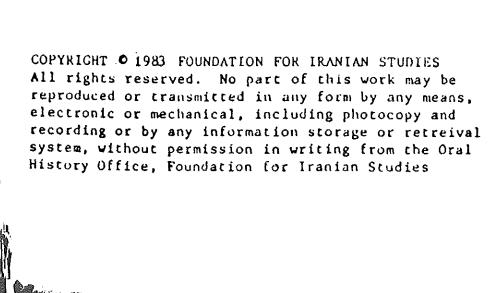
Foundation for Iranian Studies Program of Oral History

Shahrokh Golestan

INTERVIEW WITH SHAHROKH GOLESTAN

SHIRIN SAMII INTERVIEWED BY

PARIS, OCTOBER, 2, 1983



4801 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W., Suite 670 Washington, D.C. 20016, Telephone: (202) 686-1224

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 Samii Shirin with Shahroukh Golestan 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.

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 ارتباطیا برنامه "تاریخ شفا هی ایران" را به بنیاد مطالعات ایران هدیه میکنم کا در اجرای برنامه های آموزشی و تحقیقاتی بنیاد به هر نعو ی که/ مصلحت میدانند از آن استفاده نمایند.

And In 1783

موضوع نوار

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Mr. Shahrokh (Isma'il) Golestan was born in Shiraz, Iran, in 1933. After finishing the eleventh grade in Shiraz, Mr. Golestan started his career as a film-maker in Shiraz, as an employee of the American point 4 program. He then pursued his career at a number of agencies, including a film-making service which he himself operated. Eventually, he joined the Fine Arts Organization which later became the Ministry of Arts and Culture. Under the direct supervision of Mr. Pahlbod, Golestan pursued his efforts in documentary film making. Soon he became the official film-maker for royal trips and official state ceremonies. His success in this line of activity was crowned with his films of the Shah's coronation, the ceremonies for the Twenty Five Hundred Year anniversary of the Iranian monarchy, and the Fiftieth Anniversary of the Pahlavi Monarchy. Mr. Golestan also participated actively in the Shiraz Art Festival. He left Iran in 1978.

SUBJECT	PAGE
Personal background. His first prize in photography, and his first film on the Shah and Queen Soraya's trip to Shiraz. The story revolving around this film and Golestan's success with it. Leaving school in the eleventh grade in pursuance of a career in film making	1-3
Employment at the Point 4 Program office in Shiraz. His move on to Tehran and involvement with public relations services. Openning of his own office for photographic and film services. The booming of his career due to the need for news films during the Mossadeq era. Employment at Ibrahim Golestan's Film Company. His final change of employment, involvement with the Fine Arts Organization, which later on became Ministry of Arts and Culture	3-5
His first film for the Ministry on Persepolis, and the novel technics which he employed in the making of that film. Film of the Shah's trip to Oslo, Norway, and Golestan's promotion to the position of the Court's film-producer	6
Golestan's film about the Bo'in-Zahra earthquake. His disagree- ments with the Minsitry of Arts and Culture. On how he was compelled to work at the Ministry despite some unpleasent experiences. On the Shah's favor to Golestan and the work which he had done on the Shah's various trips abroad	7.
Memory of the debate over his salary when he first joined the Fine Arts Organization during the Amini premiership. His various project at the Fine Arts Organization and later at the Ministry	10-12
On the only three films on which he has affixed his name	12
The bureaucratic and organizational problems of the Arts and Culture establishment. Problems of absence of ethics and corruption in that establishment. Royal and Government patronage of the arts in Iran. Positive aspects of the operation of the Ministry, its inherent supportiveness of the arts. Unresolvable problems which faced the Ministry and its patronage system. Memory of the beginning of a number of directors' careers. Balance sheet of Ministry of Arts and Culture	13-20

SUBJECT	PAGE
About censorship in general and that of films in particular. Method of censorship of films in the Minisrty of Arts and Cultur The criteria used for censorship. A few instances of damaging censorship. The issue of the movie "Dayereh-e Mina". Golestan's own experience of the censorship of his film on the Bolshoi	
Opera in Moscow	20-24
On the film made of the Munich Olympics of 1972, purchased by Golestan's film company, and the cesnsorship which it was subjected to	25-26
On how he came to know the royal family and serve as their official film maker, his experiences during the Shah's trips to Norway, Canada and the U.S. The story of Golestan's work on the film of the Shah's coronation and the monarch's response to Golestan's efforts	27-32
The story of the trip to India and Russia, and the appreciation which the royal family had shown for Golestan's work. Compliments given to Golestan for his work in Shiraz. Taking the film of the Shah while driving and the objection raised by the various officials of the Court (1965). His private conversation with the Shah during that filming session. Golestan's impression of the Shah as a man. Opinion of Pirniya, Governor of Fars	32-37
Film of the Crown Prince at his personal residence (1965-66).	38
On the budget for films made of the Shah and his official trips. The limited budgets and Golestan's personal hard work to carry out the projects, the Queen's reflections on the situation	39-40
Budgeting and payments for the Coronation and 2500th Anniversary of Iranian Monarchy's films. On the bureaucratic problems of the ministry and their failure to even relay the Shah's congradulatory note to the respective film makers who took part in the Coronation film project	40
Golestan's reaction to 'Alam's decision that the film made of the ceremonies for the 2500th Anniversary of Iranian monarchy should be shown in sixty cinemas. The quality control problems that were caused by the decision to make multiple copies of the film. The film's lackluster success due to 'Alam's unvise decision	41-44
unwise decision	41-44

SUBJECT	PAGE
About the making and content of the film, the music composed for it, and the sound technics used	44-46
Problems with Qotbi and the Television establishment concerning filming of certain segments	46
Golestan's view on his films and artistic efforts and career. The films which he is particularly fond of and the awards and recognition which he received for his works. His last film of the Shah's visit to the Far East and Australia	47-49
The total number of films which Golestan has made. On whether the Shah saw films before they were cesnsored or after	50
The Shah's response to the question: Why did Iran spend so much on the 2500th Anniversary of its monarchy when it still has international debts and domestic socio-economic problems. The Shah's occasional comments concerning changing parts of the films. More on the problems which Golestan encountered over his film on the Shah's visit to USSR	51-54
Date of his final departure from Iran. The burning of the cinemas during the months of agitation leading to the revolution and Golestan's decision to continue to operate his cinema in Shiraz	54-55
On when Golestan sensed the real danger of the events of 1977-78. On the lackluster performance of the security forces in the face of the agitations. Golestan's belief that the Shah should not have left Iran, and why he never contacted the royal family in exile, after 1979	56-58
The Shiraz Art Festival. Golestan's praise for the fundamental objective of the Festival to serve as a meeting point between East and West. On the debate between the Queen and Hoveyda about allocation of funds to Arts and Culture. On the success of the Shiraz Festival. Contribution of the Festival to Persian Art. Various plays performed in Shiraz	58-64
On the controversial play which marked the last Shiraz Festival. The allegation of display of pornographic material in public and Golestan's reaction to the accusation	65-68

SUBJECT	PAGE
On the wisdom of inviting the theatrical group in question to Shiraz. The Shiraz Festival, an assessment of its contribution. Meeting with Qotbi and the Television establishment about the Shiraz Festival and its various functions	65-68
The debate surrounding the committee of friends of the Festival at the meeting with Qotbi. Absence of a spokesman and respondent to criticism among the directors of the Festival	72
Concerning the government's policy towards religion. Efforts to curtail religious activities and reduce the number of religious holidays and the controversy that government policy created in Shiraz. The controversial play at the last Festival, problems of cultural planning, and inner tensions of a culture undergoing rapid change	73-74
Ministry of Arts and Culture and the question of cultural planning, particularly in areas pertinent to social norms and contact between the sexes. Golestan's condemnation of the public reaction to the controversial play of the last Festival. Golestan's comments on Ayatollah Dastghayb's speech denouncing the Festival	75-77
The extent of popular as opposed to elite enthusiasm for the Festival. The effect of the Festival on cultural change in Shiraz. The financing of the Festival and its eventual self-sufficiency	77- 79
Concerning the alleged rivalry between the Television organization and the Ministry of Arts and Culture in Iran. The Ministry's ties to the Shah and the Television's reliance on the patronage of the Queen. Excessive innovative ideas at Qotbi's establishment and the commensurate conservatism of Pahlbod's organization: inevitable conflict over cultural issues. On the relative power and influence of each of the two on changing cultural trends	79-81
On Pahlbod's popularity and calibre as the head of the country's cultural establishment	82
On the need for and the dynamics of national scale planning for cultural change and artistic livelihood of Iranians	83

SUBJECT	PAGE
Comments on the valuable contribution of the Television establishment to Persian cinema. Films made by the Ministry of Arts and Culture for cinema, the case of the movie, Gay (Bull-Cow)	84-85
The movie <u>Gav</u> as an example of the insecurity and absence of artistic judgement in the Ministry of Arts and Culture. The creation of the Ministry's symphony Orchestra under Meshkot after the possibility of a similar move at NIR TV: example of the way in which the Ministry operated	85-86
Commercial film-making in Iran. The role of the Ministry and that of the private sector. The rules and procedures of film-making: an assessment. A criticism of the Ministry's practice of subjecting every Persian film scenario to the scrutiny of unqualified bureaucrats. On the absence of ethics or clear guide-lines in the practices of the Ministry: the case of Golestan's cinema	87–89
The three types of films shown in Iran as commercial movies, and Golestan's decision concerning the film schedule of his	
cinema in Shiraz	89-91

GOLESTAN, SHAHROKH

Name	Page
Abdoh, `Ali, Alam, Amir Asadollah, Azhari, General Gholam-Reza,	36 34,42 89
Cheknavariyan, Loris, Culture and Arts, Ministry of,	44 5,8,13-19,23,40,74,
Dastgheyb, Ayatollah `Abdol-Hosein, Ebtehaj, Azar, Emami, Karim, Eqbal, Manuchehr, Fall of Qavam of 1952, Farzaneh, Mostafa, Forughi, Mohsen, Ghaffari, Farrokh, Golestan Newspaper, Golestan, Ebrahim, Heshmati, Mohammad, Hoveyda, Amir `Abbas, Jabbari, Gholam-Hosein, Jahanbani, Safaeddin, Mas`ud, Mohammad, Mazandi, Yusef, Mehrju'i, Daryush, Mesbahzadeh, Mostafa, Mir-Samadzadeh, Mehdi, Misaqiyyeh, Mehdi, Mossadeq, Mohammad, Mo`iniyan, Nosratollah, Nahavandi, Hushang,	83,84,87 76-77 36 3 23 2,3 18 89 62,66,68,70,71 1 4,9 41 59,60,62,73 10,18,41,82 71,72 66 51 23,84 33 85 5,6 8 4 17 33
Nasiri, General Ne`matollah, National Iranian Radio and Television	23,52
Organization,	
Osku'i, Mostafa, Pahlavi, Mohammad Reza Shah,	84 1,6,7,9,11,17,24,27-41, 48-51,54,55,57,58,79,81
Pahlavi, Princess Farahnaz, Pahlavi, Princess Fatemeh, Pahlavi, Princess Shams,	38 38 7
Pahlavi, Queen Farah,	15,32,39,49,55,59, 71,80,90
Pahlavi, Queen Soraya,	1,27
Pahlbod, Mehrdad,	7-11,13,19,26,29-31, 40-42,47,79-82,88
Point Four Program,	3

GOLESTAN, SHAHROKH

Name	Page
Qotbi, Reza, Red Lion and Sun Organization, Revolution of 1978-79, Sanjari, Heshmat, SAVAK, Shabbakhti, Shafti, Hushang, Shiraz Art Festival, Taqva'i, Naser,	46,62,70,80,81,85 7 55-58 85 56,57 70 6,12 58-79,90 84
Twentmy Five Hundred Years of Monarchy Festival,	47-55
Zahedi, Ardeshir, Zorvan, Colonel,	32 56