

Foundation for Iranian Studies

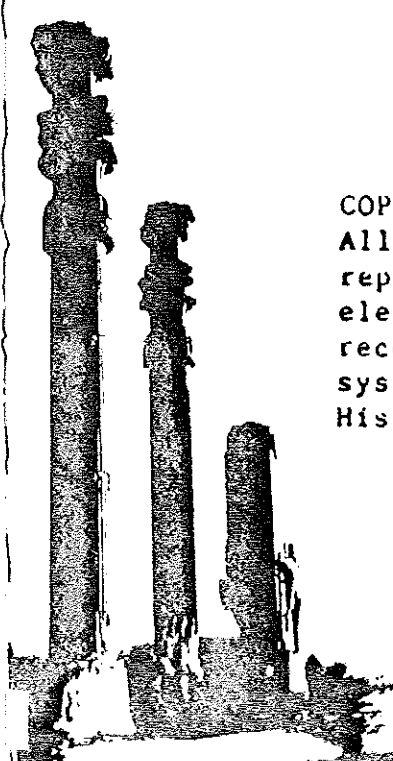
Program of Oral History

MR. SHAHROKH VAZIRI

INTERVIEW WITH SHAHROKH VAZIRI

LAUSANNE, NOVEMBER 13, 1983

INTERVIEWED BY SHIRIN SAMI'I



COPYRIGHT © 1983 FOUNDATION FOR IRANIAN STUDIES
All rights reserved. No part of this work may be reproduced or transmitted in any form by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopy and recording or by any information storage or retrieval system, without permission in writing from the Oral History Office, Foundation for Iranian Studies

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 Shahrokh Vaziri in Lausanne, Switzerland in November, 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 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.

The manuscript may be read, quoted from and cited only by serious research scholars accredited for purposes of research by Foundation for Iranian Studies; and further, this memoir must be read in such place as is made available for purposes of research by Foundation for Iranian Studies. No reproduction of the memoir either in whole or in part may be made by microphoto, typewriter, photostat, or any other device.

اینجانب متن و نوار مصاحبه های انجام شده در ارتباط با برنامه
"تاریخ شفاهی ایران" را به بنیاد مطالعات ایران هدیه میکنم تا
در اجرای برنامه های آموزشی و تحقیقاتی بنیاد به هر نحوی که
مطلوب میدانند از آن استفاده نمایند. ~~آرش رستمی~~
اکتبره ۱۳۸۵ شمس الدین شافعی مدیر

شماره ۱۳۸۵/۱۰

مصاحبه شونده

شیرین کیمیا

مصاحبه کننده

زبان ۱۳۸۵/۱۰

تاریخ

گیتا اسفندی

موضوع نوار

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Shahrokh Vaziri was educated in Tehran and in Switzerland. He became politically active while still an adolescent by joining the National Front demonstrations at his high school. He continued his political goals when he entered the university in Lausanne in 1964. He was an active participant in the initial organization and structuring of the Confederation of Iranian Students, a loosely connected network of groups and organizations with diverse political opinions whose main objective was opposition to the Shah.

Dr. Vaziri describes his experiences within this organization, the growth of the student movement and its radicalization caused by internal suppression of political expression. He describes his contacts with some of the central figures of the movement. He renders his explanation of the left's support for the Khomeini group. He reflects on the causes of the revolution, and the contribution of the regime's religious attitudes to the phenomenon.

Shahrokh Vaziri's recollections are valuable in that they offer an insider's view of the evolution of the student opposition movement to the Shah's regime.

CONTENTS OF INTERVIEW # 1 SHAHROKH VAZIRI

<u>SUBJECT</u>	<u>PAGE</u>
Educational background in Iran and Switzerland, beginning of involvement in political activity with participation in the strikes of high school students, participation in the first National Front Congress after the fall of Mossadegh	1-2
Increase in government control of political activity following the Khomeini uprising of 1963, participation in the third National Front Congress in Switzerland, history of the Confederation, Bani Sadr's participation as the representative of Tehran University students, establishing links between the students in Iran and those abroad	3-4
Lack of support of the liberal elements of the National Front for Khomeini's 1963 uprising because of his opposition to land reform and women's franchise, support of certain religious factions of the Front for Khomeini	5
The Tudeh and the Front as the main elements within the Confederation, the Front containing leftist and rightist tendencies, the left supporting China, the Tudeh undergoing fragmentation, the creation of the Revolutionary Organization of the Tudeh which initially adhered to Cuba but later supported China, the Tudeh ousted because of their support of the Soviet Union	6
Growth of the Chinese wing of the Confederation containing such organizations as Toofan who achieved majority support for a period, the organizational structure of the Confederation	7
Contact with non-Iranian political organizations, gradual shift from liberal groups to radical Marxist organizations and toward the end of the 70's with the terrorist Arab organizations	8
Finances of the Confederation, voluntary contributions, fund-raising methods, assistance from Arab countries and organizations to political groups within the Confederation	9
Disintegration of the Confederation due to increase in conflicts among political organizations within it, specifically over China, Viet Nam and other international questions	10
Separation of religious groups from the main body, cooperation of the leftist groups with Khomeini, publication of his messages and declarations in Iran Azad and other journals	11
Similarity between anti-imperialist, anti-American, anti-capitalist slogans of Khomeini and those of the Confederation, similarity in their fanatic attitude and their goal of over throwing the Shah	12

CONTENTS INTERVIEW # 1 SHAHROKH VAZIRI

<u>SUBJECT</u>	<u>PAGE</u>
Radicalization of the liberal elements because of the increasing internal political suppression	13
Concentration of all elements of the opposition on democratic freedoms and human rights which were the only areas of weakness in the Shah's regime, lack of agreement on the type of society which ought to follow after the Shah, opportunism in joining Khomeini's ready made following based on his pre-established solutions and the extremism of his approach, and the false impression that they could use Khomeini to gain power	14-15
The religious view point prevalent in the country and encouraged by the Shah's own religious fanaticism, Khomeini seen as a competitor, not as the enemy, therefore forbidding rather than confronting his works and viewpoints	16
Bani Sadr's background as member of the National Front and one of the founders of the religious wing of the front called the Third National Front, his denial of this background when he joined Khomeini	17
Roots of all contemporary political activity in Iran seen in the two political organizations: Tudeh and the National Front	20
Background of the Mujahedin organization, their assertion of their "authority" as the main anti-regime force, disillusionment of other groups	19
Changes in the society during the first year of the revolution, similarities between concepts of the desirable life style held by the Shah and the intellectuals, belief that what the Shah says is good, but unwillingness to accept his sincerity, lack of proper definitions and of differences between the Shah and the intellectuals, neither of whom made a clear statement of their positions	21-22
Iranians religious in the sense of seeing things in black and white, without moderation or flexibility, a characteristic which becomes dangerous when combined with superstition	23-24
The opposition groups actually ending in the Soviet camp regardless of their ideology because their anti-western, anti-capitalist stance helped the Soviet position,	25
Lack of an atmosphere within which various political views and positions could be expressed, clarified and confronted	26-27

CONTENTS INTERVIEW # 1 SHAHROKH VAZIRI

<u>SUBJECT</u>	<u>PAGE</u>
Interrogation by SAVAK in 1974, lack of success of the Nikkhah group in reforming the system and creating a relatively unhampered intellectual atmosphere for debate due to bureaucratic red-tape and the real indifference of SAVAK to goals	28-29
Khomeini's opposition to land reform and women's franchise as the main causes of the 15th Khordad uprising , clash between Teymour Bakhtiar and the Shah an undercurrent of the period	29-30

VAZIRI, SHAHROKH

Name	Page
Al-e Ahmad, Jalal,	27
Al-Fatah,	18
Amini, ^C Ali,	2, 18
Ardalan, ^C Ali,	4
Arfa ^C zadeh,	2
Bakhtiyar, General Teymur,	30
Bakhtiyar, Shapur,	2, 15-16
Bani Sadr, Abol-Hasan,	4, 10-11, 17-18
Bazargan, Mehdi,	10
Chamran, Mostafa,	11
Confederation of Iranian Students (CIS),	3-15, 21-23, 25-28
Derakhshesh, Mohammad,	1
Events of 1963-64,	3, 5, 29
Farhad, Ahmad,	2
Foruhar, Daryush,	16
Iran-e Azad Newspaper,	11
Jazani, Bijan,	2
Khabarnameh, Newspaper,	10
Khomeini, Mostafa,	17
Khomeini, Ayatollah Seyyed Ruhollah,	5, 11-18, 20-21, 23, 29, 30
Mehran, Hosein,	1
Mossadeq, Mohammad,	15, 20, 21
National Front,	2-6, 9-13, 15, 17-20
Nikkhah, Parviz,	29
Pahlavi, Mohammad Reza Shah,	13, 14, 16, 20, 22, 23, 30
Qannadiyan,	3
Qotbzadeh, Sadeq,	4, 10-11, 23
Rajavi, Mas ^C ud,	18
Revolution of 1978-79,	22
Salamatian, Ahmad,	2-4
Sanjabi, Karim,	16
SAVAK,	13, 19, 21, 28-30
Sazeman-e Cherikhay-e Fada'iyan-e Khalq-e Iran,	18-19
Sazman-e Mojahedin-e Khalq-e Iran,	18-19
Shakeri, ^C Ali,	3
Shari ^C ati, ^C Ali,	16, 18, 27
Tudeh Party,	4-6, 20, 26
Yazdi, Ebrahim,	11, 23