

بنیاد مطالعات ایران

FOUNDATION FOR IRANIAN STUDIES

INTERVIEWEE: MANSUR FARHANG

INTERVIEWER: MAHNAZ AFKHAMI

PLACE: NEW YORK, OCTOBER 21,
AND DECEMBER 20, 1989 AND
FEBRUARY 25, 1990

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ملاحظات :

نصرزاده

مصاحبه شونده

میرزا

مصاحبه کننده

۱۳۳۱/۱۹۸۹

تاریخ

موضوع نوار : خلاصات

PREFACE

This manuscript is the product of a series of tape recorded interviews conducted for the Oral History of Iran Program of Foundation for Iranian Studies by Mahnaz Afkhami with Mansur Farhang in New York in October 21 and December 1989, and February 25, 1990.

Readers of this Oral History memoir should bear in mind that it is a transcript of the spoken word, and the interviewer, narrator and editor sought to preserve the informal, conversational style that is inherent in such historical sources. Foundation for Iranian Studies is not responsible for the factual accuracy of the memoir, nor for the views expressed therein.

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BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Mansur Farhang was born in northern Iran, and received his early education in Tehran. While still at high school he became involved in politics. He participated in student agitations, and developed ties with Khalil Maleki's Third Force Party and Mehdi Bazargan's Iran Freedom Movement. Farhang moved to the U.S. to pursue his higher education. There, he became active in the Confederation of Iranian Students as well as in human rights activities regarding Iran. He became acquainted with such anti-Pahlavi activists as Mostafa Chamran and Ebrahim Yazdi. Following the revolution, Mr. Farhang moved back to Iran, and became active in government activities. He later served as Iran's Ambassador to the United Nations.

Mr. Farhang's reminiscences are rich in detail and shed much light on the dynamics of oppositional politics during the Pahlavi regime, and the working of the Islamic Republic following the revolution.

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BJH

Interviewee: Mansur Farhang

Interview #1

Interviewer: Mahnaz Afkhami

Place: New York

Date: October 21, 1989

Farhang: We should do it in English.

Q: Where were you born, if you don't mind?

Farhang: Not at all. I was born in Sari in 1936. When I was not quite four years old, my parents moved to Tehran. Later, I learned one reason my father decided to move from Sari to Tehran was that he had some difficulty with Afshartus, who was apparently in an official Security Police position. He was involved in a difficulty concerning expectations of fund raising in the city that he was not able to do, and he felt threatened. Whether there was actual threat or not, I don't know. But he felt threatened enough to pick up his belongings and move. He was a businessman.

Q: What kind of business was he in?

Farhang: He was basically, I would say, a tajer, a trader, who went up and down in his career. But, fundamentally, he was buying and selling rice, sugar, for a while dried fruit, even some petroleum. Early in his career, they were buying petroleum from the Russians when he was in Bandar Pahlavi and

Sari. Fundamentally, he stayed in the same business. There were times that he was very successful, and there were other times that he was down, depending on the kind of decisions he had made and all that. But I would say, overall, a rather middle-class --

Q: Comfortable.

Farhang: Comfortable, middle-class. A more or less traditional home, but in a very peculiar way. He was born in Yazd. He left Yazd when he was sixteen years old. It was somewhat of a pattern in dry years when there was not enough rainfall and the economy was bad in Yazd, that young people used to leave. That is why we have Yazdis all over in Iran. He left during one of these periods. Nevertheless, he maintained his culture and his own orientation toward people and society, very much influenced by his own upbringing. Yazd has a very conservative and well-knit culture.

Then, he married my mother in Sari, who was also there, according to a very idiosyncratic incident in the sense that my mother's mother, my grandmother, was from Esfahan. She was from the Kazeruni family. She married her cousin in Esfahan, and he was given a kind of official mission from Esfahan to Mazandaran. So, after they got married and my grandmother was pregnant, they went to Mazandaran. But shortly after they arrived there, he was killed - again, in disputes which related to the family, to business, and all that. He was killed. My mother was born. She was the only child from my grandmother's first marriage, who was

also very young but, nevertheless, Esfahani. Again, the culture of Esfahan has its own distinctiveness and so forth. She was raised in that family, and she remarried and had other children.

My mother was twelve years old, actually, when my father was twenty-two, when they married. So, he was kind of a Yazdi thrown into Mazandaran. And she was a child of really Esfahani background and orientation, thrown into Mazandaran, again by accident. Later, they moved to Tehran.

So, it was very peculiar. A lot of relatives and associations we had with people, they kind of represented a kind of mosaic of customs and habits. Yet, we were raised, we grew up, in Tehran in the neighborhood. I mean, the school and friends and all that. So, when I look back, it's very difficult to say exactly which cultural orientation has been more influential because I know these things are very important in our country.

Q: Did you have a large family?

Farhang: Yes. In fact, my mother gave birth to eleven children altogether; four died and seven survived. My older brother is a physician, who is practicing in Tehran. My younger brother has moved to the States. He is a very successful businessman in Tucson, Arizona. Two of my sisters are halfway between the United States and Iran, given the family members here and, like many other Iranian parents, they're very divided in terms of

their attachments, relatives and so forth between the States and Iran. And the other two, more or less, they also have children and relatives here, but they are more attached to the Iranian scene. But, nevertheless, they're all alive.

Q: Did you think that you were growing up in a traditional family?

Farhang: It was a traditional family in form, in certain style. For example, my father was very much influenced by the social and educational reforms of the Reza Shah period. He was a very socially active person, and he influenced my mother in the same direction. For many years, for example, my mother was a rather areligious person, someone who had literally taught herself how to read and right. But I always thought of her as a very brilliant woman who was very influential in the family. There was the style or appearance of tradition somewhat, but there was no effort on the part of my parents to impose any kind of behavior or belief on their children. I remember some friends feeling compelled that they had to pray or fast before their parents, some. We were never really forced, not even suggesting. In many cases, my father wasn't even doing it himself. So, it was a very typical, I would say, Iranian family - within the same family, some people playing poker and other people praying. In the month of Ramzan, two members of the family fasting and others being very cynical about it. One praying regularly, and someone else not even knowing the prayer. This type of

coexistence seemed to be very normal, and no one really objected to the diversity of perspectives and lifestyles - not only in my immediate family, but also my uncle, aunt, and many others. It was a kind of loose and pluralistic kind of coexistence in degrees of intensity towards religious or traditional values.

Q: Your mother was veiled?

Farhang: It's interesting. When I was born, no. She was not. Later, as she grew older, many Iranian women, as you know, returned. In the beginning, they were some reluctantly and in a confused fashion, but gradually embraced it. I would say she was, in that sense, quite typical. As she grew older -- because the early rejection of certain patterns of behavior was not a conscious choice. It was imposed. It was simply going along with what was happening at the time. Later on, there was a void. In fact, toward the end of her life, she became extremely religious, extremely religious. She was studying Arabic. She was very concerned that the children did not seem to be pious and all that, toward the end of her life. So, there was, to some extent probably, this change, yes.

Q: And your sisters?

Farhang: It's very interesting. The oldest one, who was somewhat educated during the integration days in the Reza Shah

period, is fundamentally, constitutionally, temperamentally a conservative person. She is not an intense person, either. So, she is somewhat traditional. There are days that she would wear the veil and other days that she would not. But neither way seems to be particularly important to her. Just conforming to the occasion is very much compatible with her personality.

My other sisters don't. They never wore the veil. In fact, they objected to it. They resisted it even if there was any social pressure. However, one of them, who is a year younger than I am, married when she was very young, seventeen, in, again, a modest, middle-class, merchant-class Bazari kind of family relationship. Her husband was also working for a company which was located in Bazar. But after the marriage, they became extremely successful in business. He was a very tough and shrewd businessman in land speculation and construction particularly. He made a lot of money. As he became rich, I would really categorize him as a typical, newly-rich unit of the rising bourgeoisie in Iran under the Shah. It's fascinating, as they became more successful and more enriched by their business activities, they became more religious - again, the void, particularly my sister. Here for them, for example, someone like Shari'ati was an extremely important figure. They went to Hoseiniyyeh-e Ershad in later years. Later on, she played a significant role in the sense of putting me in touch. I got to know Shari'ati through my sister. My sister and her [husband] actually bought a house for Shari'ati. The residence Ali was living in was donated, was given to him as a gift. My

brother-in-law and sister were the principal fund raisers. Their relationship was so close that, later on, Shari'ati sent his son, Ehsan, to Seattle, where they bought a house. They also sent their own children, their four daughters, who are all graduates of University of Washington - totally different from the background of their parents. There's a mountain or a valley of difference, a gap, between the social culture upbringing of the children, who were all really very Americanized. Still, they all live here, and the parents. Anyway, that's a different story.

They got very politicized. In the revolution, they were very close to some prominent people like all the crowd around Hoseiniyyeh-e Ershad, Taleqani, Bazargan, and Minachi. They were very close family friends. In fact, in the 1970s, when I used to go to Tehran, I'd like to know in number of these people besides my own political kind of connections. They were new people that I did not know them personally. There was probably no way for me to know them unless there was someone to introduce me to them, given the fact that I used to spend two weeks or three weeks in Tehran and also traveling. There was not enough time. So, she has a difference -- But she was the only one really political among my sisters or brothers, for that matter.

Q: So, when you went to Sari to Tehran, do you have any recollections of Sari in early childhood?

Farhang: Yes, very vague. I went back several times. I don't

know if returning to that neighborhood -- To what extent I don't know what you know about Sari. I was going back, and I have a very vague recollection. I was not quite four yet. But what I remember very distinctly was when we came to -- I still vividly remember the night we got off. An old car. We had to walk a long way. My uncle, my mother's brother, da'i, was carrying me from the Rei Street, you know Kucheh Abshar, where it was the station for buses and cars and doroshkehs and other stuff, to where they had bought a house, which was inside Bazar-e Seyyed Ebrahim, which was very traditional. In those days, it was the center of 'Eynoddowleh, etc. These were the central parts of Tehran. Then, I grew up in the family in that neighborhood until I was about seventeen, eighteen, when we moved to Amirabad.

Q: Where did you go to school?

Farhang: There was an elementary school near our house. The first year of my elementary school, I went to Dabestan-e Mokhtalet. It was at the end of that year in which the school closed and we were transferred to Dabestan-e Safavi. My older sister, who is two years older than I am -- we went to the same school. I have a lovely memory of that year because Bijan Mofid and I were together in that school, and we were very close friends. Bijan's aunt, Khaleh, was the principal of that school. Later on, I even established contact. We had recollection of that year. But at the end, it was closed. But I have very, very vivid memories of that first year of elementary school. Then,

after that, Dabistan-e Safavi, which was within walking distance from our house. It was a rather rigid and not a pleasant learning environment at all - very rough.

Q: For high school, where did you go?

Farhang: From that high school, I went to Naser Khosrow High School, which was again near our house. Lots of friends were going. Then, from there, I transferred to another high school which was closer to our house in Egbal. During these days, I was becoming very somewhat interested in politics and society and all that - going beyond immediate family and neighborhood kind of interests.

Then, from there, I transferred. I was kicked out of one school for [chuckles] political activities immediately after the 1953 events. Then, I went to Iranshahr, and that's where I graduated. I completed my high school.

Q: Do you have any friends from that time?

Farhang: Yes, I do. I have many. Some of them are here. The last time I spent an extended period in Tehran, yes, I still have some friends. Some of them have moved to very prominent positions in the military, in the police force, in business, in academy, and all that. But I would say the successful ones from that period, from Kucheh Abshar or Khiyabam-e Rei, are a minority

of students. No more than ten percent pursued education. The vast majority came from working-class families, and they pretty much continued in the tradition of their parents.

You see, the neighborhoods, in those days, were not at all as rigidly divided by class lines as they became in later years. I remember very distinctly, for example, that we had a house with ten rooms. There was a mansion with a huge garden belonging to the Mahdavi family just about a block away. Across the street there were houses in which each room belonged to a different family. So, there was a policeman living there, a baker living there, a physician living there, a pharmacist. That neighborhood very much, in fact, under the pressure of change -- My father felt compelled under immense insistence of my mother to leave because the social structure of the neighborhood went through this dramatic change. All the people who could afford it moved away and the neighborhood became more of a, I would say, lower middle-class, working-class neighborhood.

Q: During that time in high school, when you were becoming political, was that the time that the influence was mostly Tudeh, or what kind of influence?

Farhang: No. In fact, if I can trace it back, but not in any exact sense, from the very beginning, there was a very intense anti-Tudeh sentiment. It didn't really have much to do with the family, even though my father was very anti-Communist and all that. He was politically conscious. First of all, my father was

very much involved in Bazar in the support for nationalization of oil industry. So, that was one source of influence.

My brother was a student at medical school. He also played the violin. He used to go to these celebrations, and he was kind of recruited into the Iran Party - not because he was political, but because he was a violinist and a medical student. This is really true. They needed him, and they used to compensate him in various ways like he managed to become an intern a year before his classmates in a semi-private insurance hospital, Bimarestan-e Bimeh. The only reason he was able to do that was because of political influence, that he had managed to please them with his violin playing in various occasions that they needed musicians. So, he was another source of influence. Some of his friends were active in the Iran Party.

I was involved in playing volleyball and ping-pong, being a champion and being on the school team. So, in that sense, I also came to know in various ways the teachers - for example, the physical education teacher. I remember Mr. 'Aqili, who was principal of Naser Khosrow High School, who was a very intense nationalist and pro-Mosaddeq person. I would say a collectivity of this and not only a kind of pro-nationalist, pro-Mosaddeq sentiment, but equally and anti-Tudeh sentiment.

Q: The generation before had been apparently very influenced by the Tudeh.

Farhang: Definitely. I would say those who were about ten to fifteen years older, there was no other influence, in fact. It was during that open period in Iranian history, in 1941 to 1953, that there was a genuine marketplace of ideas in competition for influence and various ideological perspectives and so forth. This period, I would say, was not particularly helpful to the Tudeh Party. Also, again, at the time, I was not aware or conscious but, later, I could understand the upsurge of anti-Tudeh and the Communist, anti-Russian sentiment had to do with the occupation of Azarbaijan. That was 1946, and I was ten years old. This is the period that the discussion in the neighborhood, in the school, in the family, was the occupation of Azarbaijan, and the fact that the Tudeh Party was supporting this occupation and secession.

So, I would say a cluster of factors contributed to this atmosphere. This was not particularly the period where the Tudeh Party could recruit, except where the older brothers or the fathers had already been recruited as members of the previous generation, so the younger brothers invariably followed. Let's say, I used to look up to my brother. If he was a Tudehi, for example, it would not have been entirely inconceivable that I could be very much influenced by it.

But, later on, when I got directly involved, it became a different story because I became very interested in Khali Maliki. In fact, I became a member of the Third Force Party. And I was also interested in writing in these days - wherever in Naser Khosrow or Eqbal we had wall papers. I remember every time in

any school, I was a member of the group interested in producing a wall paper and also getting into conflict and difficulties with others over this. It was another avenue of interest in reading and all that. So, gradually, I came to know his thinking when they split from the Tudeh Party. But that was the very early beginning of influence. I would say [Mohammad] Mosaddeq was Prime Minister when I developed a more conscious kind of interest in organized student politics.

Q: Prior to that, you weren't formally a member?

Farhang: No, not at all. Just sympathies. The involvement was such that if you were a curious kid, you could not remain aloof.

Q: Did you take part in demonstrations? Do you remember any?

Farhang: Well, all demonstrations during the Mosaddeq period, I've never missed one, including "Si-e Tir." But before, I don't really remember having participated in demonstrations in the serious way that I'm going to demonstrations before "Si-e Tir." We had demonstrations, for example, in Naser Khosrow on various occasions. It had to do with all nationalization, Mosaddeq's opposition to [Ali] Razmara. There were always groups outside. They were not organized into a political party, but there was a network of informal connection in educational institutions, as well as in bazar and danishgah, including high school, I would

say, and invariably through teachers who had just graduated from the university, or some of them were still university students. So, they were the agitators in all that. So, the curious kids, those who have a natural propensity to pay attention to these things, which invariably are a minority of people --

So, these demonstrations took place, but I really have no conscious recollection that I felt intensely involved in defending a particular position. But, yes, we used to hear probably because the people I admired were there, so we had to be there.

Q: Did somebody tell you what was happening beforehand?

Farhang: When Mosaddeq was forced to resign his office, in the neighborhood, there was activity. At that time, still Hizb-e Zahmatkeshan and Maliki were in the same group. There were people in our neighborhood, including my brother through Hizb-e Iran that were involved. So, there was an atmosphere that I remember. In the neighborhood, people wanted to go out, and "we must do something," kind of joining the crowd and forming a group of ten or fifteen students largely from neighborhoods - people who were both your friends at school and playmates in the neighborhood. Again, the people who were interested in this were a minority - no question.

But I remember distinctly that I made a conscious decision, "We must do something."

Q: And you were on the street then?

Farhang: We were on the street, yes. We went in front of Majles and we were actually witnessed, running around, gun shots, and tanks, and so forth. Amir Bijar, who was actually killed there, was from our neighborhood. I did not know him personally. He was somewhat older. But later, I learned where he lived, like ten blocks away. So, there was a sense of pride that Amir Bijar was from this general area. [chuckles] He sacrificed himself. All that mythology and affection that one develops after these things.

Q: Do you recollect the actual events very well, what was happening? Was somebody giving a speech? What was happening?

Farhang: No, there was no -- In front of Majles, the place where we went through Sarcheshmeh and Majles, there were groups of people congregating in a state of almost indecisiveness. They screamed one slogan, "Long live Mosaddeq." And then, the police -- I did not see any soldier anywhere on the way from our neighborhood in Khiyaban-e Rei to Sarcheshmeh and in front of Masjed-e Sepahsalar. But once we moved to Meydan-e Baharestan and that corner where Hizb-e Zahmatkeshan was located, Khiyaban-e Ekbatan, in that area, I saw soldiers and tanks. But there was groups of ten, fifteen, twenty, largely young, I would say high school, university students. Every time, obviously, in Tehran,

in those days, you have half a dozen people pretending to agitate. There were people who could gather to see what is going on. So, every small group, if it sustained itself for ten, fifteen minutes in this spot, could actually appear to be more impressive than what it actually was. I remember that very, very distinctly. Screaming your slogan, running away - we did that.

Q: They weren't huge crowds?

Farhang: No, not in the areas that I went. In Meydan-e Baharestan, because there were so many streets - people coming from Meydan-e Jaleh, from Mokhberoddowleh, but there was no huge congregation of demonstrators at any one place. Later on, I learned that the same kind of gatherings existed in Bazar and Buzarjomehri and in front of the university in Shah Reza.

Q: Were you, at that time, conscious of what it was that you wanted politically?

Farhang: To the extent that a sixteen or seventeen-year-old kid could be. I would say by average standards, I was probably more aware of what was going on than people of my age group because I was a voracious reader and really very curious about these things. Since childhood, I was extremely interested in going to school and becoming an "Ostad-e Daneshgah."

Q: You always knew?

Farhang: Oh, it was my dream when I was eleven, twelve, and all that. I don't know where it came from - through my father's relatives, who were in education. Some of them I admired and all that. One of them was a good poet, for example, Yazdi. He as a teacher and a poet.

Anyway, these influences were so -- And yet, if we want to go back, I really didn't know by any objective standard what was happening. There was a raw feeling of sympathy and identity, the desire for group solidarity and admiration, and awe for the person of Mosaddeq - kind of elevating him to almost a mythological level in our minds. Again, my father was also an admirer of Mosaddeq, even though, later on, he became critical. But it was too late for him to influence me when he changed his position. So, there was a great deal of influence.

You see, if you had asked a typical kid in those days, depending on how articulate, he would have said, "Mosaddeq is a patriot, "mihan-parast ast." Mosaddeq is pak. He's not a thief." These are the standards. "He is well-known. He is famous throughout the world." These qualities and nationalization of all, that the foreigners are exploiting or stealing our resources, and he is trying to save us. These were the kind of slogans, I would say. They had something to do with reality but, obviously, did not constitute the entire picture. Yes, these impressions and these sentiments definitely existed.

Q: Did it translate itself into an anti-monarchy or republican type of feeling?

Farhang: No, absolutely not. The idea of republicanism did not even exist in our political discourse or in terms of our preferences or alternative thinking - not at all in the home or in the family, not even in the party later on. Not at all.

Q: At what point did you decide to come outside to study?

Farhang: Well, after the 1953 coup, I became very intensely political. Here, my brother completely withdrew. He didn't want to have anything to do with a dangerous situation. My father became apolitical. Again, there was danger. And many of the kids I knew in the neighborhood also withdrew under pressure of parents and all that. Yet, at that point, I would say, in my generation, I was probably the very tail end of the people who were politicized during the Mosaddeq period.

We became very -- The idea of anti-regime or anti-shah - not so much anti-monarchy again. Anti-regime and anti-shah feelings and sentiments, and so forth, were invoked. They entered our politically consciousness and sensibilities.

Immediately after the coup, I wanted to pursue political activities. There was this urge which had as much to do with what was going on, as well as one's personality. Because a lot of people with similar situations kind of withdrew. So, I looked around to see who else. There were some people from Third Force

Party in the high school, in the neighborhood. These were really the only sources of contact. High school was connected to daneshgah usually through some students who had a brother there or a cousin or a family member, a neighborhood friend and all that. Anyway, we had connections. I remember Ja'far Qolizadeh was, but I didn't know him. There were two or three people. I still remember distinctly their names. So, I had these connections. As time went on, like within six months, I realized that the core people who were involved in the establishment of the resistance, Nihzat-e Moqavemat-e Melli were a group of people who had split from the Iran Party, Mohammad Nakhshab, and his brother-in-law, who happened to be my literature teacher, insha'va dikteh, Marja'i. Mohammad Nakhshab and Ja'far Marja'i. He trusted me as a teacher. He got involved. We found out he was, so an underground student newspaper was being printed. I started writing for the students. Gradually, we developed a network of kind of semi-underground connections in relationship with Nihzat-e Moqavemat-e Melli. And most of the leaders of the Nihzat came from Jam'iyate Azadi-e Iran, which was instituted by Nakhshab.

The Iran Party became pretty aloof and apolitical. Most Third Force Party people, there were some. Also, during this period, there was a split within the Third Force Party between Khonji and Maliki. Maliki was in prison. He was sent to Falakolafalak. Khonji and Mas'ud Hejazi, who became active in the National Front. So, there was this split within the party. We

were very agitated as Third Force Party members within the National Resistance Movement. We were divided. There were fascinating meetings in various places - all underground. I'll never forget that when Maliki, after about ten months -- The first time that I actually saw the man was when he was transferred from Falakolafalak to Tehran, and it was rather easy to go and visit him. We went there with some other students. I visited him in prison, which was not really a prison - it was farmandari nizami. There were huge rooms, and he was in a very comfortable room and all that. [Teymur] Bakhtiyar was still there. Bakhtiyar, in fact, used to like him. They used to have regular conversations about events.

So there was this agitation, division, and I was involved in that. I was very much pro-Maliki and anti-Khonji. Why? I don't know. But, at the time, Maliki seemed more interesting. So, the arguments were advanced to support the sentiment. I would say the vast majority of kids my age were in the same kind of category. So, we were involved, on behalf of pro-Maliki Third Force Party with other members of the Nihzat, the resistance. When Mosaddeq was on trial, activities when on that I cannot really get into. Every day, we had some activity. I had become kind of a prominent member of this student underground through school, neighborhood, and connection with some really big people like Nakhshab and Marja'i, which was incidental simply because he was my teacher and, yet, trusted me. They were printing things in his house.

When Mosaddeq was on trial, his defense was not published

outside in its totality. So, he had smuggled the defense out. The National Resistance Movement had published a pamphlet. It was published and we were distributing it. I was arrested with one hundred and fifty copies of this pamphlet. The only reason I was given, we were distributing it. There was one man who worked as an engineer in Telegraph Building in Toupkhaneh, Mohandes Pakzad. I remember him very distinctly because I had to make sure that I wouldn't mention his name at the time. It was again a very crazy incident. I had been there before, giving him other things -- We had a regular newspaper. I was a distributor and all that like, Nihzat Newspaper. But, basically, it was published by Nakhshab and Marja'i, Nihzat-e Azadi people, but in the name of Pro-Mosaddeq Coalition.

This time, I went in to deliver the La'ihah-e Difa'iiyyeh, the booklet with his picture on the cover. He wasn't in his office. I waited.

Q: And you were just carrying all that?

Farhang: I was carrying this in a suitcase. There were a hundred and fifty of them in a suitcase. I was amateurish. I waited in the hall, and he didn't show up. Finally, I was kind of panicky. After twenty minutes, half an hour, I decided to leave. As I was leaving the building, the policeman who was standing at the door turned to me and said, "What are you taking out?" Parenthetically, the only reason he stopped me was because

there was construction going on in the back of the building. In previous days, they had lost some wires and electrical-related equipment. So, they had been warned to make sure that nobody takes any construction or electric equipment things out. As soon as he said that, I panicked. I said, "I don't know." He looked at me. [chuckles] He stopped me. He stopped me, and I insisted he stop me exactly on the gate of the door. It was somewhat crowded. He wasn't absolutely certain that I was there, I was coming from inside, and all that. So, I detected shortly his indecisiveness. I made up a story that I was standing there, waiting for somebody, which they knew it was a lie. Nevertheless, I sustained it. I didn't want to say that I was going upstairs to see somebody. He would have been in trouble. They took me to the security station inside the building. There was an officer and police. They got a knife and opened [chuckles] the thing, and they popped up. From there, they sent me to --

First of all, there was one colonel, whose name was Shahshahani. He desperately tried. He, in fact, beat the hell out of me. He was very interested in getting the information from me, where I got these pamphlets because he wanted to get the credit, that he was the one who discovered them. I resisted it. I pretty much managed to stick to a story. But he finally got tired and he called Farmandar-e Nizami, and they came after me. So, I went there, and I was there for a few days. I repeated the same story. I had rehearsed it so much.

Q: What did you say?

Farhang: There was one guy who made all these things. There was one guy in our high school who was well-known as an agent of Farmandar-e Nizami. His name was Rasul Rezvani. [chuckles] It's an insane lie.

Fifteen years later, parenthetically, I saw him on Hollywood Boulevard, and he was ready to kill me. [chuckles]

Q: That you said you got it from him?

Farhang: I said I got it from him. He left the school and we hated him because he was always trying to cause mischief. There were a gang of people who always congregated near our school in Meydan-e Baharestan, they were Amir Mubur, Mansur Rafizadeh. There were gang-type, who were also very rough. He was a younger member of the same gang.

[end of side one, tape one]

So, when they asked me where you got it and all that, I had about fifteen minutes, or probably half an hour, in the very beginning, unharrassed, to cook up a story even though, in the very beginning, I really panicked. But I would say after five or ten minutes, I kind of recollected myself and managed to come up with this story and to stick with it. No one really pressured me

to tell the full story, except Shahshahani in the original place, which he was not supposed to do at all.

In those days, once they found out that you are not Tudehi, they did not pursue questioning. There was no torture. They used to beat you up. They'd whip you, but it wasn't really anything because if they wanted to, they would have easily been able to make me say where I got them.

Q: How old were you?

Farhang: I was eighteen years old. Easily, they could have, but they didn't. So, I went to Farmandar-e Nizami, and I was there for three days. From there, they sent me to Qasr Prison. What they said was, "You stay here until you say where you got this." They actually went after this guy, and he was from Hamadan. They went all the way to Hamadan. They could not locate this guy. But he found out about it when he applied for exit visa to leave the country. [chuckles] He came to know the story years later. And they dropped the story. Obviously, they did not pursue it diligently. They pursued it for a while. The only reason they didn't pursue was that, within days after my arrest, they had already captured the house where the print machine was located and the rest of the stuff. It was not really a big deal for them. Perhaps if they had no other lead -- They were sensitive about publication of this thing. But they had managed to get to the source in other ways. I know that other people were arrested with it, and not with one hundred and fifty - with five, ten, or

one. They didn't really bother. Later, I learned, Marja'i told me, that literally three or four days after my arrest they discovered the place.

My father was a very close friend with Ha'erizadeh, who was very close to [Fazlollah] Zahedi. He was Wakil-e Avval-e Tehran. Ha'erizadeh had called a chief of the Bakhtiyari family. He did not know Teymur Bakhtiyar himself. He called another Bakhtiyar, who was a senator at the time. I can't remember. So, my father went to see him, and he sent my father to Bakhtiyar, and Bakhtiyar said, "Well, yes, I can let him go as soon as he says where he got these pamphlets," and all that. So, I went to prison. Once I went to prison, but not the building of Farmandar-e Nizami, but the temporary facilities of Shahr bani, there, we were put with other political prisoners. Another teacher I had, I saw him there. He was my physics teacher, Behazin. I remember the first thing when I saw him in the prison, I started smoking a cigarette. He came to me and directly said, "Why are you smoking cigarette?" He has one arm missing. He was a leftist, even though he knew me from the activities of school, Dabirestan-e Behbahani, the fourth year when I was there, and then transferred at the end of the year to Iranshahr.

So, I got to know. There were gangs of organizations, largely Tudehi. They were very organized. They were very together. And they influenced others. Even in prison, I found a few other Pan-Iranists, pro-Mosaddeq - eclectic characters whom

we organized.

I was there for about a week, and then they transferred me to Qasr Prison. Again, I remember getting into -- There was one woman. I have always remembered her face. When we got into this truck to be transferred to Qasr, she turned to I think virtually everyone in that car. There were probably twenty, twenty-five people. The trucks that had chairs around. People who couldn't find a seat would stand up. There were two women in the car - one of them extremely articulate and very beautiful. She turned to the people who were there, condemning the Tudehis who sign tobehnameh. She said, "When you got to prison, tell the rofaga that they are producing shame." She actually gave a lecture that I was genuinely moved by the spirit and the strength of this woman. I have no idea. I never learned who she was.

When we were there, we were separated. Still under eighteen, I was put into Band-e Do, which was for teenagers up to eighteen. So, I went inside the huge prison camp. They were all fundamentally -- One group of Tudehi, one scattered group of Mosaddeqis, and criminal elements and all that. I was there for another eight days, again getting involved in heavy discussions with Tudehis, fundamentally maintaining a reasonable spirit and, at the same time, learning a great deal about the Iranian society, the kind of people who were in prison, and all that. When you're raised in a middle-class family, you could be completely --

Another very important thing that really relates to all this is that there was another man who was very active on behalf of

Mosaddeq. He was a molla, Sheikh Baqer Nahavandi. In those days, it wasn't so much an idea of with whom you identified ideologically, but who is doing something. If you were a doer, a caring dashti, you looked for action, you looked for doers. Nahavandi, obviously. Remember that in those days, it had so much to do with what happened later. The religious elements had a very positive and a pleasant image in our minds, the ones who stayed with Mosaddeq. Nahavandi was a pro-Mosaddeqi.

Another night, eighty-six people were arrested in Nahavandi's home. It was a meeting or a Jalase-e Tafsir-e Nahj al-Balagheh. It was the title of it with a lot of kids, university students, usually pro-Mosaddeq people from the neighborhood. So, we went there and two trucks of soldiers came and arrested everybody. This was the second time. But this time, they didn't even ask our names. [chuckles] Fortunately, there was a pharmacist who saw the situation, and he was our neighbor. So, he informed my family. We were there for less than forty-eight hours. After the forty-eight hours, they kept Nahavandi and they kicked the rest of us. [chuckles] It was not prison, it was Lashkar-e Do-e Zerehi. It was kind of place, asayeshgah, for soldiers that we were held captive. So, I had one solid record and one imprisonment without any record or even identification.

During high school, this was the period that going to the United States, going abroad, was the in thing. I don't know of any kid who hadn't thought about it. Some took it more seriously

than others. I really wanted to go abroad. By this time, I had learned that if I'm interested in studying politics -- hoquq, we used to call it in those days -- I should go to an involvement where such study is possible because I got to know many people and I continued. When Maliki was freed, I used to see him very regularly. He used to relate to me more as a teacher. He was a very impressive man. Like the rest of us, he had his flaws but, as an intellectual, he was quite impressive and learned, and a "Turk." Later on, it was through his influence.

When I finished high school, we either had to have mo'afi or we had to serve in order to leave the country, to get an exit visa. So, I decided to sign up. Every year, the number of people who actually are wanted for reserve service, for military service, from high school graduates was really much smaller than the number who had volunteered. But, unfortunately, that particular year, there were about four thousand high school and university students who had signed up, and they needed about nine hundred. There were six hundred volunteers. So, we all went to Saltanatabad one day for a lottery to get the other three hundred, and I was one of the three hundred. [chuckles] That was, again, out of dumbness because they told us that whether you pick your lottery first or last, it doesn't make any difference. "We have thirty-four hundred, thirty-one hundred puch and three hundred sarbaz."

In fact, I managed to influence somebody to go to the front of the line. I was way in the back. We said, "Let's get it over with and go." But the reality was they didn't really have time

to wait for all of them, so they put lots of soldiers in the beginning. Within the next two or three hours of the day, they got enough. Three hundred. And they told the rest of the people to go home. "You're all ma'af." So, I was drafted.

Later, I desperately tried for about three weeks, through my father, who knew a general, who was also a physician, Timsar Kani, who was an eye specialist -- My father tried to influence him to say that I'm physically handicapped. He looked at me and he said, "Not at all." But in the meantime, after three weeks, I really liked the experience. When my father tried to see someone else, I said, "Stop it, because I'm really enjoying it." It was a fascinating experience of military service. I wish it was required for everybody. [chuckles]

Q: What did you like about it?

Farhang: In the sense that, first of all, for the very first time, I saw a cross-section of Iranian youth. There were forty-five or forty-seven of us in the artillery unit. The chief of artillery, who was Khashayar Mostafavi, was an engineer. He was also a chess champion. I got to know him, and I was very interested in him and some other friends. Just the experience of living with some people and going through this physical exercise, going to class, living a very disciplined and regimented life and all that, doing your own work. The whole experience appealed to me. Unlike the images I had before I went in, I realized that

this is really interesting, it's fun. It was different.

Q: Where were you stationed?

Farhang: The nine months we were in Saltanatabad. We went to school for nine months to get basic training. Also, I went through training as a reserve officer. After the nine months, I was sent to Gorgan. In fact, I wanted to go there. My average was not high enough to stay in Tehran, where I wanted to. Because mathematics were very important, and I was poor in mathematics. But I was close enough to kind of choose as the second choice. So, if I couldn't stay in Tehran, I went to Gorgan because I had an aunt there and I was very close to her. We used to be very, very close. So, I went to Gorgan because everything was -- When I went to Gorgan, theoretically, my position was a third lieutenant in the artillery unit. I became very interested there in teaching Farsi. Again, there in Gorgan, it was an incredible discovery to me that more than half of the soldiers could not even speak Farsi. They were Turkomans, Turks, Lors, from all over the country. We had goruhbans that were often translators. The reserve officers, one function we had besides the regular duty we were supposed to play as a trainee or whatever it was we were trained for, was teaching Farsi. Except that I took this very seriously. The other ones were kind of irrelevant. We never practiced. It was just a sham, really.

Q: Did you do any political work?

Farhang: No. During this period, there was no political [work]. The only political thing I would say I got involved in didn't really cause any difficulty, but toward the end of my -- almost finished, toward the end -- there was a coup in Iraq, the 1958 coup against the monarchy. And then, apparently, there was this order for a rokn-e do in every lashgar to do an investigation, to ask people and produce a report. So, they were routinely asking all officers, "What do you think about this coup? Do you know anything about it?" I happened to know, because I used to follow it and I had done reading. So, when he asked me, I gave a lecture. [chuckles] We talked extensively. He had reported that this guy seems to know quite a bit about [Gamal Abdul] Nasser and the Nationalist Movement in the Arab world. During this period, Nasser was a hero, and we used to read anything we could get our hands on about him. I was questioned by the next -- There was a colonel who was assistant to the deputy commander. He called me in and asked me some more questions, and he realized that I was just a reserve officer and simply interested.

There was no political. But the major work I did there that I still have very fond memories of was teaching reading and writing to soldiers. The most touching thing was at the end, they got a gift for me and there was a big celebration and all that, a departing kind of party that soldiers and the group gave.

Q: This was about a year?

Farhang: Nine months. All together, nine months. We were a year and a half. The reserve officers had a year and a half. Nine months for training.

When I went to Tehran, I immediately applied for an exit visa - first getting the records in and acceptance. I had a friend in California who had already sent me an acceptance from college. When I applied for the exit visa, you had to do it through the Ministry of Education. You go in, and your name is there. They say, "You have been cleared." So, I waited and waited. Finally, I went in one day and they said, "You have to introduce yourself." By this time, SAVAK was established, and they were looking into these records - my file from the prison. It took me, all together, almost a year - six or seven months of going back and forth for just very stupid kinds of reasons. They knew exactly what it was and all that. You go in and sit there. "Come back in three weeks. Come back in two weeks."

Q: The usual bureaucracy.

Farhang: The usual bureaucracy, right. It was also a period that it was difficult to partibazi. I don't know why. I don't know if my family couldn't manage to get -- We approached a number of people, and they refused to deal with this to recommend anybody for clemency or for influence to this particular organization. Later on, I learned that my case was not an

exception. It was not an isolated one. For a while, it was an organization that, generally, people were hesitant, because they didn't know. Here is a kid. He might do something awful, and I would be in trouble. So, my father couldn't. Usually, he had all kinds of contacts to manage these difficulties. But here, he couldn't. Finally, they said, "Fine, go." There was one man who said, "Okay, I'll let you go if you write a statement saying that you repent and you're loyal and all that. Also, when you go abroad, if you see anybody involved in political activity against the Iranian government, you must report it." He gave me a name and an address which was in Amiriyyeh Avenue. It was the address of a tailor's shop. I assume that it was a pseudonym. "You write to me. Do you commit yourself to this?"

I said, "Sure." I signed everything. [chuckles] The purpose was to get out. I signed everything.

Then, I came to California. But it didn't take me very long after I came here to be involved in political --

Q: Where in California did you go?

Farhang: I went directly to Sacramento. In fact, I arrived in New York on April 24, 1959. I had a very dumb friend in California, who told me that if you really want to see the United States, don't take the plane. I took the train from Tehran to Tabriz, and spent some time with some family friends in Tabriz. From there, I took the bus to Erzerum. From there, I took the

train to Istanbul. I did this intentionally. I wanted to stay in every place. Then, from there to Yugoslavia. Again, that was another romantic image through Maleki and Third Force Party. He had this romantic view of Yugoslavia. Then, you go out later and think about these things. They are really very funny, how these images are formed. Yugoslavia was a kind of a utopia. From there, to Germany. I spent some time in Germany - a few days in each place. From there, I took a ship, the United States Line, which was again my choice. I'd also dreamed about the idea of going across the Atlantic on a ship, on a boat. I don't know where I got that - I think probably reading a translation of [Ernest] Hemingway or [William] Faulkner. I used to read these people. Anything translated, I used to read it voraciously. They had a lot about sailing. To New York. Here, I was planning to take a plane to California. He said, "No, take a bus."
[chuckles]

Q: How long did it take?

Farhang: Three days, seventy-some hours. It was the most miserable trip, the most miserable trip. I didn't see anything. It was all from one bus station to another.

So, I went to California. I studied some language and all that, and then worked. When I got to California, I had thirty dollars.

Q: That's all?

Farhang: That's all. I had thirty dollars in my pocket. That was all left. I was very determined not to get any money from --

Q: Didn't the government help at that time?

Farhang: No. There was none. You could. I mean, you had to take examination and all that, but I didn't. The vast majority of the students came on their own. Some worked and some received assistance. I had a friend who was working in Sacramento as a dishwasher, who is now a very successful businessman in Los Angeles. He went back, later on, to Iran and worked with Lajevardis after he finished his education. Now, he's back. He was working as a dishwasher, and I became his assistant. [chuckles] The third day I arrived there, I was his assistant. I worked there for a while. I learned the game of -- In this country, in that sense, it's really an incredible place if you're willing to support.

So, that was the beginning. Then, I traveled to the Los Angeles area. I bought a car later on. I traveled. I went to Santa Barbara. I loved that city. I fell in love with that city. I went to the college there and got my acceptance. The following spring term, I started my college in Santa Barbara.

Q: Studying what?

Farhang: Politics and literature. Literature was for my own love. Any course -- I had one teacher who taught Shakespeare. I was very interested in it. But that was my own interest. But also studying -- I studied there for two years, and then got a scholarship to go to University of Arizona. From then on, I completed my work there, and then got another Ford Foundation Fellowship to go to Claremont Graduate School for my Ph.D.

In the meantime during this period, I was very active in student politics -- As soon as I moved to Santa Barbara, it's interesting. I was still in Sacramento when Majid Rahnema was Iranian Consulate in San Francisco. I met him twice. The first time, there was one Iranian student who was in trouble, and people advised him to pretend that he's crazy and out of his mind. He was stupid enough, or perhaps crazy enough, to do it. Then, the students, who were concerned about these things got together and selected two people to take him to the Consulate and seek help. I went along. So, we took this man to Majid's office. He was extremely generous and kind. He immediately called the hospital. We went there with another friend. We were there when they sent him inside.

Later on, I had another conversation with Majid on the phone, and I told him, "You know, some people say that this thing is all fake. But I tell you that anybody who actually changes his clothes in the insane asylum and went inside is, by definition, crazy." [chuckles] That is evidence. We don't need to pay attention. I wanted to encourage him to pursue this. He was very helpful.

Another time, he came actually to Sacramento when I was still there to talk to a group of the students. I got up and asked him a couple of pointed political questions that he was very sympathetic to, but he didn't answer. At the end, he called me and said, "These questions you're raising, they could cause you some danger." [chuckles] That's how I got to know Majid, the beginning.

Then, I continued. We organized in Southern California. The organization, in those days, it's really important for the student movement abroad. In those days, student activities abroad were still the domain of Tudehi and Mosaddeqi. Once again, the Tudehis, more or less, were better organized even though, numerically, it's smaller. But Mosaddeqi's are very anarchistic, but not as intense and so forth. Shahin Fatemi was here. I made contact. I wrote him once, and he wrote back. I invited him to Santa Barbara. And a number of friends in Los Angeles area, we formed the Iranian Student Association with the Iran Nameh, the paper they were publishing there. The same person, Mohammad Nakhshab, whom I knew from Iran, was working for the UN here. He died before the Revolution. He was working for the UN. Another person I knew from there who had come here was Mostafa Chamran, who was at UC/Berkeley. And a number of other people from those days reappeared in the States, in California, some. And others, we got to know each other here. We published a magazine in Southern California called Moj. I was the editor of the paper. We published five issues, and we went bankrupt.

It ended.

Basically here, again, we divided. Half of our activities had to do with Iran, and half would be the Tudeh. It was a double kind of confrontation. Just as in the past, they used to say, "Let's form a unified organization," and we had rejected it categorically and say, "You are agents of foreign power, and we cannot cooperate with you," until the activities of the early 1960s. When I left Iran, the opposition political scene was dead. But in Los Angeles we were here and we were inspired by what was happening in Iran.

When the Shah came in 1964, I participated in a demonstration. After that, they refused to renew my passport in the Consulate in San Francisco and so forth. So, I didn't have my Iranian passport for about four years. The fifth year, they gave it to me, and I don't know why they didn't and why they did.
[chuckles]

Q: How could you get a visa when you didn't have a passport?

Farhang: I was already, at this time, married to an American woman in Santa Barbara, so I didn't really need the passport. But, nevertheless, I kept writing to them and asking them. Later on, I became naturalized, actually, because I needed the passport. It was more a combination of gradually feeling that we were really part of the American scene. My sons were born, even though, by that time, I had separated from my first wife and all that. But with the children here and all that, the issue of

custody came in. I actually got custody of my children. My lawyer said, "It's important that you establish --" But it was a cluster of reasons. So, I became naturalized. Later, I got my passport. When I went to Iran, nobody said anything at all. Beginning in 1969, I went to Iran every other year until the revolution. All together, I think I went to Iran about seven times.

Q: And had no problem?

Farhang: Absolutely no problem. Absolutely.

Q: Even with all of your activities?

Farhang: Absolutely none. We were extremely open. Everything I wrote, it was with my own name. We were cautious in the sense that we were active up to, I would say, up to about 1964. One could say that what we were doing was not illegal. There were older people among us and even people like Nakhshab and Fatemi. They didn't really want to completely disconnect from Iran, and we did not want to disconnect. It wasn't the case that we were completely rejecting.

I give you a very good example of the nature of the activities we had. When Zahedi refused to renew Shahin's and Qotbzadeh's visas, we actually tried to mediate to the extent that Zahedi was open to this mediation, and he invited two

1960s, these two groups, who were really the backbone, the totality, of the student activity, both in the States and in Europe -- We also were in close contact with Europe. As an editor and writer in Europe in those days Amir Pishdad and Hosein Malek, these people were publishing Nameh-e Parsi. Ali Shari'ati was there, except I knew him by name; I had not met him. But a number of people associated with Maliki, Dadashpur, they were publishing this paper. So, I was in contact with these people. I wrote for them. When Bani Sadr came later on, he published his Iran Nameh.

Gradually, I would say in between the early 1960s, right after [Ali] Amini -- I always thought with the following of Amini, the Shah actually abolished the institution of premiership in Iran. Up to that time, the premiership had some independent authority and leeway.

From then on, these two groups kind of diminished and new political activists were coming on the scene. Their number was increasing. This is also the period when the number of Iranian students coming to the United States is dramatically increasing, that people of my political orientation, as well as people of Tudehi political orientation, who were also scattered around, they felt isolated, outsiders. Now, Cherikha-e Fada'i-e Khalq are on the scene. Mojahedin were never active abroad. The Iranian Muslim Association gradually, in the late 1960s -- Suddenly, we see a new generation of Iranian students.

Q: More radical?

Farhang: In one sense, more radical; in another sense, in a cultural sense -- For example, most of the student associations were extremely conservative, so they congregated amongst themselves. They became very much concerned with eating habits, religious rituals, and so forth. Yet, they were not really political. They were political only symbolically. About less than a year before the revolution, [Ebrahim] Yazdi came to Davis to give a lecture. In the lecture that was very political and, I would say, militant, he did not mention Shah's name. The closest he came to it was -- I don't remember -- something symbolic like "Shemr" or "Yazid" or something like that. He used something symbolic that the audience knew what he was talking about, but not directly.

The Muslim Student Association remained political very symbolically until, I would say, mid-1977, late 1977. As individuals, the vast majority of them were the beginning of demonstrations.

Q: Prior to that, when you say they weren't political, you mean it was culture mostly?

Farhang: It was, right. Religious. They'd get together. They'd read the literature from Shari'ati's writings, Bazargan's writings, distributed widely. They'd have discussion sessions. They'd pay a great deal of attention to their mosques, where

they'd go for praying, fasting. Days of important religious rituals, for example, you'd see 'Ashura, the birth of Mohammad and so forth. They had established an organization, and they'd get together and associate with one another and so forth. There's a close sense of cultural identity. Yet, not in an overtly political way, the way, for example of the Fada'iyans were. They were very militant and radical.

The way the remnants of the younger people of the National Front orientation, who had become, some of them, Marxists and real Marxists in ideological rhetoric. It was the only way they could compete with others. So, politics became not only radical. Radicalization was not really reason enough for isolation and detachment, but the fact that all their reference came from outside Iran. It was China. It was Albania. It was Cuba. It was Che Guevara. The models of analysis or the models of political movement, which was South Yemen, depending on what was fashionable. And they were totally ignorant about either the Mosaddeq period, just as our generation was totally ignorant about the Constitutional Revolution and the period immediately following it. Simply because I became a student, interested as a person, I studied. But as a group, there were very few of us who studied politics. In school, I was interested. But as a group, we were extremely ignorant. I mean, really ignorant about the Iranian history, in general, and the recent history which was so much connected to Mosaddeq particularly. This discontinuity reappeared and re-emerged with the new generation of activists.

For them, if we talked about the Mosaddeq period as a significant event in forming political consciousness or influencing the history of our country, they dismissed it categorically. Iran and its future could be understood according to a theoretical construct, the red book of Mao and the rest. It was a disease to the extent that communication with many of these people became impossible. Yet, as a teacher by this time -- I started teaching in 1969. I taught in Southern California, and then went north, so I met a lot of students. When I talked to them individually, I saw them being very uninformed and shallow, but in group they are very militant and intransigent and harsh, which is another phase of the same disease, that this so-called sense of solidarity was not something which was existentially felt, but a behavior pattern which defined their belonging or their attachment to a group. As soon as there was a threat, they disintegrated. They went after accumulation of capital instead of -- [chuckles] Many of them became very successful in the real estate business in Northern California.

It's fascinating. People in my generation, my group, gradually, we had an easier time to communicate with the Muslim Student Associations than with the leftists simply because they were more civilized in their personal behavior, they were more polite. Second, their model and their standards of judgment were Iran. The nativity in their language, in their concerns, in their theorization and so forth, was appealing. Also, there was greater degree of continuity between the new generation of activists mostly with students and their older predecessors. For

example, people like Yazdi, Mostafa Chamran, Mohammad Nakhshab, Abul-Hasan Bani Sadr. They had humane relationships. They had cordial, humane relationships. Even they could socially relate to each other. For us, on the political level, it was much easier to relate to them, but we could never be social friends because their lifestyle was very different even though, politically, in politics, you work with what is. These were the ingredients of the political scene. Either the Muslim students or a variety of leftists who really were childish with some lunatic elements. The vast majority of them were very sincere, human, and intelligent -- the students as individuals -- but as participants in this movement, they invariably took leave of their own judgment. [chuckles] The examples were numerous.

I would say in the 1970s, they continued, but I maintained more or less active during this entire period for the obvious reason that I was interested. Second, I used to come to Iran regularly and contact old friends, read regularly, and also being on campus all the time. When you're a teacher, you live your life -- You invariably are in contact, being on campus and teaching politics, international relations, and so forth. So, I maintained my contact and interest and all that.

I was very close to the Muslim Student Association. They used to invite me, knowing that I don't share -- Invariably, every time there is an opportunity, I told them. What is interesting here is that, because of the experience of our generation during the Mosaddeq period, this diversity was normal.

As a kid, I used to go to Ayatollah or Sheykh Baqer. He hated the word "Sheykh." He wanted to be called Ayatollah. Ayatollah Baqer Nahavand. Later on, we used to go to Masjed-e Hedayat where Taleqani spoke in the years following the coup. We had come to perceive the coexistence and cooperation of religious and secular opponents of the regime as something completely natural and unthreatening. Also, given the fact that many of us were politicized and associated during the period that Iran was enjoying an open political environment --

[end of side two, tape one]

What I was saying was we did not see any danger in the religiosity of the people we were working with politically, because of our previous experience of coexisting and working together for me, for example, in the immediate post-coup period, as well as pro-Mosaddeq mollas in Iran. Secondly, the idea of an open political involvement being established in Iran was perceived as a real possibility.

Q: At this time, in the early 1960s, you were aware of [Ayatollah Ruhollah] Khomeini's activities?

Farhang: Only to the extent that we read about it in the papers and all that. I knew about his activities. He wasn't all that active, first of all. That also is a huge exaggeration about his activities after he left Iran. He was sitting in Najaf, and

people used to come and go. There was really no systematic organization of any kind - again, in the tradition of the way people go visit him, and he always has words of encouragement and all that for all these people. I knew more about his activities because, later on, Yazdi, who was a student here, doing his graduate work at MIT in chemistry -- He was a genuine religious person. Again, in the tradition of respecting pluralism, which was very familiar to us.

Q: He had that?

Farhang: Oh, definitely, absolutely. The first time he came to New York, I urged him. I said, "When are you going to get all these Iranians together? The first thing I really want you to say is that it is not required for Iranian women here wear rusari," and he did that. There were a number of occasions.

Gradually, in the position of power and the impediments in the way and all that, they all went through a change. They all went through a change because they were faced with a different kind of reality.

Yazdi was Khomeini's representative in the United States only for one principal reason. There were many merchants and religious people in Iran who wanted to give money to Khomeini, Sahm-e Imam, and they didn't want to do it directly for security reasons. They sent the money either through Europe or the United States to Khomeini's representatives, and then they sent the

money to Khomeini. Yazdi played that role, and he was also a very serious political activist and person. He had traveled there. He had met Khomeini earlier -- Khomeini knew him personally -- on two different occasions until he actually quit his job when Khomeini was about to be expelled from Iraq and went into Najaf. I also knew him through Yazdi. Again, the political activities of his people were not really all that extensive as political. They were far more important for many years in cultural, religious, and organizational terms than in strictly political terms.

Q: How about Chamran?

Farhang: In August, 1962, when Zahedi was accused of refusing visa to Qotbzadeh, we went to San Francisco and staged a demonstration in front of the Consulate. It was on the front page of the San Francisco Chronicle because they were not used to demonstrations yet. Two years later, the situation changed with the Free Speech Movement. In that, the situation Mostafa Chamran and his American wife, who was pregnant, were demonstrating. In the San Francisco Chronicle, there is a reference that Iranians were so intense about this demonstration that they even bring the pregnant wife. [chuckles]

Mostafa was a brilliant physicist and, at the same time, a very disturbed person from my point of view. I used to say the same thing, that he was very religious and yet, scientific. And his obsession was to bring the two together, and to prove that