics from a sonnet of Petrarca, is memorably moving. In the one Schubert song, we have the added luxury of clarinetist Gregory Lunin.

Next we hear the swooning bewilderments of Claude Debussy, and four completely unique musical caricatures, ending with “The Apparition,” which is perhaps the most artistic event on the album. Lest we be forever charmed, however, these songs are followed by the heart-bleeding strains of Rachmaninoff. There are no words to sufficiently describe the subliminal confessionals of Rachmaninoff. After such Stygian murmurings, such ponderous drones, one can only gaze plaintively upward.

And then something truly magical happens. After this profound journey into the wilderness of human experience, we hear Aaron Copland’s arrangement of the old Shaker hymn, “Simple Gifts,” which feels heavenly. This song, along with two other Copland songs, cleanses the soul’s palate for the finale desert, Bernstein’s “Glitter and Be Gay,” from *Candide*. Bernstein never did employ any but a mundane mode, and the essentially “popular” musical event was his real achievement. Bernstein is, simply, forever pop. An appropriate ending for such an album, indeed, The Litwin-Markiw Duo will surely become thus popular, certainly among those artistically inclined.

Of all the works, the Rachmaninoff “Vocalise” is the most curious. Litwin’s timbre is so varied, and even unexpected, that the work sounds completely improvised. Of course, this was no doubt the intent of the composer. Litwin’s ever-changing tone makes this work especially captious. Markiw’s accompaniment is equally spontaneous. Their rapport is matchless.

Ms. Litwin earned her Bachelor of Music at the Oberlin Conservatory, and her Masters at Yale University School of Music. She debuted with the Sarasota Opera as Olympia, in Jacques Offenbach’s *Les Contes d’Hoffman*. She is a professional pedagogue, as well as a successful Wall Street persona. Markiw holds a Bachelor of Music from the Hartt School, a Master of Fine Arts from the State University of New York at Purchase, and a Doctorate from the University of Connecticut. He teaches at the University of New Haven, and will publish his first scholarly work through Edwin Mellen this year Myroslav Skoryk: *Life and Solo Piano Works*. For the artistic audience, the album is pure luxury. For young musicians, it should be required listening. It is a musical reference library, with a treasure of lessons. This collection will actually create finer ears in sincere students. It is a sparkling work, in all respects.



General Assembly Recognizes Norooz

The General Assembly this afternoon recognized the International Day of Nowruz, a spring festival of Persian origin.

According to the preamble of the resolution on the International Day (document A/64/L.30/Rev.2), Nowruz, which means new day, is celebrated on 21 March, the day of the vernal equinox, by more than 300 million people worldwide as the beginning of the new year. It has been celebrated for over 3,000 years in the Balkans, the Black Sea Basin, the Caucasus, Central Asia, the Middle East and other regions.

The Assembly called on Member

States that celebrate the festival to study its history and traditions with a view to disseminating that knowledge among the international community and organizing annual commemorative events.

Welcoming the inclusion of Nowruz into the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) on 30 September 2009, the text notes the festival's "affirmation of life in harmony with nature, the awareness of the inseparable link between constructive labour and natu-

ral cycles of renewal and the solicitous and respectful attitude towards natural sources of life".

The text was introduced by Azerbaijan's representative, who said that, as a holiday celebrated in many parts of the world with themes important to all humanity, Nowruz encouraged intercultural dialogue and understanding. Speaking after the Assembly took action on the draft, the representative of Iran marked its adoption by quoting lines of the Persian poet Jalaluddin Rumi that expressed the holiday's theme of rebirth "on our planet and in our souls".

You Are Now a Part of United States History in the Congressional Record!

On the evening of March 17, 2010, Norooz Commission held its inaugural event at Representative Ed Royce and Representative Howard Berman of California presided over the event together with Mr. Nasser Kazeminy, Chairman and Gissou R. Kian, President of Norooz Commission along with Ambassadors and senior diplomats of eight nations.

Dr. Kamran Khavarani, the creator of "Abstract Romanticism" pledged a special painting titled "The Bird of Freedom" presented to the spirit of Thomas Jefferson.

This pledge was accepted by Dr. James Hadley Billington, the Librarian of Congress. This pledge and acceptance was witnessed by nearly 400 people of Iranian, Iraqi, Turkish, Kazakh, Kyrgyz, Tajik, Russian, Ukrainian and Kurdish origins at the Coolidge Auditorium.

This is the first time in history that an Iranian American artist pledges a painting to the spirit of Thomas Jefferson, the man whose gift of books provided the beginning for the Library of Congress.

This historic pledge is worthy of

mention in the congressional records for the coming generations to know about the greatness of our nation, the contribution of immigrants from Iran and other corners of the world, the unique gift by Dr. Kamran Khavarani, the Iranian born architect and father of "Abstract Romanticism" and Norooz Commission, whose mission is to bring people of many cultures and creeds together with a bond of love, peace and friendship on this day, the first day of Spring, Norooz, on March 20, in the year of, two thousand and ten at Washington, DC.

ZOROASTRIANISM AS TAUGHT BY THE PAHLAVI WORKS

Judaism in Persia. Judea had come under the Persian rule at the very early period. The Babylonian exile brought the Jews into close touch with the Persians in the sixth century B.C. We have already referred to the fact that the restoration of the temple at Jerusalem was executed at the royal command of the Persian kings Cyrus and Darius. The Jews had settled in Persia in large numbers from very early times, and had planted their colonies all over the country. They thrived peacefully and were given privileges to manage their own civic affairs without molestation from the state. Some of the members of the royal house had even married Jewish princesses. King Yazdagard I, for example, had a Jewish consort.¹³ But in general those who contracted matrimonial alliances with Jewish women were disliked, and the Denkart inveighs in strong terms against the practice of contracting such unions.¹⁴ In the course of time, the Persians and the Israelites seem to have been sharply divided in religious

matters. Disputations on questions of belief must have been frequent. All of the Pahlavi works denounce Judaism in unsparing terms. The writer of the Denkart, for instance, avers that Judaism is not a divine religion,¹⁵ and points to Zohak, the most detested of men, as the originator of the Jewish scriptures,¹⁶ branding elsewhere the Jewish books as utterances of the demons

17 Seno, a Zoroastrian sage, is reported to have said, in his admonitions to the kings of Persia, that the sovereign of the people ought to keep aloof from the religion of the Jews, as bringing devastation to the world.¹⁸ The progress of the Jewish belief be arrested, lest it spread its evil among the faithful.¹⁹ The knowledge of this religion produces baneful influences upon the Mazdayasnians,²⁰ it implants vice,²¹ and aggravates immorality

22 Men become of evil disposition through it.²³ Those who belong to this faith cannot be said to be related to the Prime Source.²⁴ Such violent attacks on

the beliefs of a race which had settled in Persia from the very early period of her history show us the bitterness of feeling that must have prevailed between Zoroastrians and Jews. A later writer, confounding Kai Lohrasp with Nebuchadnezzar, states that one of the meritorious deeds done by Lohrasp was that he destroyed Jerusalem and scattered the Jews.²⁵

13. Shatroihâ-i Airân, 47, 53.

14. Dk., vol. 2, p. 97-102.

15. Dk., vol. 4, p. 211.

16. Dk., vol. 6, p. 372, 373; vol. 7, p. 439.

17. Dk., vol. 9, p. 604.

18. Dk., vol. 5, p. 310.

19. Dk., vol. 1, p. 24.

20. Dk., vol. 6, p. 373.

21. Dk., vol. 7, p. 456.

22. Dk., vol. 6, p. 357, 358.

23. Dk., vol. 4, p. 257.

24. Dk., vol. 4, p. 267.

25. Mkh. 27. 64, 67; see also Jackson, Zoroaster, p. 209.

NOROOZ IN TAJIKESTAN



THE NOROOZ IRANI- AN NEW YEAR IS NOW AN OFFICIAL HOLIDAY IN GEORGIA

Report by the Georgian News Agency on March 21, 2010

“The oldest outside influence in Trans-Caucasia is that of Persia many of its populations, including Armenians and Georgians, as well as Persians and Kurds, the Transcaucasus had much closer ties with the former Sassanian world to its south and east than with the world to the west” Whittow, Mark, *The Making of Byzantium: 600-1025*, University of California Press.

Iranians Are One of the Best Immigrants the USA Has Seen

According to extrapolated 2000 US 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 US 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 hold 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.**

Marriage Solemnizer, Official Translation Services

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TEHRAN - NEW YORK

MARCH 5 - APRIL 1, 2010

The much anticipated group exhibition TEHRAN - NEW YORK, which is part of the Armory VIP program, opened at the Leila Taghnia-Milani Heller (LTMH) Gallery on March 5 and ran through April 1, 2010. TEHRAN - NEW YORK surveys work by 40 well-known and emerging contemporary Iranian artists - including artists living in New York and the United States such as Shoja Azari, Shiva Ahmadi, Negar Ahkami, Shirin Neshat and Y.Z. Kami - as well as the work of artists currently living in Tehran, such as Reza Derakshani, Shadi Ghadirian and Farideh Lashai. A significant portion of the work has never been shown in the U.S. A catalogue accompanied the exhibition.

The exhibition is presented in conjunction with ART MIDDLE EAST, a series of exhibitions and cultural programs focusing on cutting-edge contemporary art of the Middle East.

Through paintings, drawings, sculpture, photography, installation, and video painting, TEHRAN - NEW YORK explores synergies and differences among the work of Iranian artists living in Iran and the U.S. The exhibition does not aim to define Iranian art, but rather to examine the unique visions that exist among Iranian artists, while encouraging a much-needed place for dialogue. However great the distance, there are always loose ties that unite these artists across the globe. While many of the artists tackle the same political and social issues, the result is hugely varied due to the different perspectives of the geographically dispersed group. Other artists in exhibition are: Samira Abbassy, Shoja Azari, Maryam Bayat, Majeed Beenteha, Bahar Behbahani, Ali Chitsaz, Hossein Edalatkhah, Aylene Fallah, Mehdi

Farhadian, Roya Farassat, Siamak Filizadeh, Darioush Gharahzad, Ramin Haerizadeh, Khosrow Hassanzadeh, Bahman Jalali, Rana Javadi, Shahram Karimi, Pooneh Maghazeh, Niki Manray, Mahmoud Bakhshi Moakhar, Nazar Moosavinia, Farhad Moshiri, Nicky Nodjourni, Farah Ossouli, Soody Sharifi, Arman Stepanian, Taravat Talepasand, Sadegh Tirafkan, Hamila Vakili, and Darius Yektai.

IT'S NOT YET DRY

It's Not Yet Dry, is the title of the article by Roberta Smith that ran in the Arts and Leisure section of the New York Times, March 28, 2010. The article reviewed 20th Century painting and featured a number of younger established artists. One of the featured artists was Negar Ahkami with her picture "Trying to Pluck Her Eyebrows, She Blinded Herself." The piece was completed in 2009 and the picture was given to the paper as a courtesy of the Leila Taghnia-Milani Gallery New York.



MUSIC AND LITERATURE

THUS SPOKE ZOROASTER

by N. M. Tejaratchi. M.D.

In the last issue of Persists Heritage I read an interesting article about Nietzsche's hook "Thus Spoke Zoroaster" and the music later composed about it by Richard Strauss.

It is interesting to note that classical music is closely related to literature and the arts.

Richard Strauss (1864-1949), a renowned German composer, demonstrated this in 1896, when he made a composition inspired by Nietzsche's poetic and philosophical treatise of the same title "Thus Spoke Zoroaster" (or "Also Sprach Zarathustra" in German). This composition is a "symphonic poem (or it single continues movement in which the content of a poem, a story or novel, a painting, landscape, or another non-musical source is illustrated or evoked). It is comprised of nine sections, starting with all introductory fanfare with trumpets dominating - called "Sunrise" or "Dawn." and ending with the section called: "It's Song of the Night, Wanderer." The jest section is very popular and has been used in various movies (namely "A Space Odyssey") and several TV programs (including the BBC's coverage of the Apollo Moon Landing). This section was also proposed as (lie new national anthem for Germany during the Nazi regime. However, when asked his opinion. Richard Strauss declined, saying that he would not like to replace the existing anthem, which was based on Franz Joseph I Hayden's music - an antecedent German composer.



Richard Strauss

Richard Strauss (who, by the way, is unrelated to Johann Strauss or his family) was actually the last of the great German composers. He made numerous great compositions including the operas "Salome" and "Der Rosenkavalier." In his music, he followed Richard Wagner's style "Leitmotif" (a melodic passage or phrase associated with a specific character, situation, or element) which still prevails in classical music today, and which also reveals how closely related classical music is to literature and the arts.

Reflections

By: Shahrokh Ahkami

*Alexa, when nervously and unsure
I stepped into your room in the hospital,
I was filled with fearful images
That morning I saw you like a little bird,
in the arms of your mother,
shaking and restless with your cheeks red,
forehead sweaty.*

*I was afraid to walk into your room.
But when I entered the room
everything looked shiny and bright,
because a light was radiating
from your most beautiful face,
lighting the dark room.
With your mother affectionately and patiently
holding the line that eased your breathing,
You were so peaceful
with your everlasting smile
and closed eyes.
You gave a feeling
of tranquility and calmness
to your mother and me.
You looked so beautiful,
even though you were sick.
I could not resist taking your picture
and sending it to your loved ones to
share your beauty.
I would never have suspected that,
this picture, would create
such anxiety.*

*But Alexa,
your ocean of innocence,
your beauty,
even in sickness your breathing,
so difficult,
you made us forget that you were sick.*

*My mind was filled,
only with my thoughts of...
what a beautiful child you are*

*I wish to see your beautiful smiles,
Your beautiful eyes,
Light up my world many years*

Your Loving Poppa

AN INTERVIEW WITH

**DR. NASSER HEYDARIAN,
MD, GCKSJ**

A WORLD HUMANITARIAN

BY: BRIAN APPLETON



*Good Morning Doctor Nasser
Let's begin at the beginning.
Tell us about your childhood.*

I was born in 1958, July in Tehran, Iran to my parents Mohammad Haydarian and Farhangis Afshari. From early childhood I was very socially and political aware especially of the discrepancies between the rich and the poor in Iran. When I started Sina High School, I was always the first one to finish the examinations and always received the highest grade in class. I skipped from 7th to 9th grade and then from 9th to 11th. My IQ is 180. I was extremely good in literature and horrible in Physics and Chemistry but excellent in mathematics.

I finished high school by age 15. I had written a poem called “Elm behtare ya Servat?” (which is better, knowledge or wealth?) It went on to say that the wealthy think that wealth is better and then it went on to enumerate all the crimes that rich people commit to stay in power exploiting the poor. One of the reviewers on the examination committee was Savaki (state secret police) and then I got kicked out of Sina High School. One day the principal of Sina High School called me in and questioned me about who I had collaborated with on my poem and I said: “no one.” A week later he said I could stay because I was such a good student but I had to keep my mouth shut. So I decided to leave.

My older brother introduced me to one

Doctor Nasser is one of the most decorated men I know but not with war medals but rather medals for his humanitarian efforts for which he has been recognized by many nations and yet he goes unappreciated and relatively unknown in these United States of America although he has been living in San Francisco and been a citizen for over 20 years.

As I write this he is being investitured into the Order of the Knights of Rizal, which is one of the highest distinctions available in the Philippines and it is reserved for persons who make a major contribution to that nation. He will be made a 4th degree Grand Commander, which is second only to the head of the order.

Here is a brief summation of some of his accolades:

He was awarded the “Heart of the World” medal or “Sersa Danka” by Adelina Lanedovna, the mother Theresa of Russia, of which there have only been 50 given worldwide. Deputy and Diplomatic Counselor of the World Parliament for Security and Peace; Vice Consul for UNESCO and United Nations; Advisor to President Putin of the Russian Federation Administrative Offices Health of the Nation; Advisor to the Dumas of the Russian Federation Council on Health of the Nation; Maltese Cross: Grand Commander of the Knights of Malta; Cross of St. John’s Hospitaller: Grand Commander of the Sovereign Order of the Orthodox Knights of St. John Hospitaller of Jerusalem; Medal of the Legion of Merit of Belgium for Science, Education and Culture; Medal of Cavalier of Dubai from the Lotus Educational Institute; Countess Tatiana Bobrinskoy, descendant of Empress Katherine the Great, Czarina of Russia, awarded Dr. Heydarian the medal of the House of Romanoff for humanitarian service and research for his service in Central Asia.

He was also investitured into the Sovereign Order of the Orthodox Knights St John’s Hospitaller of Jerusalem, for humanitarian service and research for his service in Central Asia.

Academic distinctions: MD Pavalov State Medical University, St. Petersburg; MBA Columbia Southern U. Alabama, USA; PHD British Institute of Homeopathy; Licensed Naturopath, Wash DC.; Sports Medicine specialist post grad from Military Medical Academy, St Petersburg, Russia.

Nasser Haydarian holds four passports: A diplomatic passport form the UN IPSP (International Parliament for Safety and Peace.)

A diplomatic passport from the Sovereign Medical Order Knights Hospitaller St. John of Jerusalem; A US passport and an IRI passport.

the most famous poets of Iran of the day, Akhavan Saless. I apprenticed myself to him for 8 years. I studied with him every day. One night I was coming home from Akhavan Saless's home. Savak knocked at my door. I went down and answered. They asked if I was Nasser Heydarian. I said yes, and they said they worked for the government and they had a warrant to ask me some questions down town. I told my mother they were some friends inviting me out for a coffee and I went with them. I was put in jail and tortured for a year with no contact with my family at all.

Every night I heard the torture going on in the neighboring cells around me and at dawn I heard people being executed by firing squads against a wall. I coped by doing Namaz and meditating. I would have to guess that more than 10,000 people were executed during the Shah's regime.

I had been accused of subversive activity yet I was not a member of any organization. I had read a book by Samad Behrang and another by Sadegh Choubak and that was enough to get me arrested. When they tortured me, they were trying to get me to name other "subversives." You can see the scars of cigarette burns here on the backs of my hands and the scars on my back from razor blade slits rubbed with potassium. It was my anti establishment poetry that had gotten me in trouble. After my arrest I actually had to stand trial in a court of law but it only lasted two hours. I was only 18 and didn't know how to keep my mouth shut so I said to the court that we live in a country where oil and other resources were plentiful in abundance and a country with a long history of human rights and therefore there was no reason that there should be such a huge discrepancy between the rich and the poor with homeless people living in card board shanties while rich lived in marble palaces. There was no reason for such inequality. That was enough to get me jailed and also a court gag order in which they stated I was not allowed to write anything politically provocative especially in poetry or in their words not to be a "wise ass." I refused to sign anything to that effect so I was jailed. The sentence was for 14 months but the revolution came and all the jails were liberated so I got out unexpectedly two months early. I was grateful since a lot can go wrong in two months in jail. Six months of my sentence was in solitary confinement.

Everybody was shouting "Khomeini, Khomeini, Khomeini" and I went home. I had just the clothes on my back and a pair of

sandals and no money so I had to walk from Evin Prison to home which was about ten miles. Everybody was home. My mother fainted when I walked in.

After that I watched the new regime to see what they were up to and to decide if I wanted to stay in Iran or not. At that time I kept busy writing song lyrics for young singers in recording studios. I worked with the famous singer Maziar.

One day my brother came and asked me if I wanted to work for the government. I asked him which section. He said Setad Enghelab Farhangi and I would have to do background checks on applicants for universities. I told him no thanks. That was exactly one year after the revolution. I decided to leave because I didn't like the direction the new regime was headed. My family especially my brother said that it was time for me to leave. The regime knew that if I refused to work for them that I was against them. My brother drove me to Tabriz. I stayed in Tabriz one week with friends and I made a plan of escape as they were looking for me by now. My friends took me to the mountains to the Barzargan Border with Turkey. There a young man in his thirties acted as my guide and rented me a donkey for 400 tomans. We rode together to the border. My donkey's name was Ascar and he was pure black. When we got to the border there was a mouth of a narrow gully. Here the guide took back his donkey and gave me a back pack with some noon-e-sangak-o-panir (flat bread and goat cheese) and a bottle of water. The passageway was about 25 meters long and after ten minutes I emerged on the other side in Turkey. From there I walked about 14 kilometers to a man waiting with a car which my brother had prearranged. We drove for almost two days to Izmir. I stayed with my escort in his house for ten days.

What happened after that?

After that I contacted a friend of mine in Palermo, a Persian student, who was going to help me get a visitor's visa to come to Italy but my passport was from the Shah's regime so it was invalid. I contacted my brother to tell him I needed a new IRI passport.

Meanwhile I went to Istanbul, where I stayed for two months, with a connection from the guy in Izmir and I paid him 1000 Tomans to stay with him for that period of time. My brother got me a new passport and arranged for someone to bring it to me in Istanbul in person. Then I got an invitation

to come to Italy with a 30 day visitor's visa. I went to Palermo and started on a new journey of a life of exile. I moved to Perugia because a friend told me there were many Iranian students there. I stayed 1 1/2 years in Perugia and learned Italian and took most of my meals in the University Mensa. I worked as a dish washer in a restaurant in winter and in summer I did farm labor like harvesting water melons. I was about 21 by now and I had no money. It was very cold in the winter and I was only wearing summer weight clothes because that was all that I owned. I went into Standa, the department store and on the second floor I put on a winter coat. As I was leaving the store, I was apprehended and taken to the Questura (police station.) I stayed overnight in jail. The next day I had to go before the judge and they got me an Iranian lady translator. I told the judge that I was a hero and that in one year's time I would help a thousand more heroes to escape Iran. When the translator heard my story and understood who I was, she started crying and pleaded my case with the judge. He was lenient and gave me a court order to vacate Perugia within 48 hours. My story made the local paper, the Corriere del Mondo.

A friend, Mehrdad took me on his motor scooter to the freeway. I wanted to go to Rome. It was very dark on the freeway and we had no head light or tail light. A car suddenly came up behind us and swerved to avoid hitting us. Unfortunately it went into a skid and went off the road where there was about a five foot drop. The car tumbled over several times and landed upside down. We kept going about two hundred feet and I told Mehrdad to stop. He said: "no let's just keep going" and I said: "no we have to go back and see if we can help them." I went back and heard a man shouting for help. I saw that he was a large man and he was pinned behind the steering wheel and couldn't move. I told him I would get help. We drove a few kilometers and found a small manufacturing plant and used their phone to call for help and then we left. I prayed that this man would be alright and we read in the paper the next day that he had been hospitalized but was OK. He said that he had only seen two shadows in the middle of the road at the time.

By the time we got to Rome, Mehrdad read over the court order and discovered that I had not just been banished from Perugia but I had been given 48 hours to leave Italy. In Rome we talked to some Iranian connections who told us to go to Yugoslavia. We took the train to Trieste and then

started walking into Yugoslavia through the mountains without visa as illegal aliens. The mountains were heavily forested and known to be full of brigands. It was middle of winter by now. We walked for 9 hours in heavy snow and suddenly we came up against a tall fence. We crawled over the fence and thought we were back in Italy but upon consulting the map, it turned out it was the first of nine fences in the no man's land between Italy and Yugoslavia. It took us two and half days to cross them all with only a few cans of tuna to eat and snow to drink. Finally we reached the border. The plan had been to leave Italy to comply with the deportation and then sneak back into Italy and seek political asylum from the United Nations in Rome. Mehrdad went back to university in Perugia and I went and stayed with a friend of his in Ladispoli, a village outside of Rome. Meanwhile I went to the UN and petitioned them for political asylum and they opened a case for me. After 2 1/2 months they sent me papers which gave me official political asylum under the protection of the UN. They asked me which country I wanted to go to and I told them the USA. Two weeks after that I got a parcel in the mail from the US Embassy in Rome with my tickets and \$750 traveling money and with the sponsorship of a Baptist Church in Pennsylvania. There were 75 of us who received this UN protection from different countries all around the world. The next thing I knew, I was in JFK airport. I had never been to America before and I didn't speak any English. I had studied German in a Sina Vocational High School. I was met by a security officer with my name on a sign. From there they sent me to Berkeley, California because they said there was a big Iranian ex-pat community there. There I went to Adult Education classes to learn English and I worked as a house painter. I asked my family in Iran to send me my high school diploma and transcripts so I could apply for college. I got into the College of Alameda. I got my AA degree in Psychology. After that I moved from Berkeley to San Francisco. Since wrestling is in my Iranian blood, I had wanted to start a wrestling school but I didn't have enough resources or time as I was working on my BA. About this time, a friend took me to an Italian restaurant on Divisadero and I noticed that one of the waitresses was an Iranian girl. It was love at first sight. I asked her out to coffee and after a year we were married. We have been married 23 years.

I took a lot of courses at San Francisco

State University and graduated with a BA in Physical Education with a minor in Physical Therapy. About this time, some Iranian singers in Los Angeles started contacting me asking me to write songs for them. I also ran an ad in the Pejvak, the San Jose Persian Yellow Pages, that I was available as a lyricist. I wrote songs for Maryam Jallali, Houman, Rashid and Farhad. I gave two songs to Dariush.

Wow, that's amazing! Then what?

I then decided to study medicine at the age of 42. All the years prior, I had only done business as an owner of coffee houses. But I soon discovered that it was very difficult to get into medical school in the US. A friend of mine called me from St. Petersburg, Russia and said that he thought I could qualify for medical school there and also one in Rostoff. I applied for both and was accepted. I didn't speak Russian yet but luckily the universities had just started offering the course of study in English. I chose Rostoff University. Medical school there was a six year program. They accepted my four years of US courses and I did my fifth year in Rostoff. Then I got permission to finish my sixth year by distance learning and returned to San Francisco. At the end of the year I went back and took my examinations. I then did my residency (ordinatura) at the Russian Military Medical Academy in St. Petersburg in sports medicine for one year post medicine.

I wanted to take the US Medical Licensing Exam parts 1, 2, 3 & 4. Also since my degree in medicine was from a foreign university, I had to do my residency over again for three years rather than one. I decided due to my age and not being able to take three years off from working and having to take out major loans that I would not continue my practice of medicine in the USA. I thought about going into business instead as I needed to make a living. My wife's family was involved in the coffee business so I decided to open a coffee shop. Meanwhile at the same time I kept study-

ing and started on a PhD in Homeopathy from the British Institute of Homeopathy because I thought it would be easier to get licensed to practice that medical discipline in the USA. By 1997, I opened a coffee shop on 16th and Mission called City Blend Café Roasting Company with 2,500 square feet of space. This was in the middle of the dot com bust. The business started growing and it started to become a famous place in San Francisco. Some non profit organizations began having meetings there and City Supervisors started having their campaign advisory meetings there as well. One time an episode of "Nash Bridges" TV series was shot in my café with Don Johnson and Cheech Moran. The film company manager rented out my place to do the shooting. Business remained good until 9/11. (You can go to Google to see what happened.) On Sept 11th my café was vandalized and then again on Sept 24th. Between damage and lost business, these hate crimes cost me over \$90,000. I sent a claim of all my losses to Sacramento and they basically told me to fuck off. What they did was give me a lot of press coverage. Ted Copell called me for a TV interview and I refused. Senator Feinstein and her husband came and posed for pictures with me, the City Supervisors and Willie Brown, the mayor at that time came. It was in all the local papers. Some of my patrons voluntarily camped out in



the ruins of the café in sleeping bags to protect it until the doors and windows could be replaced.

My business kept losing money but I got through with my studies and got my PhD in Homeopathy. Eventually I sold the Café. The owner of Poncho Villa Burrito Restaurant bought the Café and kept it exactly as I had it and is still doing business over there today. For the next two and half years I spent my time doing humanitarian services as a doctor in Central Asia, Russia and Iran mostly at my own expense with some subsidy from the universities and some Russian medical doctors.

I went to Russia and met with some good people like Dr. Shanti and some government officials and I asked them how I could assist them with humanitarian services and fund raising for humanitarian relief and also which regions needed my assistance the most. I went to Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Armenistan, Bellarous, Baku, Azerbaijan, Iran, Mexico and the Netherlands. I visited hospitals and orphanages to determine what equipment they needed and then I would do fund raising to purchase them. I particularly focused on the needs of the disabled for adaptive technology and wheel chairs. A lot of these places did not have wheel chair access like ramps and so forth which made it difficult to use wheel chairs even if they had them. I developed occupational therapy procedures for people with hand and leg deformities. I came up with designs for adaptive eating utensils for people with deformed hands. My high school training in wood working vocational school at Sina, paid off. I also did house modification for the disabled. I would go to the homes of the handicapped and lower shelves that were out of their reach and make other adjustments to make their daily routines of life easier. I started purchasing medicine and alternative medicine from the US, clothing, computers, beds and so forth for the needy in these countries from my own savings.

The Russian government saw what I was doing and started opening doors for me. Their public health department is called "Health of the Nation." They appointed me a member and vice consul, for the Russian Federation under the supervision of the Putin administration. One day in 2007, I received a letter inviting me to New York to be knighted as a Lieutenant of the Order of St. John Hospitaller, Knights of Jerusalem which is a thousand year old charitable organization. My latest fund raising efforts with Countess Tatiana Bobrinsky resulted

in \$500,000 of medical equipment for the Pushkin State Hospital # 33. The town was named after Pushkin the writer whom they call Chochoud Cherni which means "a little black" because he was.

A year after that I was promoted to Commander of the Order of St. John Hospitaller, Knights of Jerusalem, with the mandate of forming a commandery for San Francisco and St. Peterberg. On my last visit to the orphanages in Russia, I met the Mother Theresa of Russia, Adeline and she awarded me with a medal called the Sersa Danka or Heart of the World of which there are only 50 recipients world wide. It was exactly two weeks after that, when I received the message that I was nominated as vice consul advisory to the Putin Administration. Last January I was appointed a deputy minister to the Italian International Parliament for Peace and Safety which is recognized as an intergovernmental organization by the UN. It has the same functions as the United Nations. It was originally started by the former President of Cyprus who was succeeded by his appointee Archbishop Viktor Busa.

What are you doing now with the Knights of Jerusalem?

I am trying to establish commanderies in S.F. with 11 members and in St. Peterberg with 16 members, to see what humanitarian efforts we can undertake. Since I am in the medical field, my goal is to establish a clinic for the disabled in each country from Russia all the way down to Armenia and Iran and we will assist the biggest orphanage and drug rehab center in Tehran...Kahrizak Foundation. We will approach the large pharmaceutical companies for donations.

That certainly sounds ambitious but a very worthy undertaking. How much do you estimate you have raised in charitable donations since you began this work?

I would estimate between five and six million US dollars.

That is very impressive considering that you have done all this more or less by yourself. I find it quite ironic that you have been given so much recognition by the Russian Federation, the Italian Parliament, which even gave you an EU passport, the UNESCO and so many other governments and churches and NGOs but nothing by the US government where you are the humble owner of a coffee bar. I think one of the things which impresses me the most about you is your humility. You are possibly one of the most decorated and honored human beings I have ever met and yet you are totally modest and approachable. I am also amazed to learn that in addition to how many songs you have written for famous Iranian recording artists over the years that you, yourself are also a singer and have recorded four CDs. You are still an active lyricist and poet and in fact that is how I met you one day when you were delivering a lyric to a singer friend of mine. I want to say that it is my privilege to know you and I wish that there were more people like you on this troubled planet who are not only unafraid to speak the truth and bear the consequences but also follow their words with generous actions to the benefit of the neediest of our fellow humanity.

Thank you for those kind words. The fact that you love Iran opened my heart to you.

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