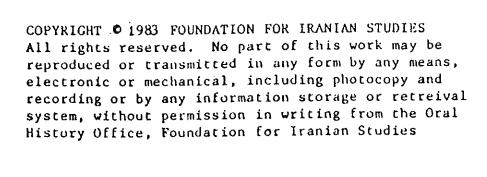
# Foundation for Iranian Studies Program of Oral History

EZZAT AGHEVLI

INTERVIEW WITH EZZAT AGHEVLI

PARIS OCTOBER 21, 1983

INTERVIEWED BY SHIRIN SAMII



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### 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 Shirin Sami'i with Ezzat Aqevli in Paris, France in October, 1983.

Readers of this Oral History memoir should bear in mind that it is a transcript of the spoken word, and that 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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اینجانب متن ونوارمماحیه های انجام شده در ارتباط بابسرامیه "تاریخ شفاهی ایران " رایه بنیاد مطالعات ایران هدید میکنسم تادراجرای برنامه های آموزشی وتحقیقاتی بنیاد مورداستفاده قرار گیسسرد،

ملاحطات:

معا حبه شونده عرف آن ار من مسلم معا حبه کننده مرش من مسلم معا حبه کننده عرب من مسلم معا حبه معا میخ مناویخ مناویخ

موضوع شوا ړ :

### EZZAT AGHEVLI

## BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Mrs. Ezzat Aghevli was born in Tabriz, where her father, a judge, worked with The Ministry of Justice. Upon her father's transference to Tehran, Mrs. Aghevli continued her education in The American School, where she obtained her diploma.

She worked with The Near East Foundation for four years. Projects she was envolved with, concerned village women, their education and home economics improvements. Mrs. Aghevli began working with The Ministry of Agriculture as the Director of the newly established section - Home Economics Extension - aimed at raising the standards of living in the rural areas. Home Economics Extension program was transferrd to The Ministry of Housing and Urban Development, Mrs. Aghevli remained as the Director General. After the gradual dispursement of the Extension program in this Ministry, Mrs. Aghevli left for the newly developed Ministry of Cooperative and Rural Affairs and became the Director of Rural Cultural Houses, and the Director of Non-Agricultural Organization. Having retired from the Ministry after twenty years, Mrs. Aghevli became envolved with The Women's Organization, as Deputy General. She had remained with The Organization for four years, before leaving Iran after the revolution.

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Personal and educational background. Work experience with the Near East Foundation; cooperating with the education of rural children as well as promotion of Home Economics Extension for rural women.

Employment at the Ministry of Agriculture. Responsible for the section in charge of Home Economics Extension and expansion of village industry. Educational difficulties on the village level from the view point of religious circumstances and women's hejab. The interference of village mullahs in affairs related to religion. A memory of an incident where the village mullah had created solving the problem via financial donation to the mullah for Rowzeh Khani expenses.

Transference of Home Economics Extension program from the Ministry of Agriculture to the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development, resulting in the dispursement of the program.

The interviewee's transference to the Ministry of Cooperative and Rural Affairs, and appointment as the Director of Rural Cultural Houses. The activities of the Cultural Houses in education and Home Economics Extension programs. The difficulties faced because of the desire of women promoters of the program in the villages to return to the cities shortly after accepting a post in the villages.

Expansion of the education program on the village level as a result of the Campaign against Illitracy.

Difficulties regarding mixed primary schools on the village level. Village women's hejab, their unfamiliarity with wearing the chador. Issues and difficulties experienced due to the influence exercised by men and the mullahs, in regards to educating the women. Success of the Extension program on the village level: firstly, by raising the men's awareness about modern necessities, and secondly, by coming into terms with the mullahs and winning their Theorems 19 to 1

The success of the interviewee in accomplishing the programs, owed greatly to her husband's likemindedness and support of progressive programs.

Difficulties faced by women traveling alone in provinces. A memory of a single lady on an official commission in a province who was not admitted to the local hotel.

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Envolvement of the interviewee with the Ministry of Cooperative and Rural Affairs as the Director of Rural Cultural Houses. Promotion to the position of Undersecretary to the Ministry of Cooperative and Rural Affairs and the Director of The Organization for Non-Agricultural Activities.

Description of the various activities of The Organization for Non-Agricultural Activities.

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Description of activities regarding the transference of small industries to the rural areas, their difficulties and efforts to prevent immigration of villagers to urban centers.

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Retirement. Envolvement with The Women's Organization as deputy general. Cooperation in programs related to women's political participation.

Participation in a society consisting of American women, called Community of Correspondence, and organizing one of the Community's conferences in Iran.

The interviewee's approval of The Women's Organization's programs, however, admitting the unnecessary rushing of some programs. The problems of individual political participation in a one party system.

The extent of women's welcoming of The Women's Organization and their programs, i.e. sewing, cooking classes and day care centers. The beneficial efforts of The Women's Organization in passing the laws pertaining to women's rights.

The problems of The Organization in attracting women for taking part in the programs. The incomprehensibility of some of the Organization's activities for various classes of women. Also the isssue of the men's influence in portraying the programs' unrighteousness, so as to maintain their sovereignty over their women.

Disagreements with and attacks against The Women's Organization by the revolutionaries. The power of the Organization, as the target of attacks.

Strike by a group of the Organization's employees; demands for higher wages. Later some of the employees became revolutionary and participated in the demonstrations as individuals, not representatives of The Women's Organization.

A memory of the manner of rumor spreading during the revolution. Strong propaganda organization and rumor spreading activities by the Islamic revolutionary elements.

Interview about women's conditions after the revolution with German journalists who had previously interviewed Ayatollah Shariatmadari.

Threats and insults by revolutionaries to the persons in charge of The Women's Organization. 21 - 29

Setting fire to a number of the Organization's buildings.

The current of the revolution and the groups which took part in the demonstrations. The original welcoming of the revolutionaries' plans, which were unclear to everyone at the time. The orderly manner of the street demonstrations, but the unclarity of the presence of organizers. Memeory of setting fire to a bus full of female university students. The breakdown of the army.

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The changing behavior of house-keepers during the revolution. Memory of the interviewee's servant joining the revolutionaries' cause, his return and his observation: "Until the mullahs fill their own pockets with enough money, nothing will ever be granted to me or the likes of me."

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