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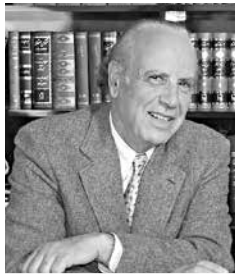
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FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

Season's Greetings and Merry Christmas to all our dear readers. This wish is also sent to the people of the world who continue to suffer and the host countries, who over forty years ago graciously accepted us into their home, cared for us and allowed us to become meaningful and contributing citizens

My wish, as it is every year, is for peace. To the refugees seeking shelter and safety for their families, from the political storms and the cold winter approaching. I pray that they will find, as we did, a land that will accommodate and care for them.

A few days ago I saw images of young Iranian migrants. Their faces showed exhaustion and desperation. With lips sewn closed, they were waiting for the door to freedom to open. It never happened, instead it slammed shut in their faces because they are Iranian. They hoped that the dangerous journey they survived would end with a welcome to a new home. It didn't because they were Iranian. And they remained hopeful that their silent screams would somehow be heard. But they were not because they were Iranian.

A few weeks ago while in London, I was sitting at the restaurant in our hotel enjoying breakfast. We were surrounded by hundreds of other guests but our attention and focus were on two other tables. One table was an Arab couple with a small child. The mother was completely covered except for her eyes. At the other table sat an Oriental couple with their small child. We, other guests, and their parents were enjoying the interactions between the two children. Though different in so many ways, they did not see the differences. They were innocent and pure succeeding in communicating and playing with each other in their "child language."

This happened only a few days after the horrific Paris attacks. People were still on alert and were afraid. This interaction between these children seemed to ease our tensions and fears. Watching them reminded me of how pure we are when born. We lack the ability to understand hatred. Differences seen through a child's eyes do not lead to fear and animosity but to curiosity. We remain pure until the outside influences of society, education, religion, family and politics taint us.

These children innocently smiled at each other held each other's hand never allowing the difference of language and skin color to interfere with their fun. During our childhood years we laugh and love together without any expectations. Yes, we are all born innocent, but we are also born vulnerable and eventually we are impacted by our surroundings making us so different from what we were at birth.

Over the past twenty years, writing for this magazine,

other media and lecturing has fortunately allowed me to make new friends and unfortunately make enemies. While I understand everyone has the right to form their opinion about my writing too often, they, without knowing me, judge my character and falsely label me. Their actions have resulted in some of my friendships changing into adversarial relationships.

Facebook has been around for more than a few years. At first I resisted the idea of joining, but one day I accidentally opened three Facebook accounts, two personal and one for **Persian Heritage**. My days as a physician and journalist are very busy, with little time left for anything else. Too often I became consumed with this social media and without realizing it I would spend a few hours a day on the site. Many times I thought about closing these accounts, but I have to admit I was addicted. My curiosity to see what was going on in the world and how people react to events prevented me from closing my subscription. Perhaps I was so attracted to Facebook because it allowed me to see how individuals approached life. Their makeup, perceptions and characteristics are revealed through their activities on their accounts and their responses towards others. Some are interested to share family events and pictures, others use it to promote their professions and others use it because of their interest in social and political events. Through Facebook they publicize their religious and political views. Others, like me, use it as an informational gathering tool for news and information, to study the different views of individuals and analyze political and social events. When I find interesting information I will post it on my page to share with my "friends."

Like all of you, I am constantly being asked to "friend" someone. Without questioning who they are, I do. I am interested in their participation in events, not their political, religious or social interests. I must admit, however, when I see names of people from my hometown of Ghouchan, my state and Iran I get very curious and excited. It is interesting and fun for me to see how and what they are doing, again not their political and religious life. I love seeing the pictures of the present Ghouchan and am shocked with how it has changed and grown into a modern city. I am fascinated to see Ghouchan's youth. The pictures they post take me back to my childhood years and I reflect on the Ghouchan that I knew 60 years ago with its old and broken infrastructure. I wonder that now as a modern city that it has still kept the wonderful qualities I knew as a teenager and laugh thinking how stupid I am to think it would remain the same as it was when I was a teenager.

Back to Facebook! One day I received a harsh and sur-

prising message from a Facebook friend. The message read, "Dr. Ahkami it seems that you have joined the Iran lobby, so therefore I can no longer be your Facebook friend." I was "unfriended." This message took me by surprise. Not wanting to respond through social media I picked up the phone to call this person. There was no answer but I left this message, "For the past 76 years of my life no government, no governing organization, political or religious group has been able to buy my support. Now at the age of 76, it certainly is not going to be the case. I am certain people know that I am not changeable. Please call me to explain your message." I did not get a return call, but I continued to be "unfriended" on Facebook in the following words "Dr. Ahkami I no longer trust you and since the Rouhani government has come into power you have showed your real color and joined the Iran lobby." I responded, "I don't know anything about this Iranian lobby or who is a member." I also informed the person that I have three Facebook accounts and have "friended" people on all from everywhere and every group. I asked if there was anyone in particular they were referring to. I received a message back with two names. Instantly I "unfriended" these individuals. I informed this person of my actions and stated that I do not know these individuals. I further stated that I believed the manner in which this was handled was very wrong and unprofessional.

My action of "unfriending" these people bothered me. A few days later I thought to myself, as I criticized the behavior of this person, my behavior of instantly "unfriending" these people was equally unethical and unprofessional. How could I take such an action, especially as a journalist who believes deeply in the freedoms of choice and speech? On Facebook I am involved with many people of many different political views. How did I have the right to cut these people off and in a way deprive them of their freedom of speech. I thought that my action and that of this person was a form of censorship. I began to think that this friend, like many other Iranians, consider you an enemy if you do not agree with or do not think like them.

My regret is that people like this person, have a flag of war against the Islamic Republic. When you look at their individual circle of acquaintances you realize that it is fairly small. There are not too many friends and coworkers who support them. They seem to be lonely and are often the leaders of groups, comprised of one or two people. It is very sad to see that individuals in this free world, choose to dictate their views on to others. And when it comes to issues concerning Iran they become tyrants. They lose their ability to tolerate and or respect others with different points of views and sentiments.

In looking at the thousands of people I have "friended," most speak about freedom and liberty for Iran and Iranians as individuals, not through an organized group.

As I told this dear friend, I have no affiliation or understanding of what makes up this so called "Iran lobby." Except for some old friends from Ghouchan who still live in that area, I do not know these writers. I simply accept them and "friend" them because of my past connection to Ghouchan and Khorasan. I am not interested in their political and reli-

gious views. Most of them are much younger than I. All my life I have been an independent thinker. As the publisher of Persian Heritage I am proud to say I have never censored a writer from any religious, political or social group, due to a difference in my personal views. I am honored to work with them and respect their opinions and thought process, we can agree to disagree. I do not have the right, as a journalist, to censor their opinions, UNLESS they are disrespectful in their writings and debates and show a lack of love for Iranian people and its soil.

Will the day come when we can put aside our differences and rid the world of hatred and animosity and join hands, like the two innocent children of Arab and Oriental ethnicity? Will we, like the parents of those children, look past our differences in the way we think, dress, look and speak and simply enjoy the goodness and purity of each other and the fragile goodness of life? Will we ever see a world where differences in political and religious views, language, dress, food, drink, dance and music are NOT something to fear, but rather characteristics to embrace and learn from and discuss and seek friendly and fair solutions? Let us enter 2016 with the intention and goal to change "Will we ever" to "We have."

As always I wish all of you peace and happiness.

Shahrokh Alavi



IT IS NOT STRICTLY TRUE

Nasser Ovissi congratulated me on my article on the Scythians, Sarmatians and Alans which appeared in the Summer 2015 issue of "Persian Heritage"; however.

I have not yet received a copy of the Summer 2015 issue of "Persian Heritage". The topic of the Western Sakas or the Scythians, Sarmatians and Alans is a large one, and so far I have only begun.

Recently someone described the obvious Alanic influence in the Arthurian Cycle as "an encounter between Celts and Iranians". However, the above is not strictly true. As Christopher Beck within his recent book noted, the close relation between the Celtic peoples on the one hand and the Iranian peoples on the other goes back to very early Indo-European times.

Please see Chapter 1 of

the new edition of my book, of which I sent you a copy on computer disk. However, after Iranians and Celts had separated, there was a reencounter when the Scythians expanded to the West into the Russian and Ukrainian steppes and the Danube plain, which is remembered in the Irish tradition, and finally yet another encounter when the Alans influenced the Arthurian Cycle of the Welsh-Breton branch of the Celtic epic tradition. So, after the separation of the Celtic and Iranian peoples in Indo-European times, there was not one but two reencounters. So, the Alanic influence on the Arthurian Cycle of the Welsh-Breton branch of the Celtic epic tradition was not "an encounter between Celts and Iranians", but rather was the second reencounter between these two closely kindred Indo-European peoples. As an anecdote, it has often been said that "Kurds look

like Irishmen", and I myself have often been taken for Iranian. Once again, "Erinn" and "Iran" The topic of affinities between the Celtic and Iranian peoples which date back to very early Indo-European times in a large topic in its own right, and must be treated separately from that of the Scythians, Sarmatians and Alans. The Germanic peoples are Indo-Europeans, but only very distant kin to Celts and Iranians. Any Celtic or Iranian influence on the Vikings is relatively late, and is due to the Goths, who always maintained contact with their ancient Scandinavian homeland, or the result of the Viking invasions of Ireland and Scotland, I would much appreciate if you would send me a copy of the Summer, 2015 issue of "Persian Heritage".

Michael McClain

DYNAMIC COVER

A few words need to be

said about the Fall cover, Dynamic and Intriguing. I admire the accomplishments these young men have achieved in their life. I am certain they are the tip of the iceberg to the accomplishments achieved by the children of our first Iranian-American generation. It makes me proud to see how we, compared to other ethnic groups assimilated so quickly into our new home. Perhaps that is the reason we have been strong in accomplishments. Iranians as a group never sought a governmental handout but rather struggled quietly to success.

HN

DEEP THANKS

Once more please accept my gratitude for the great article you wrote in remembrance of our mother. You were one of her favorites, and this eloquent piece, which conveys so much feeling, is one of the reasons.

Hossein Ghorashi

'DALLAS BUYERS CLUB' WRITER BOARDS SHAH OF IRAN DRAMA (EXCLUSIVE)



Melisa Wallack has been tapped to write the screen play for “King of Kings,” the story of Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, the last Shah of Iran.

The film looks at the Shah’s often fraught relationship with the United States, and documents the mistakes that set the stage for the Iranian revolution and the rise of religious leader Ruhollah Khomeini.

“The Shah of Iran is one of history’s most polarizing figures — once considered amongst the most powerful and reviled figures on the planet,” Stone said in a statement. “Melisa is a brilliant writer as evidenced by ‘Dallas Buyers Club’ and will provide a timely examination of the legacy of foreign interventionism, and the consequences of the Shah’s reign and eventual downfall.”

BLUESMAN JOHNNY AZARI FEATURED IN NEW JOPLIN MUSIC FESTIVAL



Johnny Azari was born in Shiraz, a city known for wine, poetry, opium, and revolution. At a year old, he was relocated to a city known as New York; noted for grit, madness, money, and proliferation, where he was raised. When Johnny isn’t on tour, he lives in New Orleans attempting to abort his liver like a stillborn. These things have no influence on him whatsoever

Johnny Azari (New Orleans) plays his own mutant form of the Mississippi Delta-Blues. His live shows blend music with storytelling and comedy. Azari has been on national tour since 2013 and is recording his fourth LP, “Songs From A Motel

Room,” exclusively in motels during his 2015 tour. Azari has scored film (“Illusions & Mirrors,” starring Natalie Portman), served as guest lecturer and performer at Brown University and seen two of his videos; “Occupation Blues” and “Freedom Glory Be Our Name” gain viral success.

Johnny Azari is a sort of time traveler. As the musician seeks a blend between Jimmy Rogers and Robert Johnson, he hears his music going back to the roots of blues.

Azari’s sound features a mix of Delta blues and alternative country — two genres known to demand authenticity from their performers. Azari said he’s just fine with that.

White House Announces New Chief Floral Designer Hedieh Ghaffarian



The White House, Office of the Press Secretary, September 17, 2015

The White House ... announced that Hedieh “Roshan” Ghaffarian has been selected as the White House Chief Floral Designer.

“We are thrilled to have Roshan serve as our Chief Floral Designer and lead our tremendously talented, dedicated floral staff,” said First Lady Michelle Obama. “Roshan’s life story is a powerful reminder that the American Dream endures and the President and I look forward to seeing her creativity flourish for White House guests to enjoy year-round.”

“I couldn’t be more pleased that Roshan’s diverse portfolio will be reflected in our upcoming events and day-to-day décor, giving guests a true taste of American entrepreneurship and artistry,” said White House Social Secretary Deesha Dyer.

“I am deeply honored to serve the President and First Lady as the new White House Chief Floral Designer,” said Ms. Ghaffarian. “I am humbled by the opportunity to serve in this Administration and will dedicate myself to advancing the tradition of excellence and elegance in the White House.”

Hedieh “Roshan” Ghaffarian was born in Tehran, Iran, and raised in Los Altos, California. After immigrating to California with her family as a young child following the Iranian revolution, Hedieh attended middle school and high school in Northern California. In her early twenties Hedieh started her business, Flower Affairs, from her parents’ garage. A female entrepreneur with over 25 years of experience and over 1,000 events completed, Ghaffarian has an expansive portfolio and extensive experience in envisioning, planning, and executing large-scale events with great attention to detail. Ghaffarian has trained with UK-based floral designers Jane Packer, Paula Pryke and Kenneth Turner. Her work has been featured in several publications, including Ceremony Magazine, Today’s Bride Magazine and The Knot Ghaffarian will be on hand for the China State Dinner and will start full time on October 18 when she relocates to Washington, D. C.

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Mummy of an Iranic Child Warrior from a Lost Medieval Civilization Unearthed Near Arctic



Source: The Siberian Times, July 2015

Scientists last week opened the mummified child's remains cocooned in birch bark and copper, which — combined with the permafrost — produced an accidental mummification. Wrapped in reindeer hide and fur, the 6-to-7 year old was protected by a child-sized bronze axe and bear's pendant.

The child — seen here in these remarkable pictures for the first time — appears to be from a higher social strata that previous remains unearthed at the site, the mysterious Zeleny Yar necropolis.

The child appears to be from a higher social strata that previous remains unearthed at the site, the mysterious Zeleny Yar necropolis, close to the Siberian Arctic, which had ancient links to Persia. So far only one female — also a child — has been found at the burial place. The major new find close to Salekhard is seen as exciting by experts who are conducting MRI scans on the remains.

The body was covered with copper or bronze plates on the face, chest, abdomen, groin — and bonded with leather cords. Along with the remains — the preservation of which was aided by permafrost — scientists found a bronze pendant in the form of a bear. Additionally, there was a small bronze axe, and temple rings made of bronze. The items found with the body — the axe, pendant and rings — suggests, “this was not some poor boy”. The child warrior was “not from the lower strata of society”.

Scientists think the mummification at this site was “accidental”: it was not intended by this ancient clan, but happened because of the copper and permafrost. The boy's remains were dug up several weeks ago, but only now opened in Salekhard. It is the first mummy from the civilization found at this intriguing site since 2002.

Previously, archaeologists found 34 shallow graves at the medieval site, including 11 bodies with shattered or missing skulls, and smashed skeletons. Five mummies were found to be shrouded in copper, while also elaborately covered in reindeer, beaver, wolverine or bear fur. Among the graves found so far is just one female, a child, her face masked by copper plates. There are no adult women.

Artifacts included bronze bowls originating in Persia, some 6000 kilometers to the south-west, dating from the tenth or eleventh centuries. One of the burials dates to 1282, according to a study of tree rings, while others are believed to be older. The researchers found by one of the adult mummies an iron combat knife, silver medallion and a bronze bird figurine. These are understood to date from the seventh to the ninth centuries.

ME

**TDC Office
The Dynamic Continues
Teheran, Since 2005
Danial Apartment**

While we were exploring the site for the first time, we saw an isolated pine tree left from a beautiful jungle which used to exist there not very long time ago... After searching the area closely, we discovered a small pine tree garden, which we enjoyed marveling at it all the time we were building Danial. That tree was the inspirational idea that came across. That's why Danial carries the memory of the lost trees of Teheran. Trees are absolutely vital to human; they provide shelter, shade and clean air, they offer people safety and security.

A tree has many branches supported clear of the ground by the trunk. Below the ground, the roots branches spread out widely and above the ground, the branches divide into shoots that bear leaves. These three parts (the trunk, roots and leaves) have different textures with different transparencies), this is where the idea of the facade design came from.

There is nothing more beautiful than a fully grown tree, a tree with fall foliage, trees inspire us to relax and commune with nature, taking advantage of the shade, the quiet goings-on of the tree's inhabitants and its beauty.

Every gentle blow of wind is enough to fly it, as well



as every ray of light can easily cross it to make it gleam.

Danial reminded us that if we dig down something we could find the balance between two opposites with a portion of the opposite element in each section. It taught us that opposing forces interact to form a dynamic system in which the whole is greater than each part. Everything has both yin and yang aspects (for instance shadow cannot exist without light). Architects always wonder how they could create a deep space in a flat façade. The answer is exactly the same as what happens in matt. It's the story of zero and infinity!

You can only get close to infinity when you are in the zero point. Here the infinity is a full open mountain view from the Danial window, the deep view of the mountain peak high above south of Teheran which marches away in all directions.

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It's said of an Iranian and an Egyptian student who one day were arguing at an American university over the matter of cultural heritage. The Iranian said, "We have a 3000-year old civilization." The Egyptian replied, "But our civilization dates back to 4000 years ago. We've even found wires at the Pyramids which shows that back then, our ancestors used wires for communication!" The Iranian retorted, "Ha! We were so ahead of our time that 4000 years ago, we were already communicating wirelessly!"

Say, your father was a sage, but what does his knowledge have to do with you? Many an Egyptian today who wastes their time riding camels in the heat of the desert and burns in religious hatred. America, on the other hand, this young country without a thousand-year old history, is walking on the moon.

The Persian magazine *Rah-e Zendegi* had recently quoted from the Internet, and I summarize, that "palm is a strange tree; no wonder that Persian language counts it as *nafar*, as if it were a person. You chop off its "head", and the tree will die, even though the roots may still be healthy. As Dr. Karim Mojtahedi, an Iranian professor of philosophy said, 'culture is akin to a palm tree. It doesn't matter if your roots have been there in the soil for thousands of years. What matters is that your head be healthy, too; that is, the cultural manifestation of your society today has to be healthy, as well. If a society's culture falls ill today, that culture will die, despite its ancient roots. Once I look at other societies from this corner of the world, I think that they've chopped off the head of *this* palm tree.'"

Indeed, culture, and not empty claims, is what keeps societies including our Jewish communities alive. An Iranian journalist once asked Mohamed Hassanein Heikal (b. 1923), a famed Egyptian journalist, commentator, and a former editor of *Al-Ahram*, that "we Iranians were once invaded by the Arabs, just as you were, but we managed to keep our culture and the Persian language. So, how come your language today is Arabic? You are not Arabs. What happened to your authentic culture?" Heikal answered, "Because we didn't have a poet like your Ferdowsi." Such geniuses as Ferdowsi or Reza Shah the Great managed to transform the fate of a nation and preserve its culture. Alas, some intellectual myopics did not allow Ferdowsi's body to be buried among other Muslims on ground of his admiration

Be Awake and Sleep Soundly

By Norman "Nourollah" Gabay
English Translation by Payman Akhlaghi

"The future isn't somewhere we're headed for, but it's what we'll make it to be." – Paraphrase of an Inscription at Oxford University

for the Zoroastrians, and centuries later they destroyed the mausoleum of Reza Shah on grounds of his "sin" of serving Iran. "*Spit be on you, the dome of heaven!*" Which item tastes sweeter to a sophisticated palate: a verse by Ferdowsi about his mythical hero Rostam, or the misplaced fame and fortune of the likes of Moshir-ol-Saltaneh, who said, "Moshir-ol-Saltaneh's cow is the Moshir-ol-Saltaneh of the cows!"

***My life be given for the rare men
Who didn't change by the less or the more.
Shame be on the covetous souls,
Who sell a world for the smell of a coin.***

A man among the crowd appeared exceptionally jubilant when a horse won in a race. They asked him if the horse belonged to him. He answered, "No, but his bridle is mine!" Those who own the reins of the Iranian, Egyptian, Greek, Chinese, etc. horses, they may make much fuss against the advocates of modern science, such as the United States. But where does each side stand today, and to whom shall the future belong?

True winners are proud of their own achievements, with no claims to the knowledge of their forefathers, to some historical background, or to miracles and prophecies. They create thousands of inventions each year, such as those ubiquitous small multitask devices that let us connect to the world at the touch of a finger – and to do so wirelessly! Alas, some ungrateful souls benefit from such unique gifts of modern American science, yet they act with ingratitude rooted in jealousy. And jealousy has forever played a destructive role in politics, and in social and religious affairs, for as they say, the *covetous shall see no rest*.

Our most dangerous enemies are our closest jealous friends. Crying out aloud when their mind is contaminated with religious and sectarian hatred, too.

A loaf of bread could fill an empty stom-

***ach, but all the gifts of the world
can't quench jealous eyes.***

Jealousy is so dangerous that our 3300-year old Ten Commandments conclude by ordering us, "Thou shall not covet!" The jealous returns kindness with hatred, and makes claims to the "bridle of the horse". He or she may be hostile even towards his teachers or supporters. We read in *Saadi's Golestan* of a master, who complains of the treacherous greed of his pupil,

***Either loyalty was alien to this world,
Or that no one practiced it in my***

time.

***No one learned from me the art of arching,
Who at the end didn't train his arrow on me.***

We saw that Mohammad Atta, educated in America, along 18 students (sic!), using the unparalleled Boeing airplanes, some of the finest of American inventions, hit the office of their host, that is, the 102-story towers in New York, motivated by the provocative power of religious hatred; and we saw how they murdered about 3000 innocent people, all strangers to them, and sadly, changed the politics of the world. We also saw how Uncle Sam, devoid of jealousy and the baseless words of ungrateful people, has continued to shine like the sun and to give warmth, health, knowledge and comfort even to the children of those treacherous few, who had received their education in American universities but turned a cruel side on him.

***Learn kindness and fidelity from the tree,
Who never holds back its shade even from the lumberjack.***

They asked Michelangelo (1475-1564), that most renowned sculptor in history, "As many talents as you have, how did you become the best sculptor without a teacher?" He answered, "With a kiss of my mother." Be assured that Mohammad Atta and his like-minded pals became terrorists by a single kiss of hatred from their ignorant mothers or some advocates of religious hatred. Meanwhile, the world deludes itself that such people will gradually wake up to the truth. We tolerate them and treat them kindly, ignoring that to love the undeserving person is to waste precious kindness and love. If so, people will keep losing in this game, while the preachers of hatred continue to live in comfort. As a Kashani chef named Touti Khanom said, "The cook takes in the smoke, but the good fat goes

to the bride!”

The famed Iranian author Sadegh Hedayat said, “In fact we were all humans until race severed our communication, religion separated us, *politics* built walls between us, and *wealth* divided us into classes. Today, everyone is asking for *freedom*, without knowing *captivity*. *Captivity* isn’t about the bars around you: It’s about the hedges that surround your thinking.”

Today, at city squares around the world, including the Al-Tahrir Square of Cairo and other countries involved in the “Arab Spring”, people ask for freedom and have been ready to give their lives for it. But little they know that freedom-fighters ought to first break down the invisible bars of captivity that put their minds and those of their children under siege: The bars of religious, ethnic, sectarian and racial hatred. Because the future isn’t somewhere we’re headed for, but it’s what we’ll make it to be. Religious schools have a strong role in building the future. Governments instead of war should make them stop preaching hatred, so that the world may achieve its beautiful dreams. Otherwise, as long as such books and teachers are around, the problems will persist, though they may pass from one stage to another. They continue to teach their nonsense and superstitions and “catch the proverbial live fish by using the dead fish!” By preaching their empty words, they’ll keep throwing an ignorant bunch from one pot-hole into another well, all in the guise of religious advocacy, using the latest technologies. They’ll continue to contaminate young minds hundreds of times the number of those who’ve already been taken out of the game. Sadly, the world has yet to realize that to enjoy a sound sleep, we should first be awake. Vigilance entails learning from the past and to avoid repeating past miseries.

The world ignores the horrendous power of religious and racial hatred, and it doesn’t pay attention to the chronic roots of bigotry and discrimination. No doubt, the roots of religious hatred and racism are not new to our times. For example, the French author Émile Zola (1840-1902) was so hurt by what he saw around him that he wrote, and I paraphrase, “Until the last temple has not collapsed upon resentful religious bigots and racists, humanity will not see calm and peace.” Just recently, on June 17th 2015, a 21-year old man, a wealthy white Christian American, went to an old African American church at Charleston, South Carolina, listened to the sermon for an hour, then shot and murdered nine inno-

cent black worshippers, including the priest. He then left his car in the parking lot of the church and fled the scene, before he was arrested shortly afterwards. It turned out that he hated badly the black people. He was a racist, and as racists are everywhere, he was blind to the truth. Indeed, not only the murderer, but also his parents and teachers should be tried.

Self-deception is the key to backwardness. We can never change where the wind blows, but we can align our life’s sail to suit the winds of modern civilization. Today, humanity suffers the pain of religion and racism as punishment for the oppression and cruelty that for long it dealt its neighboring minorities. Water can reflect beauty only when it’s calm and clean. We have failed to adopt a proper and transparent behavior toward religion. Instead, we have used it as a means to seek superiority, to treat whatever minority at hand with discrimination and oppression. The chaos that has afflicted our world reflects this poor trend.

I’m reminded of Ousta Abbas the Mason, a man much trusted by the Tehran Jewish community. The late Dr. Habib Levy, the famed Jewish historian, dentist, and ranking military officer, commissioned Ousta Abbas to build five houses in the Velenjak district of Shemiran, in northern Tehran. Once the project was completed, the architect confided in Dr. Levy, “I have a problem. For years, I have been building houses for the Jews, all of whom, God bless them, were kind to me and paid my due fees. But I don’t know why I feel uncomfortable every time I have to take money from a non-Muslim!” Dr. Levy replied, “Sit down and let me tell you why.”

Dr. Levy explained, “Do you remember when you were a child and your mother threatened to call a Jew – or an Armenian, a Zoroastrian, or a Black guy – to come over and eat you alive?! What would she tell you if she found you unkempt or poorly dressed? What did people say at family or school gatherings? Do you remember that they made it seem as if they were liked more by humiliating the non-Muslims; or that they believed their own prosperity depended on destroying others?”

Alas, the remedy for our pain and agitation was left to a crowd

Who imagined their prosperity at the cost of our destruction.

“Dear Ousta, you are not to blame: The blame is on the ignorant advocates of hatred, who thought belittling others would lift themselves. The blame is on

those who raised you, taught you those books, or preached hatred. Children’s greatest enemies are their ignorant parents and teachers. Remember that under the age of 10, the characteristics of the environment will take roots in the child, to the point that it’s said, ‘It entered the body with the milk, and it’ll leave the body with life.’

“Now, your job is to cleanse your mind and those of your children of all hatred. Bear in mind that you, that is, your seditious beliefs, are the worst enemy against you and your children. It’s up to you to avoid repeating toward your children the wrong words and deeds of your parents, friends and teachers. People aren’t born good or bad; rather, a good education renders a person good, while a bad education may turn a person into something worse than the beasts.”

As Hafez said,

***Don’t blame me for growing on the lawn:
I grow as the gardener will nurture me.***

Crying out aloud for misplaced self-grandeur! We’ve even gone as far as calling our species “the crown jewel of creation,” even though this could have applied only to the days of childhood. For sadly, once we grow up, we lose three sources of happiness that belonged to our childhood: Happiness without a reason, Love without reservation, and Curiosity without limits.

My friends: It’s wrong to judge others, and especially, to write about them out of anger. Instead, we can proudly transform societies when we speak and write politely, devoid of lies and hatred, based on logic and sound reasoning. The pens that write for happiness and for the good of society do much more than the lips, which merely pray.

***Better have my head buried under a stone,
than to see my name called out in shame.***

Baseless fear and inherited self-censor, these plagues of the days of suppression, must not hold us from publishing the truth. It’ll be then up to the readers to judge what’s been said, and not up to the regressive or ultra-cautious editor of a publication. Such differences as between the Conservative and the Orthodox, etc., reflect differences in interpretation, rather than our approval or disapproval of some individuals. This author believes that an accurate knowledge of religion is more important than believing in the religion. It isn’t enough to ask “Who’s right?” Let’s see what’s good for us today. Let’s make sure that future generations won’t call us “the dwellers inside the cocoons!” Religion isn’t a cause for happiness, but depending

on how it's been put to use it may lead to happiness or misery. Well-placed criticism helps talents grow and reveals the shortages. As the poet Saadi said,

***If I penned the truth, then why fear
The words of the fault-seekers.***

Writers write not only for the editors, but for people to read. The censor and self-censor of the days of the Diaspora are behind us. Statistics show that people will increasingly gravitate toward the Internet, leaving behind the traditional paper-based press. Curiously, the highest number of issues or subscribers for the dwindling Persian magazines in the States is no more than 1500. In the meantime, according to the webmaster, a little-known website by this humble, *www.BabaNouri.com*, has been visited perhaps millions of times by Persian-and English-speaking users. The world's greatest newspapers and magazines, such as *Reader's Digest*, have been published of late on the Internet; and soon enough, our small publications will join the trend, as well. The press is crossing from the age of Gutenberg to the age of Electronics. The greatest bookstore in the world, Amazon.com, doesn't own books, and instead, often only prints and mails the books according to the demands received electronically. And recently, the greatest digital library in the world was opened in the United States, one which doesn't have a single hard copy of the books.

The Internet is making progress fast, and soon enough "illiterate" will be applied to someone who can't use its immense resources. Fortunately, the youngsters of the immigrant Iranian families – a people who escaped a difficult past, the last generation of a kingdom, akin to a migrant tribe, some on foot and others driving their Rolls Royce – as the first generation residing and growing up in this "land of opportunities", have been shining brightly and without precedence in many scientific areas, including the digital technology. Because they have understood that victory means the ability to skip from one failure to another without giving up hope. The children of this generation will build Iran and form the new Iranian. It's a generation that with an unwitting leap worth a hundred-years has exchanged censor and discrimination for the freedom of expression, and has provided an opportunity for their future generation to learn sciences and to lead better lives. It's a generation that while preserving its best of traditions, tries to make agree the famous Deezy dish with Sushi, the Baba Karam dance with Tango, the custom of

Hana-bandan with Bachelor Party, and the public bath pools named Khazaneh with Jacuzzi. It's a generation that abandons lawlessness to abide by the law, for the environment has taught them that even for a driving violation, Uncle Sam may treat them like murderers! Alas, today is nothing like yesterday, and tomorrow won't be anything like today.

***There's left no more news of us!
The glass is broken, the wine's spilled,
And the cupbearer is nowhere in sight.***

To conclude, as the poet said,
***Oh, Saadi! To love one's homeland is an
old story,***

***But one can't die in humiliation for I was
born here.***

Humanity has to realize that the world isn't bound to one city, country, continent, or race. We're all the children of this planet. Beliefs aren't limited to your beliefs and mine; and not everyone who thinks differently is our enemy. The garden is beautiful for its colorful flowers.

As the poet Emad Khorasani wrote,
Brawls and wars grow on short-sightedness.

***Clean your lenses to see that the Kaaba
and
The Winehouse are but one and the same.***

Meet RaminBahrani

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

Ramin Bahrani (born March 20, 1975) is an American-Iranian director and screenwriter. Film critic Roger Ebert listed Bahrani's film *Chop Shop* as the 6th best film of the 2000s and hailed Bahrani as "the director of the decade." Bahrani was the recipient of the prestigious 2009 Guggenheim Fellowship, and was the subject of several international retrospectives including the MOMA in New York City, Harvard University, and the La Rochelle Film Festival in France. Bahrani is a professor of film directing at Columbia University's Graduate Film Program in New York City. Bahrani was born in Winston-Salem, North Carolina, to Iranian parents. He received his BA from Columbia University in New York City. His first feature film, *Man Push Cart* (2005), premiered at the Venice Film Festival (2005) and screened at the Sundance Film Festival (2006). The film won over 10 international prizes, was released theatrically around the world, and was nominated for three Independent Spirit Awards.



Bahrani's second film *Chop Shop* (2007) premiered at the 2007 Director's Fortnight of the Cannes International Film Festival, and then screened at the Toronto International Film Festival (2007) and the Berlin International Film Festival (2008) before being released theatrically to wide and universal critical acclaim. Bahrani was awarded the prestigious 2007 Someone to Watch Independent Spirit Award. In 2008, he was nominated for Best Director Independent Spirit Award.

Goodbye Solo, Bahrani's third feature film, premiered as an official selection of the Venice Film Festival (2008) where it won the international film critic's FIPRESCI award for best film, and later had its North American premiere at the Toronto International Film Festival (2008). The film was called a "masterpiece" by numerous critics including Roger Ebert and A.O. Scott of *The New York Times*. In 2009, he made a short film *Plastic Bag* which features the voice of legendary filmmaker Werner Herzog and an original score from Kjartan Sveinsson of the band Sigur Rós. *Plastic Bag* premiered as the opening night film of *Corto Cortissimo* in the Venice Film Festival where Bahrani was also on the jury for Best First Films. It later screened at Telluride and *The New York Film Festival*. In 2012 he made a music video of the song "Eganda" for the SigurRos album *Valtari*. Bahrani's fourth feature film, *At Any Price* (2013) stars Dennis Quaid, Zac Efron, Heather Graham, Kim Dickens, Clancy Brown and Chelcie Ross. It was selected to compete for the Golden Lion at the 69th Venice International Film Festival. Bahrani's fifth feature film *99 Homes* (2015) opened to strong reviews at the Venice Film Festival.

August 25, 1941, The Day of Infamy

WHY THE BRITISH ENGINEERED THE OCCUPATION OF IRAN?

part two

Dr. Hooshang Guilak

Tabatabai was removed from his post and after several cabinet changes; Reza Khan was appointed Prime Minister on October 28, 1923. He began acting as a dictator, manipulating the parliament and the deputies. Interfering with free election and placing his yes-men in Majles. For a short time he contemplated a republic regime but finally decided on a kingdom for himself. On December 12, 1925, the handpicked deputies of Majles passed an amendment, abdicating Ahmad Shah from the throne and appointing Reza Khan as the Shah. Also Majles ended the Ghajar Dynasty and created the Pahlavi Dynasty. Reza Shah gradually distanced himself from the British as he did with Russians. However, there were quite big differences between these two. The Russian did not possess the type of interests that the British were enjoying at the time: The Oil, the British Imperial Bank, the north Iranian Oil, the remineccasnt of the 1919 Treaty and its problems, etc. He created the Iranian National Bank to take over the function of the British Imperial Bank. He tried hard to bring Americans into the commercial and political sphere of Iran. The British watched all his actions in dismay and they never forgot his detrimental actions against their interests.

THE AMERICANS AND THEIR CONTRIBUTIONS OR LACK OF CONTRIBUTION:

Reza Khan, as the Prime Minister, followed the same ideology of many of his predecessors. Trying to bring a third power in the country. He followed the same paths by asking Americans for help. The first assignment of Dr. Arthur C. Millsbaugh as the General Treasurer of Iran followed the same line of thinking as the hiring of Shuster in 1911. It did not set well with the British. Reza Khan worked hard as the Prime Minister to have a contract with an American Oil Company for exploration of north Iranian oil. The Americans were receptive to this idea¹³, with severe objections by the Russians and the British. Standard Oil Company of New Jersey was the first to enter the arena. British sent one of their top oilmen, Codman, to Washington for letting the Americans know that they would not be able to do much in Iran without the help of the British. Codman was able to convince the Americans, easily of the British position. Standard Oil severed its talk with Iranians. It joined the APOC for a combine exploration of the north oil. Of course the Iranian government refused the offer and tried to get another interested company. Soon the Sinclair Oil Company offered its willingness. The talk with Sinclair progressed well; the primary contract was approved by Majles in a vote of 50 affirmative out of 68, despite the vigorous action of the pro-British deputies in Majles.¹⁴ This preliminary contract was signed on Dec. 20, 1923. The American Minister in Tehran, Gotlieb wrote to the Secretary of State, "This afternoon I officially witnessed signing of north Persian oil concession by Reza Khan, Prime Minister, and R. Soper, representing Sinclair Company."¹⁵ Gotlieb signed the agreement as a witness.

While working on the oil, Iranians wanted to get US companies interested in building the country's railroad system as well as the highways. The Ulen Company of New York showed much interest in getting involved and on Jan. 14, 1924 sent its representative, Lawrence Bennett, to Tehran for official talks. The program was progressing well, however, the British were extremely unhappy and

doing their utmost to derail the talks. They used American naiveté to their best. British chargé in Washington advised the Home Office to engage in a destructive manner to prevent the agreements between Tehran and the US companies¹⁶. The circumstantial evidences point to the fact the British resorted to the most destructive action to hold Americans from entering their domain of interest. The incident of the Sagha-Khaneh's miracle was created. A blind man gets his sight back. The American Vice-Consul, Major Robert Imbrie makes a trip to that holy place. Someone screams "this Baha'i is loathing our sacred place, kill him." The crowd attack Imbrie and the end comes with his death. All fingers, local and international pointed out to the British. Following this incident the Americans left Iran and the British effectively stopped American entrance in Iran until the start of WWII.

IRAN BEFORE WWII AND THE ANGLO-RUSSIAN ATTACK:

During the decade of the 1930's Reza Shah tried, in numerous occasions to bring Americans back to Iran. He wanted to have more business with them. He wanted fill his military arsenal with the American products. He wanted to have American military and commercial planes; to have a subsidiary American manufacturing airplane in Iran. All his efforts failed. The only way that one could define Americans action toward Iran, both from the standpoint of the Department of State and the consular section is that they were completely unaware and ignorant of what was going in the world.

They would only listen what they were told by the British. Even on occasion that some of their consular representative were seeing the truth; the State Department would ignore their input and do what they were told by the British. It seemed that the State Department was a branch of the British Foreign Office in Washington. Reza Shah did not give Iranian Trans Railroad project to Germans. When the Americans left, he picked up the Swedish company, the Kampsax consortium. This company used many smaller companies of different nationalities to build Iranian railroad. In regard of this project and Reza Shah's fascination with it, Dashti said, "Many people labeled him ambitious or greedy; however, I prefer the word of Idealist.¹⁷ Contrary to general belief that Reza Shah was a follower of Hitler, he had no love for the man and clearly stated his opinion, in several occasions to the American representatives in Tehran¹⁸ and criticized the German's leader.

PREPARING INVASION OF IRAN:

The British's dislike for Reza Shah continued. They used all their power and treacheries to prevent any favorable response from the United States government to Iranian demands. For Americans, the British opinions were "words of God". At the onset of war in September 1939, Iran was threatened by Russia, then a friend of Germany. Reza Shah was afraid that they may attack Iran as they did other neutral countries, such Finland. He tried to make a pact with the British, but his request was ignored.

When Hitler attacked the Soviets, Churchill befriended Stalin and the two ex-enemies became mutual friends. As early as June 1941, Churchill was planning to attack Iran. In June 41, he in-

structed the army general staff to prepare plan for invasion. British government demanded all Germans in Iran to be deported. Iranian government promised to do so as soon substitutes could be found. As usual the British gave Americans false reports of the number of the Germans in Iran. The State Department ignored the actual numbers given to them by their own representative in Tehran. British multiply, by several folds, the number of Germans in Iran to achieve their goal of justifying their action to Washington. They succeeded. Dreyfus the American minister in Tehran in his report to Secretary of State Hull said, "I am not minimizing the fifth column danger....I am convinced, however, that the British are using it as a pretext for... Contrary to some belief, Russian did not want to attack Iran. Stalin was afraid of fighting in two fronts. He felt that with their combine pressure on Iran, they could obtain what they want. However, Churchill was adamant on his decision.¹⁹ According to Aug. 21, 1941 report of the United Press: "The president of the US was informed of the attack. He approved whatever action Great Britain and Russia deem necessary to purge Iran of Nazi influence..."²⁰ The American government denied the report, but by all criteria it seems to be of value. Churchill was finally able to convince Stalin and an agreement was achieved on July 22 and the plan was operational by Aug. 7, 1941.

ATTACK AND INVASION OF IRAN:

Unfortunately, the Iranian government failed to appreciate the severity of the problem and did not act properly to avoid further deterioration of the situation. An Iranian businessman, Majid Movaghar, on an official mission to Iraq, upon his return notified Admiral Bayandor of the British military buildup on the Iranian border, no response! In Tehran, he reported the same to Reza Shah and did not get better response. The British placed their action on the Germans living in Iran. This was a minor problem and could readily be corrected, and by all indication, Shah was willing to cooperate. All of the British demands could have easily be accommodated, even the important undertaking of supplying the Red Army with war supplies and protecting the oil field in the south. The British government was not interested in a peaceful solution, they wanted Reza Shah out. The Foreign Minister of Turkey told the American Ambassador in Ankara, "The British attack on Iran has nothing to do with Germans being in the country."²¹ The future events showed that British had no love for Reza Shah's son, Mohammad Reza Shah. This is the attitude of the British; they support their servants and will do the opposite for those that they consider unfriendly toward them. And at times, they become victims to their own arrogance and vulgarity. We have seen the same again with Mossadegh's oil nationalization. They could get a lot more by working with him instead of fighting which ended with sharing the benefits multiple companies. By occupying Iran and bringing Russians, they became instrumental in starting the COLD WAR.

If Reza Shah could manage to have a few men with integrity around him, who would have love of their country in their heart, and if he would refrain of his dictatorial rule, he could have foreseen many of these problems and the history might have been different.

13. Department of State, Foreign Relations, 1920, Vol. III, p. 354
 14. Telegram 891.6363 Standard Oil/203 of June 1923 of the US legation to the Dept. of State.
 15. Telegram 891.6363 Standard Oil/ 315 ½, Dec. 20, 1923. 16. H. Guilak; Fire Beneath the Ashes: US-Iran Relation; 2011, p. 132
 17. Ali Dashti; Panjaha-Panj Sal (fifty five years); 2003, p. 4918. Engert to the Secretary of State; U.S. Foreign Relations, 1940, Vol. III, p. 622.
 19. FO 416/99, Eden to Britain's Ambassador in Moscow.
 20. Secretary Hull to Dreyfus, 740.0011 European War 1939/13803
 21 -Department of State, Foreign Relations 1941, Vol. III, p. 427/ Telegram 740.0011 European War 1939/14413, 27, Aug. 1941.

REVIEWS

AFTER THE AMERICAN CENTURY

The Ends of U.S. Culture in the Middle East

Brian T. Edwards

When Henry Luce announced in 1941 that we were living in an “American century,” he believed the international popularity of American culture made a world favorable to U.S. interests. For decades, his claim seemed to hold. Now, in the digital twenty-first century, the “American century” has been superseded, as American movies, music, video games, and television shows are received, understood, and transformed in unexpected ways.

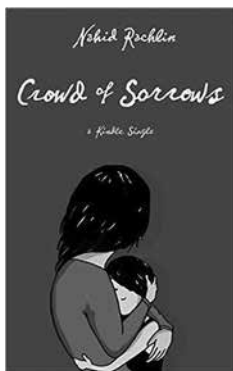
How do we make sense of this shift? Built on a decade of fieldwork in Cairo, Casablanca, and Tehran, Brian T. Edwards maps new routes of cultural exchange, that are unpredictable, accelerated, and full of diversions. Shaped by the digital revolution, these paths are entwined with the growing fragility of American “soft” power. They indicate an era after the American century, in which popular American products and phenomena, such as comic books, teen romances, social networking sites, and American ways of expressing sexuality, are stripped of their American associations and creatively re-presented in very different terms. A film like *Argo* or superhero comics is then imbued with new meanings.

Arguing against those in both scholarly and policy circles who talk about a world in which American culture is merely replicated or appropriated, Edwards focuses instead on creative moments of uptake, in which Arabs and Iranians make something unexpected. He argues that these products do more than extend the reach of the original. They reflect a world in which culture endlessly circulates and gathers new meanings.

CROWD OF SORROWS

Nahid Rachlin

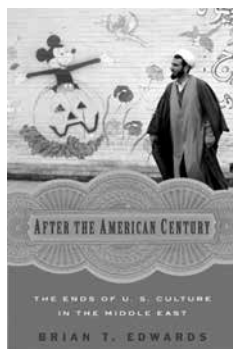
2015



Zora, just separated from her American husband, with a six-year old daughter, Anar, has had a highly unsettled life so far. After her marriage falls apart, she moves with Anar to a row-house in Cambridge, MA, that shares a backyard with several young families. She hopes to develop friendships with the other mothers, but soon finds that this is not a big happy family she has moved into.

Anxiety over the children and threats to their wellbeing hang in the air; marital problems surface among the couples. In spite of the transparency of the tenants’ activities, as seen through the sliding glass doors opening on the common backyard, hidden and ambiguous aspects permeate the air. One day Anar disappears; with this shock and its resolution Zora comes to realize that her search for a place in the world might not yet be over.

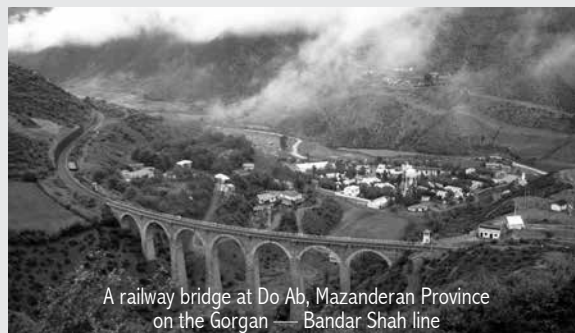
Nahid Rachlin went to Columbia University Writing Pro-



gram on a Doubleday-Columbia Fellowship and then to Stanford University MFA program on a Stegner Fellowship. Her publications include a memoir, *Persian Girls* (Penguin), four novels, *Jumping Over Fire* (City Lights), *Foreigner* (W.W. Norton), *Married to a Stranger* (E.P.Dutton-Penguin), *The Heart's Desire* (City Lights), and a collection of short stories, *Veils* (City Lights). Her individual short stories have appeared in more than fifty magazines and one of her stories was adopted by Symphony Space, “Selected Shorts,” and was aired on NPR’s around the country.

A SHORT HISTORY OF THE IRANIAN RAILWAY SYSTEM

by Manuvera

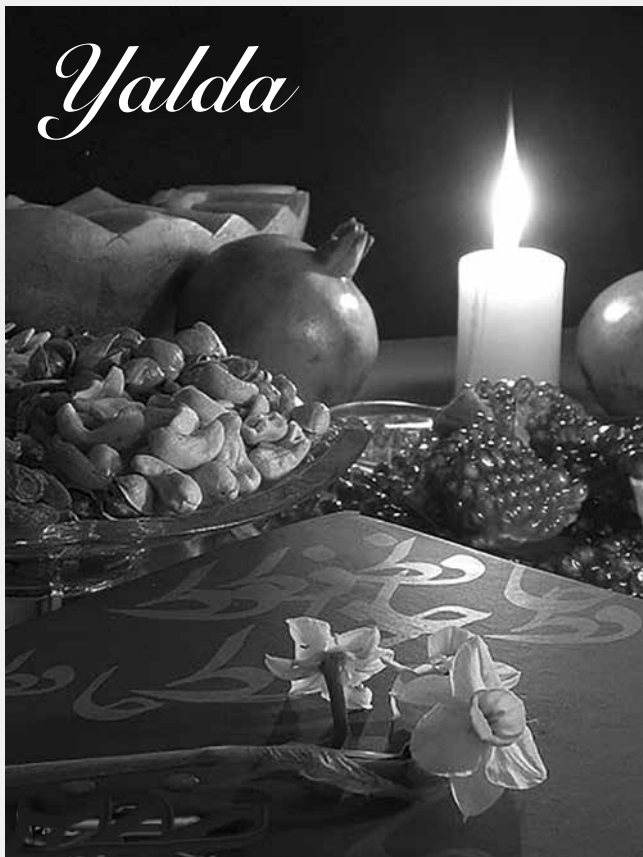


A railway bridge at Do Ab, Mazandaran Province on the Gorgan — Bandar Shah line

Perhaps one of Iran’s greatest achievements after the First World War was the construction of the 850-mile Trans-National railroad. This finally linked southern and northern Iran, a project that had been bitterly opposed by Imperial Russia in the early 20th century. For the first time the northern agricultural lands and the Caspian Sea ports were linked to ports and oilfields in the south. Construction of the Iranian railway had been an overwhelming task as it required the building of 4,100 bridges and 224 bored tunnels (64 miles in total). Iran’s economy after the First World had been in tatters, especially with increasing chaos due to British, Russian and Ottoman military incursions. Even more impressive was the way in which the project had been funded: taxes on sugar and tea helped subsidize the project.

The buildup of the Iranian railway and road systems resulted in a dramatic improvement in the economic sector. Cost and time required for the transportation of goods across the country were now dramatically reduced. As noted by the British Central Office of Information:

By 1933, the Iranian railway and road network system had reduced the cost of transportation to a third of what it had been in 1920. The time needed for transport in 1933 was now reduced to just one-tenth of what it had been in comparison to 1920. The efficiency of the Iranian railway and road networks was one of the primary factors that encouraged the Anglo-invasion of Iran in August 1941. The primary objective of that invasion was to use the Iranian network to supply the Red Army of the Soviet Union. This is because Nazi Germany had been engaged in a massive invasion of the Soviet Union since June 22, 1941 (known as Operation Barbarossa).



From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

Yalda “Birth of Mithra”, *Shab-e Yalda*, “Night of Birth”, or *Shab-e Chelleh* (Night of Forty) is the Persian winter solstice celebration, which has been popular since ancient times. Yalda is celebrated on the Northern Hemisphere’s longest night of the year, that is, on the eve of the Winter Solstice.

Depending on the shift of the calendar, Yalda is celebrated on or around December 20 or 21 each year. Yalda has a history which dates back to pre Zoroastrian times. It marks the celebration of the Persian philosopher Mithra (or Mehr). Followers of Mithra or Mithraists believed that this night is the night of the birth of Mithra, Persian philosopher of light and truth. At the morning of the longest night of the year the Mithra was born.

The Persian Mithra or the Indian Mitrarepresent the “Light-Knowledge” aspect of the immortal divinity.

As Love and Patience are integral for knowledge to be imparted, this term “Mitra” literally means friend. The word itself is of Avestic and Vedic Sanskrit origin clearly indicating the historical roots. In later times Mitra was also called Meher. As Zoroastrianism was a reformation of an existing religious philosophy, this term of “pre-zoroastrian” is not relevant; as Mitra/Meherform a vital component of Zoroastrian liturgy.

Khursheed (*Khor* in Avestan) presides over the Sun. Thus Zarathushtia is called *Khordad* to indicate his divine radiance; a divine glow achieved in one mortal life time. Similarly the land of Khorasan is so termed as it is that easternmost area of the Persian empire to see first light and the place where most Zarathustis were originally from. The first Parsis to escape

the jihadist genocide and seek refuge in India were also from Khorasan.

Following the Persian calendar reform of 1925, which pegged some seasonal events to specific days of the calendar, Yalda came to be celebrated on the night before and including the first day of the tenth month (Day). Subject to seasonal drift, this day may sometimes fall a day before or a day after the actual Winter Solstice.

The Persian calendar reform of 1925 indicates an implementation of Islamic sensibilities on a Zoroastrian calendar to suit a population that is no longer Zoroastrian. The Zoroastrian calendar is based on scientific astronomy and therefore flexibly aligned to the longest night of the year, which can shift from the 20 to 22 December. “Daena” or “Dayna” is an Avestan word meaning religion specifically Zoroastrianism. It is derived from the term “Day” which means Light (knowledge). As such Dayna means that path or philosophy, weeded to Truth, Justice and Knowledge that leads to excellence.

Following the fall of the Sasanian Empire and the subsequent rise of Islam in Persia, the religious significance of the event was lost, and like other Zoroastrian festivals, Yalda became a social occasion when family and close friends would get together.

Nonetheless, the obligatory serving of fresh fruit during mid-winter is reminiscent of the ancient customs of invoking the divinities to request protection of the winter crop.

The 13th-century Persian poet Sa’di wrote in his *Bustan*: “The true morning will not come, until the Yalda Night is gone”.

Yalda Night has been officially added to Iran’s List of National Treasures in a special ceremony in 2008.

ORIGIN

The Eve of the Yalda has great significance in the Persian/Iranian calendar. *Shab-e Yalda* is a time of Joy. Yalda is traced back to *Syriacyalda*, meaning birth. Mithra-worshippers used the term ‘*yalda*’ specifically with reference to the birth of Mithra. As the longest night of the year, the Eve of Yalda (*Shab-e Yalda*) is also a turning point, after which the days grow longer. In ancient times it symbolized the triumph of the Sun God over the powers of darkness.

Mithra, remained a potent symbol of worship throughout the following centuries. Centuries later, during the Achaemenid era, Mithra became a principal dominant figure emphasizing monotheism in Persia.

In Sasanian times, Zoroastrianism became Persia’s official religion, but Mithra’s importance remained undiminished. This is evident from the bas-reliefs as *Naqsh-e Rostam* and *Tagh-e Bustan*. At *Naqsh-e Rostam*, Anahita bestows the royal diadem upon Nersi, the Sasanian King. At the investiture of Ardashir I, Ahura Mazda bestows this diadem to the new King. At *Tagh-e Bustan* too, Ahura Mazda is again conferring the royal diadem upon Ardashir II.

Over the centuries Mithraism spread to Greece and Ancient Rome via Asia Minor, gaining popularity within the ranks of the Roman army.

In the 4th century AD as a result of errors made in calculating leap years and dates, the birthday of Mithra was transferred to 25 December.

It was said that Mithra was born out of the light that came from within the Alborz mountains. Ancient Iranians would gather in caves along the mountain range throughout the night

to witness this miracle together at dawn. They were known as 'Yar-e Ghar' (Cave Mates). In Iran today, despite of the advent of Islam and Muslim rituals, Shab-e Yalda is still celebrated widely.

It is a time when friends and family gather together to eat, drink and read poetry (especially Hafez) until well after midnight. Fruits and nuts are eaten and pomegranates and watermelons are particularly significant. The red color in these fruits symbolizes the crimson hues of dawn and glow of life.

'The sight of you each morning is a New Year Any night of your departure is the eve of Yalda' (Sa'di) 'With all my pains, there is still the hope of recovery like the eve of Yalda, there will finally be an end' (Sa'di)

During the long night, Iranians also practice bibliomancy with the poetry of the highly respected mystic Iranian poet, Hafez. The poems of *Divan-e-Hafez*, which can be found in the bookcases of almost all Iranian families, are intermingled with peoples' life and are read or recited during various occasions like Nowruz and Yalda Night.

CUSTOMS AND TRADITIONS

In Zoroastrian and ancient Iranian traditions, the winter solstice was an auspicious day and included customs intended to protect people from misfortune. On that day, people were advised to stay awake most of the night. To commemorate, people have small parties and gatherings and eat the last remaining fresh fruits from summer.

Although Yalda is not an official holiday in present day Iran, families continue to hold traditional gatherings Iranian radio and television offer special programmes on Yalda.

The night of the greater *Chelleh* is called *sab-e Chelleh* or *sab-e yalda* and is the occasion of special ceremonies. Food plays a central role in Yalda celebrations. In most parts of Iran the extended family come together and enjoy a fine dinner.

A wide variety of fruits and sweetmeats specifically prepared or kept for this night are served. Foods common to the Yalda celebration include watermelon, pomegranate, nuts, and dried fruit. These items and more are commonly placed on a *korsi*, which people sit around. In some areas it is custom that forty varieties of

edibles should be served during the ceremony of the night of *Chelleh*.

Light-hearted superstitions run high on the night of *Chelleh*. These superstitions, however, are primarily associated with consumption. For instance, it is believed that consuming watermelons on the night of *Chelleh* will ensure the health and well-being of the individual during the months of summer by protecting him from falling victim to excessive heat or disease produced by hot humors.

In Khorasan, there is a belief that whoever eats carrots, pears, pomegranates, and green olives will be protected against the harmful bite of insects, especially scorpions. Eating garlic on this night protects one against pains in the joints. Placing one's mouth near a donkey's ear and whispering into its ear is certain to cure any ailment, while mixing camel fat and mare's milk and burning them will protect from insects the place where the smoke from this concoction penetrates.

After dinner the older individuals entertain the others by telling them tales and anecdotes. Another favorite and prevalent pastime of the night of *Chelleh* is divination by the *Divan* of Hafez (*fal-e Hafez*). It is believed that one should not divine

by the *Divan* of Hafez more than three times, however, or the poet may get angry.

Activities common to celebration of Yalda include staying up past midnight, conversation, eating, reading poems out loud, telling stories and jokes, smoking "*Ghelyoon*" (water pipe), and for some dancing. Prior to invention and prevalence of electricity, decorating and lighting the house and yard with candles was also part of the tradition, but few have continued this tradition. Another tradition is giving dried fruits and nuts to family and friends, wrapped in tulle and tied with ribbon (similar to wedding and shower "party favors")

Prior to ban of alcohol, drinking wine was also part of the celebration. Despite the Islamic alcohol ban in Iran, many continue to include home-made and contraband alcoholic drinks in their celebrations.

Another custom performed in certain parts of Iran on the night of *Chelleh* involves young engaged couples. The men send an edible arrangement containing seven kinds of fruits and a variety of gifts to their fiancés on this night. In some areas, the girl and her family return the favor by sending gifts back for the young man.

Many Iranian-Americans also celebrate *Shab-e-Yalda* in America. Some go to the extent of dressing up in "mahali" (traditional regional) clothes, and making makeshift *Korsi* to place the food on and gather around. Others do far less, only wishing each other a happy Yalda in phone calls or on social networks.

Iranian-American cultural organizations teach about *Shab-e-Yalda* and some even have Yalda parties. There is evidence to suggest that the 40 day period is also observed in Kashmir, India.

Would you like to know who had written the lyric and who had composed the music for what we now consider our Informal National Anthem and where it was performed for the first time?

On the first part of 1320th (1940th), Iran was occupied by Allied Forces. The northern part was under the siege of Russians. Those uninvited guests interfered with every aspect of Iranians daily life, even caused change of the names of the places and streets to suit their purposes. As an example they had changed the name of the prestigious "Homa" theater in Rasht to "Shargh", an exclusive theater and the only one with a large screen. It had a beautiful stage suitable for live plays. Russians monopolized and used the theater solely for their propagandas, showing war movies. At times Russian musicians and artists would entertain their soldiers.

In 1945 toward the end of spring, it was announced in Rasht that, in the near future there will be a performance by the Iranian National Institute of Music, under the directorship of Master Rooh-Ullah Khaleghi.

The people were anxiously waiting for that event. The promised day arrived and the performance was held in "Shargh" theater. It was a sell out after the very first announcements. The ticket holders received a brochure containing the following information: The history of National Institute of Music; the names of the members of the orchestra; the names of the Dastgahs to be played, and the names of the performers, Javad Maaroofooy and Javad Mahjoobi, Piano players. Master Abu-Alhasan Saba, Mallah and Mehdi Khaledi, Violin. Colonel Ali-naghi Vaziri, Berkshely, Khadem Missagh and Amir Attaii, Tar. Vaziri-Tabar, Flute. Hossein Tehrani and Ali Zahedi, Drum (Tonbak). Gholam Hossein Banan, Mrs. Roohbakhsh and Ahmad Ashoor-Pour, Vocalists. The Conductor was Master Khaleghi.

Everything was new for the people; they had never come across such performances. The program started on time. The velvet screen was pulled back and the stage showed the orchestra with over twenty players in formal suits, shining under the beaming lights. The sound of the applause of the crowd filled the place once Khaleghi came to the podium.

Master Khaleghi praised the land of green and lush forests of Guilan. He also praised the Guilanians for their appreciation of music and arts. He mentioned the estab-

THE STORY OF

"Ey Iran"

The Echo of our Informal National Anthem

Nahid T. Guilak, M.D.



lishment of the music institute in Tehran and several concerts that they had already given. He went on and said, "Because of the enlightened people of Guilan, we are going to start our impressive concert here at Rasht.

Up to that time no one had ever seen such splendor, glory and harmony, Master Saba's violin with his Chahar Mezraabs, the heavenly voice of Banan and solo works of drum by Tehrani and Zahedi, were fantastic. The last part of the concert was announced by Master Khaleghi "It would be the song of EY IRAN". He mentioned, this song was made sometimes ago, however, because of political reasons it was never performed in Tehran. He continued, "I am happy to announce that we are going to perform it for the first time for such a patriotic and freedom loving people. The lyric of this song has been written by Dr. Hossein Gol-e-Golaab and I composed the music."

He turned around and started to direct the orchestra. After the prelude, singing of the lyrics by three vocalists started. It was sensational and the audience was listening with their hearts. When the last part was performed, the people became motionless. At the conclusion the whole crowd got up cheering the performers and the sounds of approvals and praises filled the air. Some of Saba's students jumped on the stage and started to embrace and kissed the members of the orchestra. A man called Javanmard did a traditional gesture by throwing money

on the stage for the members of orchestra to show his appreciation.

The depressed atmosphere of "Shargh" Theater that was constantly showing the propaganda films of war, fire, blood, death and catastrophe, was transformed to one of pleasant, exhilarating and freshness. Everybody was proud of this performance. This was not a story but it was a rare happening, showing the national sentiment. The program was finished but the audience was asking for the encore, shouting "Ey Iran, Ey Iran". Khaleghi, under the influence of severe emotion with a voice trembling with joy said, "There will be an encore after a short break".

After the intermission the people occupied their seats, however, the program would not start. Half an hour passed and there was no sign of the orchestra. The audience became impatient and could not wait longer. Another forty five minutes passed, still nothing happened. It was like a mystery, everyone was asking "what had happened?"

Suddenly the curtain was pulled back and Khaleghi appeared with a big smile. He apologized for the delay and said, this delay was due to the request of our guests.

At this time General Consul of Russia along with two Russian Officers carrying a big basket of flower arrangement appeared on the stage. He spoke of the great performance and offered the flowers to the members of the orchestra.

The orchestra started again and Master Saba played the solo violin in Byat-e-Turk. It was followed by "Aavaay-e-Ey Iran". With the great applause and cheers of the audience this unforgettable night went to an end. Next day everybody was talking of that glorious night. They started to seek the reason for the delay of starting the second part of the concert. It was discovered that since the Russian Officials did not realize how great of program and orchestra was, they had not ordered for flower arrangement ahead of time. To compensate their negligence they requested a delay for the second part of the concert until they would be able to find flowers. At those days Rasht had only one flower shop that was closed at such late hours. The Russian appealed to Mr. Symorgh, the mayor of Rasht. He sent a commando jeep with two of his employees to go to Allah Verdi-khan Garden. They had to wake him up and with the help of two members of his family and a small kerosene lantern they went to the garden. A beautiful basket of flowers was prepared and brought to the theater.

We are dealing with something known by the somewhat vague term "Iran Exterior", meaning Iranian peoples who live or lived outside Persia, in this case to the Iranian nomad peoples of the Eurasian steppe more specifically with those who lived between the Volga and the Carpatians on the one hand and from the Black Sea to somewhat north of the line which divides the steppe from the forest zone.

The first people of which we have note who inhabited said vast area were known as the "Cimmerians". Some historians believe the Cimmerians to have been Celts, while others believe them to have been Thracians. Defenders of the Celtic hypothesis note that the Celtic tradition affirms "Scythia" to have been their homeland, note the similarity between the name "Cimmeria" and the Welsh "Cymru" and finally that the Celts had far more affinity with the Scythians than did the Thracians.

As an anecdote, Robert Howard, author of the popular "sword and sorcery" series **Conan the Barbarian**, was an expert in the field of Indo-European studies; the series **Conan the Barbarian** leaves no doubt that he believed the Cimmerians to have been Celts.

Very likely the ancient Greeks used the term "Cimmerian" to refer to all the inhabitants of the above-mentioned area, without making ethnic distinctions, so "Cimmeria" may have been home to both Celtic and Thracian peoples.

In any case, around the 8th century BC a new people from the East occupied the former Cimmeria; the Scythians. The Scythians were a branch of the "Sakas" or Iranian nomad peoples of the Eurasian steppes. The Persians called all these Iranian nomad peoples of the Eurasian steppe by the generic name "Sakas", though of course they also had names for the various divisions of the Sakas. The word "Saka" also has a variant, "Sai". The word Saka is related to the Avestan "Saxta" (sakhta) meaning "tough, strong", and to the Vedic Sanskrit "s'ak" (shak). "s'ak" appears in the

Rig Veda in the form "s'aknoti", used as an epithet for "men". In Classical Sanskrit "s'ak" means "to be able, strong".

The word "Scythian" is a Hellenization of the Iranian "skuth", meaning "archer", which was appropriate as they were mainly horse archers. The Scythians are said to have invented chain mail, though here are those who dispute this. Their art was mainly in the "animal style" though abstract forms were not unknown.

The Scythians buried their dead in large earthen mounds which still dot especially the Ukrainian countryside and which so fascinated the 19th century Ukrainian poet Taras Shevchenko.

Since they left no written records, we know little concerning many aspects of the life of the Scythians, notably their religion. Some have claimed that the Scythians, as well as the other Saka peoples, were untouched by Zoroastrianism. Certainly said peoples were not Zoroastrians. However, to affirm that the Sakas were "untouched by Zoroastrianism" does not follow. Let me give an analogy. The neo-African cults of the Americas known as "vudu" in Haiti, "Santeria" in the Spanish-speaking Caribbean and "candoble" and Macumba" in northeastern Brazil, are certainly not Catholic, as many of their beliefs and practices are incompatible with Ca-

tholicism. However, no one says that said neo-African cults are "untouched by Catholicism", as this is manifestly false. As we shall see later, there is evidence, albeit indirect, that some of the Sakas were at least lightly touched by Zoroastrianism.

After several centuries, other Saka peoples invaded the Russian and Ukrainian steppes from the East and subjugated or absorbed the Scythians. These new Saka peoples were known as the "Sarmatians" and the "Alans" or "Roxalans". Though similar to the Scythians in most ways, the Sarmatians and Alans differed from them in important respects.

Whereas the Scythians had been horse archers, the Sarmatians and Alans, though they did not completely abandon horse archery and light cavalry, were basically heavily armored knights who used long lances, heavy swords and heavy shields as their principal weapons. Thus, the Alans and Sarmatians were the forerunners of the medieval knights.

Though they continued to use the animal style, the Sarmatians and Alans made far more extensive use of enamel than had the Scythians, which means that their artwork was polychromed. The Sarmatians and Alans decorated their large and heavy shields with colorful animal motifs; thus, besides being the forerunners of the

medieval knights, they were also the inventors of heraldry.

At this point I believe it wise to make a digression, in this case concerning the Goths. The Goths, of course, had nothing to do with the Gothic architecture of the 12th - 15th centuries, and certainly nothing to do with those strange people whom one sees today who, for some strange reason, are known as "Goths".

One may well ask why we speak of the Goths; after all they were most certainly not Iranians. However, for reasons, which will be obvious, without some knowledge of the Goths the reader may find himself a bit lost.

The Goths first appear in what is today, where they left a great

many place names. Though closer to Old Norse than to any other language, Gothic in fact bears so little resemblance to any other language that it is put into a category by itself among the Germanic languages. So, in spite of their Scandinavian origin, it would be quite wrong to refer to the Goths as "Vikings".

The Goths were the inventors of the Runic alphabet, which prompted the historian Jordanes to say: "The Goths have always known the use of letters." Though long obsolete as a means of writing, the Gothic alphabet has in recent years enjoyed a modest revival, as its exotic look has recommended it for decorative purposes.

Jordanes refers to Gothic songs and tales of King Berig, who led the Gothic migration from Scandinavia, Filimer, who guided the Goths to the Black Sea, and the deeds of the Gothic heroes Terpmara, Hanala, Fritigern and Vidigoia, says Jordanes. But when the number had increased greatly and Filimer, son of Gadaric, reigned as king - about the fifth since Berig - he decided that the army of the Goths with their families should move from that region (the Baltic coast of what is today Poland). In search of suitable homes and pleasant places they came to the land of Scythia, called Oium

The Sakas

Part one
Michael McClain



in that (Gothic) tongue. Here they were delighted with the great richness of the country, and it is said that when half the army had been brought over, the bridge whereby they had crossed, fell into utter ruin, no one could any longer pass to or fro, for the place is said to be surrounded by quaking bogs and an encircling abyss, so that by this double obstacle, nature has made it inaccessible. Even today one may hear in that neighborhood, the lowing of cattle and may find traces of men, if we are to believe the stories of travelers, although we must grant that they hear these things from afar.

This part of the Goths which is said to have crossed the river and entered with Filimer into the country of Oium (Scythia), came into possession of the desired land, and they soon came upon the race of the Spali (Slavs? Balts?), joined battle with them and won the victory. Thence the victors hastened to the farthest part of Scythia, which is near the Sea of Pontus (Black Sea); for so the story is generally told in their early songs, in almost historic fashion."

The Roman historian Priscus notes: "Crossing many mighty rivers - namely the Tisia and Tibisia and Dricca - we came to the place where long ago Vidigoia, braves of the Goths perished by the guile of the Sarmatians."

Let us take a brief look at the Goths themselves, probably the most noble, cultured and artistic of all the Germanic peoples who invaded the Roman Empire. This is far more complex than it might appear at first glance. Who the Goths were in reality varies according to the place and period of which one is speaking; their long migration not only completely altered the culture of the Goths but even their ethnic composition. The Goths, who lived in Scandinavia shortly before the time of Christ were thoroughly Germanic in Language, culture and ethnic composition. However, as we shall see, the Goths who fought against the Romans on the Danube frontier could be referred to as "Germanic" only in quotation marks.

Firstly, of all the Germanic peoples, it was the Goths who were most influenced by the Celts. The Celtic influence reached the Goths from two sources, or, perhaps more precisely, at two different times and places. This requires a bit of explanation.

On the first lap of their long trek from Scandinavia to the Black Sea, the Goths crossed to the south shore of the Baltic Sea, where they encountered the Balts or Lithuanians. The Baltic influence on the Goths was very slight, consisting only of the personal name "Galindo". However, shortly thereafter the Goths came in contact with another people whose influence on them was to be far more extensive. On the south shores of the Baltic the Goths were vassals of a people with the transparently Celtic names of Lugians.

The influence of the Central European or Lugian Celts, while not very extensive, is interesting. The Gothic word for king is "reiks" and is attested in the earliest documents referring to the Goths. Now, the word "reiks" bears no resemblance whatever to the Germanic stem for "king" (German: Konig; Swedish: Konung, Icelandic: Konungir), but is obviously cognate with the Gaulish "ric" or "rix", more distantly to the Gaelic "righ". This explains why so many Gothic names, such as Roderic, Ermanric (Gothic; Airmnareiks; Old Norse; Jormunrekkr), Alaric, Athanaric, Amalric, etc. have a strangely Celtic sound or even (such as Roderic) are identical to Celtic names.

Some Goths held high positions under Attila the Hun. Among said Goths was one named "Scottas." This is very nearly identical to the name "Scotta", famous in the Irish epic and which survives in such names as "Scotia", "Scot", "Scotland", and a long etcetera. There exists a possibility that the Gothic name "Scottas" may be Iranian rather than Celtic. The Celtic name "Scotta" is generally

believed to be derived from the Iranian "skuth", which means "archer", and is the origin of "Scythian". However, by the time of Attila the Hun the Scythians had long vanished.

Perhaps most interesting of all is the mythological ancestry of the "Amal" or "Amalung", noblest of the gothic clans. The son of "Amal", founder of the clan, is "Hisarna", a transparently Celtic name which means the "Iron One." This would indicate that the Amal clan inter married with their Celtic overlords and, indeed, derived their nobility, royalty and "charisma" from this connection.

However, the Celtic influence on the Goths is far more extensive than this, and refers to a different time and place. As Herwig Wolfram says: "If, however, the Goths met Celts or Celtic elements mainly on the lower Danube, this would explain the exclusiveness of some Celtic-Gothic connections."

Like the Celtic and Saka chiefs, the Gothic chiefs wore torque-sas a symbol of authority. The Emperor Theodosius I rewarded the Gothic garrison of Tomi with gold torques. In fact, due to the predominance of Alans and Goths among the Byzantine palace guards in the 5th century, the torque became the sign of an officer of the guard in Byzantium. The wearing of torques as a symbol of command or nobility is a Saka and Celtic custom, not Germanic.

The Gothic word for a circle of wagons - typical of Gothic as well as Saka warfare - is "carrago." This is obviously a combination of the Celtic "carrus", i.e., cart, and the Germanic Hago", meaning fence. Since this tactic would be most useful on the open steppe, the persistence of Celtic words among the Goths when settled in the Russian and Ukrainian steppes may indicate the survival of Celtic nuclei in the steppe, the survival of Celtic words in the western Saka languages, or both.

The Gothic word for "keep" or "citadel" is "kelikn", from the Celtic "cilicon". The gothic words for agricultural worker, "magus"; retainer" and bahts"; and discipline, "siponeis" are also Celtic, as are the words for inheritance "arbi"; for oath Aiths"; marriage "liuga"; and obligation "dulgs". The Celtic connection is yet more extensive; the Goths, like the Celts, feared the falling heavens. Also like the Celts, the Goths worshipped the divinized Danube. Of course, the Danube was not the only river divinized by the Celts. River names such as "Don", "Donetz",

"Dnieper", "Dniestr", and "Danube", which also contain the syllable "Dan" or "Don" are reminders of the aquatic goddess called "Danaan" or "Don" by the Celts, or "Danu" in the Rig Veda. The various Spanish rivers called "Deva" are also manifestations of this, since "Deva" with a long "e" is the Sanskrit word for "goddess". Interestingly, the Gothic name for the divinized Danube is "Donaws", which bears a striking resemblance to the Rig Vedic "Danava", i.e., "Child of (the goddess) Danu".

No doubt a specialist in Celtic linguistics who closely examined the language and culture of the Goths could find yet more Celtisms. To paraphrase Alexander Alexandrovich Vasiliev, I should also like to see Celtologists turn their attention to the Celtic presence in the South Russian and Ukrainian steppes, including Crimea. The Goths lived in Saka territory in what is now South Russia and Ukraine for two centuries. No doubt the Kingdom of Ermanric) Gothic: Airmnareiks; Old Norse; Jormunrekkr) the Amal (or Amalung) on the banks of the Dnieper, with Olbia as its capital, included many Sakas; one of Ermanric's titles was "King of Germans and Scythians".

Says Lucien Musset: "These Germans (the Goths) lived in symbiosis with the Iranians in the 4th century AD appear proofs of marriages between Alans and Goths. The Iranians, who had a civilization more advanced and in particular better adapted to

an environment to which the Goths were strangers, passed to the Goths many cultural elements: combat on horseback costumes (the fur garb of the Gothic kings appears to be of Iranian type) and especially the famous “art of the steppes” whose roots are Sarmatian and Sassanian.”

Says Mikhail Ivanovich Rostovtzeff: “What is extremely important is out of all these elements the Sarmatians created a peculiar culture and in particular an original and characteristic style of art. I refer to the renaissance of the Scythian animal style, which combined with the use of precious stones and enamel, led to the formation in the Russian and Ukrainian steppes, of the polychrome style of jewelry which was adopted by the Goths and is wrongly called Gothic. The style is not Gothic at all: it is Iranian - if you like, Sarmatian. And it was not the Goths but the Sarmatians who introduced it into Central and Southern Europe.”

Say V. Vuksic & z. Grbasic: “The arrival of the Goths on the shores of the Black Sea and their alliances with the Sarmatians and Alans resulted in pooling of the military experiences of the northern peoples and the ancient Iranian nomad civilization.”

To prove the above it is sufficient to compare Richard N. Frye’s description of the arms of the Sarmatians with any description of the Goths and Alans who destroyed the legions of the Emperor Valens at Adrianople (9 August, 378).

There is at least one gothic word, which is obviously of Saka origin. I refer to “sarwa”, meaning “coat-of-mail”, which is related to an Avestan word. There are abundant proofs of intermarriage between Goths and Alans, including the noblest of Gothic clans. Strabo, of the Amal or Amalung clan, was the brother-in-law of Aspar the Alan. The Andela-Andagis family of the Amal clan was half Alan by blood. Jordanes mentions an Alan named Safrax as being a Gothic nobleman. Balthi, Royal Clan of the Visigoths, claimed a Saka origin.

Says Jordanes: “His (referring to Alaric I the Balthi, king of the Visigoths) people mourned for him with utmost affection. Then turning from its course the river Busento near Cosenza (Italy) - for the stream flows with its wholesome waters from the foot of a mountain near that city - they led a band of captives into the midst of its bed to dig out a place for his (Alaric’s) grave. In the depths of this pit they buried Alaric, together with many treasures, and then turned the waters back into their channel.”

As Herwig Wolfram says: “The entire story of Alaric’s mysterious grave in the Busento, which has occupied the imagination of treasure hunters to this very day, is the stuff of legend and not historical fact. The origin of the saga goes back to the region of the lower Danube and the Black Sea, thus reflecting the acculturation of the Goths to their Scythian homeland.”

Even when settled on the shores of the Black Sea, the Goths continued to maintain contact with their ancient Scandinavian homeland, which in this case means the ancestors of the Vikings; the Viking Age would not begin until several centuries later.

Viking art is a mixture of Celtic and Iranian elements, though Celtic and Iranian or Saka art are essentially similar, they are by no means identical, though it is sometimes impossible to determine whether a given piece is Celtic or Saka. Viking art is therefore derivative, but the Vikings put their own stamp on it, and no one denies the merits of Viking art. There is no doubt that the Saka elements in Viking art reached Scandinavia by way of the Goths, who had adopted the art of the Sarmatians and Alans, and, as we said above, always maintained contact with their ancient Scandinavian homeland even when settled on the shores of the Black Sea. Also, at least some of the Celtic influence on Viking art may also have arrived by way of the Goths, and for a simple reason; in Pre-viking

times contacts between the Celtic peoples and Scandinavia were virtually non-existent, and by the dawn of the Viking Age what would be known as Viking art was already largely formed.

In a Viking saga appears the story of Sohrab and Rustam, though with the names changed. Of course. Since I read neither German nor Old Norse. There exists a *chanson de geste* in Old High German called “Hildebrand”, which repeats the story of Sohrab and Rustam almost exactly. “Hildebrand” obviously was translated into Old High German from another Germanic language. Whether “Hildebrand” was translated directly from the Gothic or from the Gothic by way of Old Norse there is no way to know. In any case, it is perfectly obvious that these *chansons de geste* which so closely imitate the story of Sohrab and Rustam passed from the Sarmatians and Alans to the Goths, and from the Gothic to Old Norse and Old High German. We shall have more to say about all this later and in a different context.

The great Gothic king of the Russian and Ukrainian steppes, Ermanric (Gothic: Airmnareiks; Old Norse: Jormunrekkr) also appears in Viking sagas, a conclusive proof that the Goths when settled on the shores of the Black Sea always maintained contact with their ancient Scandinavian Jordanes gives an account of the downfall of Ermanric (or Airmnareiks or Jormunrekkr) the Amal which appears to be from a Gothic *chanson de geste*; in a version only slightly altered it appears in Viking sagas: “Now Ermanric (or Airmnareiks or Jormunrekkr) the Amal, king of the Goths, was the conqueror of many tribes, as we have said above, yet while he was deliberating on this invasion of the Huns, the treacherous tribe of the Rosomoni (Celts?) (Germans?), (Balts?), (Sakas?), who at the time were among those who owed him their homage, took this chance to catch him unaware. For when the king had given orders so that a certain woman of the tribe I have mentioned, Suinhilda (a Germanic sounding name), should be bound to wild horses and torn apart by driving them at full speed in opposite directions (for he was raised to fury at her husband’s treachery to him), her brothers Sarusans Ammius came to avenge their sister’s death and plunged a sword into Ermanric’s (or Airmnareiks’, or Jormunrekkr’s) side. Enfeebled by this blow, he dragged out a miserable existence in bodily weakness. Balamber, king of the Huns, took advantage of his ill health to move a army into the country of the Goths ... “

There is now general agreement the “valkyrie” of the Viking sagas were originally the Iranian *fravashies*. Yet another Iranian element that must have reached the ancestors of the Vikings by way of the Goths. So, as Herwig Wolfram says: “Under its (the Amal kingship) the scythianization of the Goths is completed: the armored lancer, who covered incredible distances and fought on horseback; the practice of hunting with falcons; shamanism; the adoption by the Amal of the Sassanian royal vestments; in short, the life-style of the Iranian peoples of the steppe became part of the Gothic world.”

So, the Goths were profoundly Iranian during their sojourn on the Black Sea, becoming even partly Iranian by blood. Not only this, but the Goths were instrumental in spreading elements of Sarmatian Alancult - heavy cavalry, heraldry, falconry and the “art of the steppes” to central and western Europe. Also, the Goths spread many elements of Sarmatian and Alan culture to the ancestors of the Vikings: art, the valkyries (originally *fravashies*), and many aspects of what would become the Viking sagas.

Therefore, it seemed wise to open a study of the Saka peoples of the Russian and Ukrainian steppes with an overview of the Goths.

to be continued ...



“The oppressed, having internalized the image of the oppressor and adopted his guideline are fearful of freedom. Freedom would require them to eject this image and replace it with autonomy and responsibility.”

– Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, 1968

The Works of

Farideh Sakhaeifar



Ms. Sakhaeifar was born in 1985 in the city of Tehran, Iran. She attended Cornell University in New York and the Azad Art and Architecture University, in Tehran, Iran. Currently she lives in Brooklyn, NY.

SACROSANCT

In *Sacrosanct*, Farideh Sakhaeifar’s first solo show with William Holman Gallery, works in photography, sound installation, and video are used to explore the social injustices and political unrest in her native country of Iran and around the world. Inspired by Paulo Freire’s 1968 book *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, the exhibition challenges propagandized images and censored narratives through the artist’s disruption of these systems.

Sakhaeifar writes, “To maintain totalitarian power, it is necessary to control the people not only through terror and surveillance, but also through manipulating beliefs and, in this case, religious behaviors.” The repetitions of religious and political slogans, which orally or visually praise the ruling elite, have been used to reinforce conservative ideologies within the public.

The installation *Pedal* mimics totalitarian leaders’ control over the public. An 8 x 16 foot wall collage composed of found images shows the faithful gathered in a crowd to

listen to Iran’s Supreme Leader. In front of the collage, a foot pedal rests on an elevated, carpeted stage. When the pedal is compressed, a recording of applause sounds from the crowd, reflecting the theatrical dynamic between power and the people. Sakhaeifar has erased the images of the Leader in the posters held by the crowd. The blank pictures embody the hollowness of idolatry, and the superficiality of forced and... propagandized events around the world. In *Toppled*, a bronze sculpture of a leader is shown with a noose around his neck, suggesting the transitional moment in which the statue of a leader is destroyed by the public.

Sakhaeifar was inspired by images of the toppled statues of Saddam Hussein in Iraq after the US invasion, Gaddafi in Libya, Nicolae Ceausescu in Romania, as well as the long history of others. In this moment, power is temporarily dispersed, and the simmering rage and frustration of the oppressed boils over. Public frustration becomes directed in the only way possible - towards the idolatrous imagery and propaganda of the leadership and its destruction.

Tehran a loud 2011, an installation comprised of eight sheets of plywood, explores the preservation and destruction of memory by the ruling class. A map of Tehran has been transferred to two pieces

of plywood; cut from the wood are the locations of protests that took place in Tehran in 2009. Sakhaeifar has eradicated these spaces from the physical map, symbolizing the government’s denial of the protests and its attempt to manipulate memory. On the opposite wall, a 9-channel video shows each location with silent, empty streets. The government had erased any evidence of the violent uprising; in the videos of the following days the only clue of trouble is the uncanny absence of people.

The destruction and manipulation of history reappears in Sakhaeifar’s series often photographic collages entitled *NASA/ISIS*. The series juxtaposes

found images of ISIS bombing historic monuments and mosques in Iraq, with images of NASA launching of rockets into space at Cape

Canaveral. The series alludes to the voyeuristic relationship between the US and Middle Eastern countries, where sanctions, oppression, control, and war have been a constant presence.

A direct response to daily life in many parts of the world, *Sacrosanct* explores the challenges of these realities. Sakhaeifar looks through the forms of ethnic, political, and cultural control in order to visually express the struggle for autonomy and responsibility.

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I have the distinguished honor to interview a father and daughter, Mr. Jahangir Sedaghatfar and his daughter Anahita Sedaghatfar for the winter issue of Persian Heritage.

I am honored and delighted, as is my daughter, to have this opportunity. Please accept our thank you for your efforts in keeping Iranians connected to each other and also to their culture.

Thank you. To begin with, please brief our readers on your life in Iran.

My life began in my parent's home. It was located in a small neighborhood in Tehran. It was a traditional Persian style home, with a courtyard. This home was a distance from the Jewish neighborhood of Tehran. I am told this area has gone through many transformations.

Our home was used for both family and business. The street opened to Cyrus Ave. the beginning of the Jewish section. From the 1940's on, the Jewish population had more mobility to move around and the population eventually moved from this area to a more affluent neighborhood located in the northern part of Tehran. These new neighborhoods had their own temples and schools, which were opened to children of all faiths.

I remember that like our old neighborhood, at this location we continued

An Interview with

*Jahangir
Sedaghatfar*

Architect and Poet

Shahrokh Ahkami

to have very close relationships with our neighbors. Some became very important figures in Iran such as Dr. Hossein Gol-e-Golab who wrote the verses for the Iranian national anthem. Another was Mr Mehdi Bazargan, the former Prime Minister and Mr. Mousa Pastor who was considered to be the father of modern pharmacology in Iran. One of my playmates in the neighborhood was Darioush Gol-e-Golab, son of Gol-e-Golab. He became an important figure in the construction business and had offered me employment.

As I stated so much warmth surrounded this neighborhood and we were all very close despite our differences of religions.

What about your education?

For my early education I had an Armenian teacher and then went to the Alliance School for my primary and high school education. I remember that my teachers at this school were very strict and very intelligent. Many of my classmates at this school became famous and I am proud to say represented all religions.

After ninth grade I continued my education at Dar-ol-Fonoon where I studied literature. While there I changed my course of study to mathematics. I changed schools and received my degree from Kourosh, which means Cyrus. One of my physic teachers at this school was Dr. Barokh Brokhim, Mr. Parviz Shahriari for mathematics and Dr. Parviz Atabaki for literature. Dr. Atabaki later, provided an Arabic- Persian dictionary and he was who introduced me to Mehdi Akhavan Saless, the poet. This was a very important introduction in my life and influenced my development.

Where did you complete your

higher education?

After getting my high school diploma in mathematics I left for the United States. It was not easy leaving Iran and I remember vividly the cold winter day I arrived in New York. From New York I proceeded to the University of Ohio where I received a BA in Architecture and a Masters in Civil Planning.

While in Ohio I unfortunately witnessed the sad events of Kent University. It was in 1970 and four students were killed by the National Guard during a protest. This was very sad and upsetting to me. Midterm the university closed and I scrambled to find another location to hold classes. I did in a church. After giving finals I decided to leave. I was offered a position at Hampton University in Virginia.

While I was at the University of Ohio I wrote a book called Entopia, which discussed issues of –housing projects for people. The book was republished by Hampton University, Architectural College. This greatly impacted my professional career.

Did you return to work in Iran?

This is interesting. Unknown to me copies of my book were sent to the Iranian Embassy in Washington, DC. From there they were forwarded to the Ministry of Higher Education in Iran. One day I received a letter from the Minister of Higher Education asking me if I would like to do a lecture series in Iran. Of course I graciously accepted the invitation. Throughout that summer I lectured at the Architectural Schools of the University of Tehran and Shiraz Universities.. The lectures caught the attention of the media, which was very interesting.

While in Iran I proposed an idea to create a park in Iran to the head of the Department of the Environment, Mr. Eskandar Firouz. He accepted it. I returned to the United States and began to interview different architectural firms in the Philadelphia area. With Mr. Firouz's acceptance we decided to use the WMRT firm in Philadelphia.

Would you like to tell the readers about the park?

The main person of this idea was of course Mr. Firouz, who was considered the "Father of the Natural Environment

in Iran.” The park was given the name of Pardisan it was 650 acres and located in the western section of Tehran. It was supposed to house a small version of the universe, a zoo, botanical garden, aquarium, a lake, woods, picnic grounds, play grounds and a place to attend environmental classes about man and nature. In 1974 it received a medal of honor from the Society of American Landscape Architects in the United States. Being connected with the park presented me with the opportunity to lecture about the park in New York at the United Nations, Vancouver and in Washington, DC for the conference on developing countries.

When and why did you return to the States?

The main reason for leaving was the difficulty we faced in proceeding with the plans and development of the park. As the director of the project it was difficult for me to leave the project. It was important to me because I recognized the need for green within Tehran because of Tehran’s population growth. I am happy that I did have a part in creating this legacy.

Can you tell us about your life in the US?

The first two years here were a bit of a struggle. I needed to rebuild my career. In addition I was the oldest son and felt obligated to help both my in laws and my parents to immigrate.

In 1981 I received my architectural license from California and began to work and attract business. My wife and I also had two children my son Nima and my daughter Anahita. They are everything we ever dreamed of as parents.

Now as I am older I do less architectural business and more reading, writing and painting. But, there is not a day that passes when I do not remember my birth land.

It is interesting to me how many individuals who write and paint outside of their professional careers. How is it that you an engineer and architect became interested in writing and painting?

Since I was young I had a tremendous attraction to creating; taking my ideas and putting them onto a paper by pencil or

paint. In fact when I first came to the United States one half of my suitcase contained poetry books and an English-Persian dictionary. Studying architecture impacted this creativity. I remember the first year I was in school my professor asked me what style of architecture I wanted to pursue. My response was unusual, I said, poetic. This style showed my love and interest for both. Whenever I had a free moment I would read and write poetry. In reality the practice of architecture and painting are closely tied as both use thought out placement of lines and movement.

What about your painting styles?

I try to be open to all styles of painting.

Have you published your poetry?

Yes. To date I have published four books.

And do you have a personal style of writing poetry?

As a Persian we must take poetry seriously because our history is so rich in poetry and literature. Both the new contemporary and old classic styles offer so much depth. While I have tried many styles I find myself leaning more to the styles of Nima, the father of Persian contemporary poetry. However, I do not like to frame myself into one particular style. I try not to have repetition in my words and expressions. In fact my last book contains 95 poems including quadrants and free style.

What poets do you admire most?

So many: Hafez, Sa’adi, Rumi, Ferdowsi, Khayyam. Khayyam is so unique in his presentation! I also love Saeb-e-Tabrizi. As for more modern poets, the list is equally impressive and long and include Mehdi Akhavan Saless, Simin Behbahani, Nader Naderpour, Forough Farrokhzad, Manouchehr Atashi, Houshang Ebtehaj, Ahmad Shamlou and Ismael Khoie and so many more.

Do you have any closing words for our younger population?

As a matter of fact I gave a message to them in one of my Persian poems. I explained that they must always remember their beautiful and rich culture and the land from which it came.

Thank you for your time

Thank you for this opportunity.

Mother Tongue

John Sedaghatfar

*Go figure!
Flittering to the same rhythm
for a long fifty years,
now,
suddenly
she dances to a different tune!
Three books of verse
in Farsi
published in a foreign land.
Collections
edited,
collated,
pampered
not sent out
but laid in coffins
the size of shoe boxes,
hoping to be resurrected
on Judgment Day ...
in the Motherland!
But Pen
never sang English till now!
Go figure this one!*

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An Interview with

Anahita Sedaghatfar

Prominent Attorney and Television Legal Analyst

Shahrokh Ahkami

the firm's employment litigation. As you know, Johnny Cochran (the founder of the Cochran Firm) was the defense lawyer in the O.J. Simpson criminal trial. It is as if my career has come full circle and I am blessed to have had the opportunity to work with some of the best attorneys in the country.

During my career, I have represented, and continue to represent many professional athletes, (NBA and NFL players) as well as actors and entertainers in the music industry. Aside from work, I am also an adjunct law professor at Southwestern University School of Law.

Describe your life experiences in the U.S. and your upbringing as an Iranian Jewish American. Did you ever feel a difference between yourself and others in your age group, your friends, and classmates while at school?

I won't say it was difficult growing up as an Persian Jew in the United States, but it wasn't easy as a child. There were only a handful of Persians in my school and the other kids didn't really understand my culture and teachers couldn't pronounce my name. When you are young, you really just want to be like everyone else, to fit in. It wasn't until I got older that I truly appreciated how much my culture and the way my parents raised me contributed to my success and truly helped mold me into the person I am today.

How did you become involved in commentating with national Television and other mass media?

I never pursued a career in television or other media venues, it just sort of fell into my lap! I was in court one day and after my case was over, I was approached by another attorney. He asked me if I had ever thought of appearing on television as a legal analyst. I gave him my card, and didn't think much of it. The next day I received a call from a producer from Fox News Channel and that week I did my first appearance. I suppose you can say the rest is history. From that one hit, I began receiving calls from numerous other producers at Fox News and also from CNN, HLN, ABC, and other networks. My TV career basically snowballed from there and I haven't slowed down since. I appear on national news shows almost daily and continue to maintain my law practice.

Besides your law practice and participation in a wide variety of news and radio shows, what are some of the hobbies and extracurricular activities you are engaged in?

I am an avid sports fan. You can always catch me rooting

The first time I saw you was on television. I admired how articulate, knowledgeable, and in control you were. Watching the daughter of one of my friends on such a prestigious national American news medium made me so proud.

Thank you for this interview and let's start with your back ground , the beginning of your life, your childhood, your education and professional positions.

Thank you so much for your kind words, they are an honor coming from you. I was born in Iran, but my family and I moved to the United States when I was about two years old. We settled in the San Francisco area and that is where I grew up. I currently live in Los Angeles.

I attended UC Davis, where I received a BA in Political Science and a Minor degree in Sociology with an emphasis on law in society. I graduated from UC Davis with the highest honors and was on the Dean's list each year. I subsequently attended Southwestern University School of Law on a full merit scholarship and I received my Juris Doctorate degree, *magna cum laude* (top 5% of my class). While at Southwestern, I received numerous academic achievement awards and was a member of the Law Review. Upon my graduation from law school, I was offered a position at the prestigious law firm of Musick, Peeler & Garrett, LLP, where I practiced in the areas of business law and environmental defense litigation. After a couple of years, I left the firm to open my own practice. I partnered up with famed attorney Christopher Darden, who was the prosecutor in the O.J. Simpson criminal trial, and during this time I successfully litigated numerous employment discrimination and sexual harassment cases. I still currently maintain my law firm in Los Angeles where I practice general civil litigation and continue to specialize in employment litigation. In an interesting turn, a few months ago, I joined the Cochran Firm as "of counsel" to handle

on my home team, the champion Golden State Warriors. I never miss a game! I also am currently taking golf lessons, but still have a lot to learn!

What are your views concerning the Iranian American youth of your age group in America?

I have to say, I am beyond proud of what the Iranian American youth, and in fact Iranian Americans as a whole, have accomplished during the past 30 plus years and in the midst of so much adversity. While we comprise such a minute percentage of the population in the U.S., we continue to be among the most educated, successful and driven minority groups in the world. And our community's success is vast; we have excelled in fields ranging from medicine, law, business, science, politics the arts... the list goes on and on. And I don't think this is a coincidence. I believe the longstanding Persian values that are instilled in us, the values placed upon education and hard work combined with the strong emphasis on family are (among other things of course), what have propelled our community to the levels of success we are seeing today.

What message would you like to convey to the young readers of the Persian Heritage Magazine?

If there is any message that I can convey to the young readers, it would be to never give up on your dreams, whatever they may be. Success can mean different things to different people. But however you define it, remember that success doesn't just come and find you. You have to go out and get it. I am a testament to that.

Karaj, Little Iran



Shah-Abbasi Caravansaray - Karaj

Karaj is a city in the western part of the Tehran Province and one of the major cities in Iran. Recently it became the capital of newly formed Alborz Province.

Karaj is a city and the capital of Karaj County, Alborz Province, Iran. At the 2006 census, its population was 1,377,450, in 385,955 families, making it the fifth-largest city in Iran. It is situated 20 kilometers (12 mi) west of Tehran, at the foothills of the Alborz Mountains. The city is surrounded by mountains, which give it great landscapes.

The history of Karaj dates back many centuries. The stone built Zoroastrian fire temple of Takht-e-Rostam from the Parthian era is a testament to this.

The Soleimanieh palace (currently housing a college of Agriculture), the mausoleum of Shahzadeh Soleiman, Imamzadeh Rahman and Zeid Palang Abad-e-Eshtehard are other historical relics of the Karaj area.

During the Pahlavi dynasty era, the Morvarid Palace was constructed in nearby Mehrshahr district, designed by the Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation.

Especially after the Islamic Revolution thousands of people started to migrate to this pleasant small town making it one of the biggest cities of Iran in less than 3 decades. Currently Karaj is the center of Alborz province located at west of Tehran. Alborz province itself is the youngest and smallest province of Iran. It is named after Alborz mountain range, which is located at the north of Iran. It also provides a great share of water supply of Tehran because of its rich resources such as rivers and springs.

It is connected by freeway, railway to Tehran 40 km east and Qazvin 100 km northwest, and by commuter rail to Tehran subway system (Metro).

Karaj's climate is a bit cooler than Tehran and it receives 260 mm of rain annually. The economical base for Karaj is its proximity to Tehran, where transportation of products between the capital and the Caspian Sea is central. Chemicals, fertilizers and processed agricultural goods are also produced here. It possess importance in agriculture and industry. Many of the most important factories of Iran are located near it.

Karaj is a multicultural city, due to migrants from all around Iran, that is why Karaj is called as Little Iran.

An Overview of the Military Activities of Russo-Soviet Aircraft Against Iran (1914-1988)

part three

Dr. Kaveh Farrokh

COLD WAR ENCOUNTERS (1946-1978)

Iran was a pivotal state in the cold war between the US/NATO and the Soviet Union. The very first political confrontation of the Cold war between the West and the Soviet Union took place during the Azerbaijan crisis in 1946. After this crisis Iran was to become a critical base for the US against the Soviet Union's southern flank. Soviet aerial operations in the Iranian theatre may be examined with respect (a) the Azerbaijan crisis (1946) (b) CENTO aerial Espionage and air to air combat (1958-1978) (c) Iranian air force doctrine against Soviet invasion (1970-1978) (d) Iranian combat aircraft against Soviet-style armoured thrusts (e) The Tu-22 Blinder against Iranian anti-aircraft batteries (f) Soviet strategic bomber (Tu-95) flights into Iran (1970-1978) and (g) aerial encounters between the Mig-25 Foxbat and Iranian combat aircraft.

(A) THE AZERBAIJAN CRISIS (1946)

The Soviet Union, through its occupying forces in Iran, encouraged secessionist movements among Kurds and Azerbaijanis in northwest Iran in 1941-1946 with the aim of annexing these satellite political entities into the Soviet Union (Sicker, 2001, pp.165; Yevgorova, 1996, pp.3; Dzhirkelov, 1987, p.66; Roosevelt, 1947, pp.253, 258). Soviet forces however evacuated Iranian territory by May 9, 1946, which removed Moscow's military umbrella from the satellite governments of

Mirjaafar Pishevari (president of Azerbaijan Democratic Republic) and Qazi Mohammad (president of Kurdish Democratic Republic of Mahabad). Prior to their departure the Soviets did leave a large amount of ammunition and automatic weapons for Pishevari's militias. In addition, despite the "official" pullout of Soviet forces in May 1946, 6000 Soviet military personnel (mainly from the Azerbaijan SSR) remained in Iranian territory to continue supporting Pishevari's army and secret services (Central Intelligence Group Report, June 4, 1947, pp.6). The Soviets had also pledged Qazi Mohammad unspecified numbers of combat aircraft but never delivered these. No aircraft were delivered by the Soviets for Pishevari either. As a result when the Iranian army entered northwest Iran to restore Tehran's authority in December 10-15, Moscow's clients in the area were void of air cover. Soviet air forces also made no attempt to enter Iranian airspace to support the militias of Pishevari and Qazi Mohammad during the arrival of Iranian forces in northwest Iran. The main combat aircraft used by the Iranian air force were British-built Hurricane aircraft that mainly engaged in strafing operations against the militias (Babaie, 2005b, pp. 446).

(B) CENTO AERIAL ESPIONAGE AND AIR TO AIR COMBAT (1958-1978)

The threat of a Soviet invasion of the Middle East had led to the formation of

CENTO (Central Treaty Organization; first known as METO or Middle East Treaty Organization) in August 1959 composed of Turkey, Pakistan and Iran. While the US did not join CENTO directly, it did provide military support for the organization. This was part of the Eisenhower doctrine which committed the US to support regional allies (such as Iran and Turkey) threatened by a Soviet invasion. A major outcome of this was Iran's receipt of its first jet fighters to help bolster the country against the Soviet Union (Ward, 2009, pp.192). Iran and the US also signed a bilateral agreement in 1959 strongly committing Washington's military support for Tehran. CENTO quickly antagonized the Soviets who were concerned that Washington would turn Iran into a de facto US military base and station missiles against the Soviet Union inside Iranian territory (Saikal, 1991, pp.446).

Moscow's fears of Iran becoming an anti-Soviet base were warranted. US spying aircraft would often take off from bases in Iran's southeast Zahedan airbase (in Iranian Baluchistan) to fly into Soviet airspace. Numbers of Iran-based US spying aircraft were shot down over Soviet airspace. The first of these was a modified US Air Force C-130 Hercules aircraft flying out of Turkey, into Iranian air space and from there into the Soviet Union on September 2, 1958. This aircraft was intercepted and shot down by four Mig-17s. The aircraft crashed near Yerevan in Soviet Armenia. Most of the crew were killed with several taken

prisoner. This incident was followed nearly a year later by the shooting down of a US Air Force ERB-47H by Mig-19s in 1963. This aircraft crashed in an unspecified region in the Soviet Caucasus with all its American crew killed.

Subsequent spying aircraft incidents involved Iranian and American military equipment and personnel. In May 1963 an Iranian Army AirCommander-560 was destroyed by Soviet Mig-17Fs of the Soviet 156 Interceptor Air regiment. This incident witnessed the loss of a US colonel and several Iranian crew members. Another Iranian Army AirCommander-560 was destroyed in August 1964 by two Soviet Mig-17Fs, these again being from the Soviet 156 Interceptor Air regiment. It was sometime in 1963-1964 when a Soviet pilot flying a Su-9B flew into Iranian air space and landed in Abadan airport in Iran's southwest Khuzestan province. The pilot duly surrendered to Iranian authorities and declared that he had defected from the Soviet Union. US military personnel quickly arrived at Abadan airport to disassemble the plane, load its parts into transport aircraft and fly these to the US for close examination.

More aerial confrontations were to occur in the 1960s and the 1970s, right up to the Iranian revolution in 1978-1979. On December 2, 1965 a US Air Force RB-57 flying from Turkish or Iranian airbases, was shot down with both crewmen over the Soviet Caucasus. Nearly two years later another American spy aircraft, an ERB-47H, attempting to investigate pos-

sible weaknesses in the Soviet air defense network, was severely damaged (most likely) by a Soviet SA-2 anti-aircraft missile. The damaged aircraft managed to escape Soviet airspace and came close to Tehran but it failed to land safely and crashed. The Americans suffered more losses in October 21, 1970 (a U-8 which crashed in Soviet Armenia) and 1971 (a C-130 shot down along the Iranian-Soviet frontier in the Caucasus).

Numbers of Iranian manned reconnaissance aircraft were also shot down by the Soviets. One notable case was that of an Iranian RF-4E aircraft flown by Major Shokouhnia of the Iranian air force and Captain Saunders of the USAF which was rammed by a Mig-21 on November 28, 1973. Both pilots ejected safely and landed in Soviet territory where they were captured. The Mig-21 had been destroyed when

it impacted the RF-4E. The pilots were repatriated to Iran after fruitless Soviet efforts to obtain information from them during interrogations. US Air Force General S. Hind was the chief director of the Iranian RF-4E flights into the Soviet Union. Interestingly, the Soviets claimed six additional incidents of Iranian air force RF-4Es flying over the Soviet Union.

US-Iranian surveillance against the Soviet Union continued to grow in sophistication right up to the explosion of the Iranian revolution from early 1978. By that time five stations in Iran were monitoring missile and aircraft activities in the Soviet Union. Two of the bases were completely run by the CIA with the other three manned by a mixture of Iranian and American personnel. The role of the stations was to primarily convey information to US forces stationed

on Okinawa and Alaska on the locations and operations of Soviet missiles (Bamford, 1982, pp.198). All five bases coordinated their activities with four Iranian C-130 Hercules aircraft that had been modified for reconnaissance duty (these were known as the Khofash or "Bat" in Persian). The Khofash aircraft flew continuous patrols along the Soviet-Iranian borders, maintaining constant surveillance on Soviet ground, air and missile forces.

Five years after shooting down the RF-4E, the Soviets achieved a major success against a team of four Iranian CH-47 Chinook transport helicopters flying over Soviet airspace on June 21, 1978. A Soviet Mig-23 piloted by Captain Valery Shkinder shot down two of the four helicopters ("Two Iranian helicopters shot down by Russian air defence personnel", The Times [London, England], July 18, 1978). It is very

likely that these helicopters had been engaged in some type of spying or reconnaissance mission. The date of the incident is also interesting as by June 1978 anti-government riots in Iran against the Shah had spread from their January 1978 origins in Qom to major cities such as Yazd, Tabriz, Kermanshah, Arak, Mashad and Isfahan.

(C) IRANIAN AIR FORCE DOCTRINE AGAINST SOVIET INVASION (1970-1978)

By the 1970s, Iranian military planners had identified two major threats against Iran's security. These were posed by the Soviet Union to the north and the Arab world to the west, southwest and southern Persian Gulf area. The greater threat was of course posed by the Soviet military superpower that had demonstrated its willingness to annex Iranian Azer-

baijan as recently as 1946. The Soviet military posed a major threat along Iran's northern borders. Traditional Soviet doctrine was that of the "daring thrust" which hinged on the overwhelming use of waves of rapidly moving armour, closely supported by mechanized troops, anti-aircraft vehicles, massive artillery (including mobile artillery) and attack helicopters (McNaugher, 2005, pp.23-46). The Soviet land invasion would unfold in three phases: (phase 1) invasion takes place through Iran's northwest (into Azerbaijan province) with the initial aim of seizing Qazvin and Hamedan in the northwest and Tehran (north) leading to (phase 2) a drive into Central and western Iran and (phase 3) a determined push into Iran's southwest (notably Dezful) and south where all of Iran's oil industry assets and Persian Gulf ports would be seized by Soviet forces (Epstein, 1981, pp.128).

The Soviet thrust into Iran depended heavily on the deployment of large fleets of supersonic bombers such as the Tu-22 Blinder which could reach as far as Tehran (see also discussion under e below). The Tu-95 long-range strategic bombers (capable of carrying nuclear weapons and heavy payloads of up to 15,000 kilograms (including air to ground missiles) (see also discussion under f) would also be deployed to inflict massive and rapid destruction upon Iranian civilian and military infrastructures. Overwhelming numbers of Soviet jet fighters would also swarm into Iranian airspace to eliminate the Iranian air force (see also g below and a-c under Iran-Iraq war). With Iranian airspace secured, the Soviets would then be able to deploy approximately 600-plus heavy transport military aircraft (An-12, An-22, Il-76) in addition to the aircraft of the Soviet civilian airline (Aeroflot) (Miller, 1983, pp. 170-171). This massive aerial transport fleet would

allow the Soviet military to rapidly airlift a large number of troops into Iranian territory in a relatively short time (Epstein, 1981, pp. 149).

The success of the Soviet airlift would heavily depend on pro-Soviet operatives inside Iranian territory. As noted by Ilya Dzhirkvelov (a key Soviet spy in Iran during the 1960s and 1970s), the KGB had trained Iranian leftist guerrillas to engage in sabotage operations against Iranian military installations and airbases to support the Soviet Union's invasion of Iran (Dzhirkvelov, 1987, pp.51).

The Soviets' leftist Iranian allies tabulated key Iranian airbases, military installations, depots, and landing sites in Iran's northwest (Azerbaijan), west (Kurdistan) and south (Khuzestan) for bombardment and aerial landings by the Soviet air force (Ward, 2009, pp.194). The TASS news service in Tehran (almost entirely staffed by KGB operatives) would have played a key role during a Soviet invasion of Iran, especially during its initial stages when massive airlifts would be taking place into Iranian territory (Dzhirkvelov, 1987, pp.179).

By the 1970s, the Iranian air force had considerably matured as an air arm, with Western assessments ranging from favourable (Farrokh, 2011, pp. 306-308; Cooper & Bishop, 2000, pp. 44-47) to negative (Zabih, 1988, pp.10; Ward, 2009, pp.207-208). Farhad Nassirkhani (a Major in the Iranian air force Test/Instructor Pilot before the 1978-1979 revolution) reported that the Iranian air force "...in less than 20 years... created 10 air force bases, 15 radar sites, operated the most modern machines and equipment at their best performance..." (Personal Communication with author, December 18, 2009). The Iranian military however was under no illusions regarding the Soviet Union's

overwhelming military superiority. In this context, Iran's alliance with CENTO, the US and the west was vital for Iran's defence. Iranian ground forces at best could resist a Soviet invasion for around 2-4 weeks, just in time for the arrival of US, Western and CENTO allies into the Iranian theatre.

The Iranian air force would play a key role against a Soviet invasion and significant advances to that effect had been achieved by 1977. By that time Iran fielded around 400 fighter aircraft, including 160-166 F-5 (Tiger) and 190 F-4 (Phantom) fighter-bombers (Cooper & Bishop, 2000; pp. 38; Sreedhar, 1985, pp.9). However it was the arrival of 77 F-14A Tomcat interceptors that transformed the Iranian air force into one of the most modern fleets in the Middle East. Featuring the latest in avionic and aeronautics technology, the F-14A with its deadly AWG-9 radar system, was capable of tracking multiple targets simultaneously and imposed a deadly threat with its potent and accurate Phoenix air to air missiles.

The F-14A was also capable of quickly taking off from short runways, a feature derived from its original design as a US navy carrier-borne interceptor. The Iranian military leadership was keen to deploy aircraft that could quickly scramble to action as Iran was within short striking distance of Soviet airbases in the Caucasus and Central Asia. Iran faced the same strategic problem along its Western frontier with Iraq, which was mainly equipped with Soviet aircraft. With the F-14A, Iran now had an interceptor capable of challenging the Soviet Union's most advanced fighters, especially the Mig-25, which often flew into Iranian airspace (Jenkins, 1997, pp.22-24). By 1977 the Iranian air force had also been equipped with 24 KC-707 and KC-747 airborne tankers resulting in a sharp increase in

the combat times, operational radius, aerial interception and ground attack capabilities of Iran's combat aircraft.

There were also plans to expand and modernize Iran's already formidable air fleet with orders for an additional 250 F-4 fighter-bombers, another batch of 78 F-14A interceptors, 53 F-15 all-weather air superiority fighters, 140 highly modern F-16s, and 250 F-18 combat aircraft (Babaie, 2005a, pp. 322; Babaie, 2005b, pp.253; Cooper & Bishop, 2000; pp. 20-24, 33, 38; 322; Sreedhar, 1985, pp.9). The F-16s would have replaced the F-5s by the early 1980s, which would have been transferred to training duties. The F-4s would have been replaced by the F-18s over a longer time span. Had the combat aircraft been delivered, Iran would have fielded a powerful air fleet capable of posing serious challenges against Soviet air forces supporting an invasion of Iran.

The plan was to have up to 1000 state of the art combat aircraft (155 F-14As, 100-140 F-16s, 250 F-18s, 440 F-4s and 53 F-15s), which would include a core air superiority wing composed of 150 F-14s and 300 F-16s (Zabih, 1988, pp.106). The expanded fleet would be supported with an additional order of 24 KC-747 airborne tankers.

Orders had also been placed for seven airborne aerial radar platforms (AWACS) that were capable of monitoring a radius of over 400 kilometres. This aerial platform would have had the potential to elevate the coordination and striking power of Iranian combat aircraft to very high levels of effectiveness. This would have significantly upgraded Iran's ability to (a) quickly identify large numbers of intruding hostile aircraft and to (b) vector in its combat aircraft (esp. F-14A and F-16s) to intercept the invading aircraft.

to be continued

An Interview with

Sara Safari

Everest climber and Humanitarian Activist

Persian Heritage

Please tell us a bit about your background.

I was born in Iran and moved to the United States of America 13 years ago. I studied electrical engineering at UCLA and now I am teaching at different colleges.

When did you become passionate about climbing?

It was a few years ago. I had just participated in a workshop. I decided to do something that I could never have imagined doing and something that challenged me. So I decided to climb Everest. I didn't have any experience in climbing or even camping but I have always loved nature.

How did your involvement with "Empower Nepali Girls" begin? Why is this important to you?

When I started teaching at California State, Fullerton, I met Dr. Jeffery Kottler, the founder of Empower Nepali Girls. He told me about the organization. I was so moved and touched by hearing stories about the Nepali girls, their lives and how they were forced into early marriage and sex slavery. Hearing this I decided to dedicate my climbs to them and raise awareness for their situation. This decision I realized, gives more meaning to my climb and inspires me to do more since, it's no longer about me, it's about these girls.

When did you decide you would attempt Everest? Describe the training you've undergone since then to prepare?

I decided to make the Everest climb in the spring of 2015. At the point of decision I had been training for two years, climbing different mountains all around the globe to get ready for Everest. As far as training besides the other climbs I did boot camp circuit training, yoga, rock climbing, running five to ten kilometers and hiking local peaks with heavy back pack. The highest I've ever been is Cho-Oyu the sixth highest peak in the world 27,000 feet. I climbed mountains in Ecuador, Argentina, California, Washington and Himalayas.

Please tell us about your Everest climb. Where were you during the earthquake?

We started the climb on April 3rd and reached the basecamp on the 13th, after 10 days of trekking and acclimatization hikes to prepare our bodies to be at 17000 ft. The next important step of the mission was to practice our ice climbing skills and ladder crossing to go through the famous Khumbu icefall, which is hours and hours of unstable ice and glaciers on top of each other hang-





disciplined on how to take the next step. When I was exhausted, cold and my muscles burned because of lack of oxygen. I learned how to create an inner happiness and motivation that helped me take that next step even if I didn't feel like it or thought it impossible. I learned how to force myself to eat the same food, sometimes tasteless over and over again to keep myself strong. I learned to be comfortable not taking showers for days and be ok with smelling bad. I learned there was no limit of what I could achieve. I learned that everybody is capable of anything and everything. Of course there were days that I thought I'm done with this and I can't do it anymore, but I never gave up because I still had a little bit more to give.

How much money have you raised for Empower Nepali Girls? If people are interested in supporting the cause, what's the best way to do so?

My promise was to raise a dollar for every foot of the climb. I have raised \$29,000 and I am donating all of it to Empower Nepali Girls (ENG). The cost for each girl to go to school one whole year is \$150. The best way to donate to ENG is our website. www.empowernepaligirls.org or you can visit my Facebook page at empoweringallgirls.com. If you have any questions please email me at sara@empowernepaligirls.com or call me.

What are your future plans? Are you going to climb Everest again?

I don't know yet, I don't know if I'm going back next year to summit Everest. I'm going back this December to visit the girls and help them recover from the earthquake. My future includes plans to climb the highest peaks in the Middle East and Africa to raise funds and awareness for female genital mutilation that sadly still happens in many countries.



ing in different angles and crossing ladders over deep crevasses. April 25th is the day we decided to go to Camp One at 19000 ft. This was the day of the 7.9 earthquake that hit Nepal. After 6 hours of climbing through treacherous icefall and crossing many wobbly, long ladders, we were climbing a 30 feet ice wall with 5 ladders installed on it.

As soon as I finished the fifth ladder I felt the whole wall moving left and right. I was trying to figure out what this was when a big chunk of ice, the size of a three story building broke down and fell. The noise it made was like a plane taking off next to my ear. I lost visibility and I couldn't see anything. I climbed the three feet up to the flat area and clipped myself to the anchor. At the time I thought that everything I was doing was pointless, if this ice decided to break down.

Snow and ice debris from glaciers up top started rolling down towards us. At that point I thought this was the beginning of an avalanche, I kicked my crampons to the ice to fix my feet and wrapped the rope around my hands, covered my mouth and nose so snow didn't go up my nostrils and choke me. Even though my heart rate was really high, I was trying to keep some oxygen in case I got buried under the snow.

After 3 minutes everything stopped, there was no shaking and there was no snow rushing towards us. I could hear our guides yelling if everyone was ok. I unclipped myself and ran towards another climber and started sobbing. After the rest of the group climbed up, we had to continue to the next camp since all the ladders were moved, we had to fix them as we were climbing up. As soon as we reached the next stop we heard about the devastating news in the capital, the basecamp and all the people who perished in the earthquake and avalanches. For two days we had to stay where we were. There were many aftershocks and avalanches. Finally a helicopter came to rescue us and bring us to the base camp. When we arrived there were dead bodies, crashed tents and gear all over the mountain. I couldn't believe it!

Some people might not understand your decision to climb, do you often get asked this question?

All the training and time on the mountains were the best life lessons. I learned how to be motivated and energetic. I learned how to wake up in the middle of the night at high altitude, minus 20-degree temperature and with a head ache and sore throat, get ready to eat in 15 minutes and proceed to the next camp. I became