

Khomeini in Exile

An Iranian religious dissident who enjoys a special status and influence in Iranian society flees from his home in the holy city of Qom and **goes into exile**, describing the Iranian regime as “the world's worst dictatorship”. As sinister agents of the regime search for him abroad, fearing that he may become a focus of religious resistance to their rule, he expresses the hope that Iran's escalating protest movement, “would in not too long develop into a popular revolution”. The dissident's name? *Khomeini*.

Anyone who can remember the political scene in 1978, or knows its history, will find the above eerily familiar. Is it a description of the key events preceding the **Iranian revolution**? No. This is today, and this is a different Khomeini. Not Ayatollah Ruholla Khomeini the founder of the Islamic Republic, but his grandson, Hussein Khomeini.

So, as the undercover death squads of the Revolutionary Guard scour Najaf for Khomeini, and the student protests on the streets in Iran are brutally suppressed, why isn't he (and **why aren't they?**) getting the intense press coverage and publicity for his cause that his grandfather enjoyed? Why is he not a trendy icon already? Why are there no mountains of multi-cultural excuses being made for him? Where is the relentless demonisation of the government whose overthrow he seeks? And perhaps not least, why is he not being harboured by France?

Simple. What's different this time is that *this* devoutly Islamic Khomeini is not a murderous throwback to the fourteenth century. This Khomeini is not an utterly implacable enemy of the West. This Khomeini, who apparently sensed that something might be amiss when his favourite uncle was murdered after refusing to endorse the regime, has called for the separation of religion and state, and for “a democratic regime that does not make use of religion as a means of oppressing the people and strangling society”. But all those sins, though they disqualify him from automatic adulation by the trendies, lefties, journalists and villepinists, are not enough to get him ignored as completely as he has been. *This*, we bet, is what really puts him beyond the pale:

“Freedom is more important than bread. If the Americans will provide it, let them come ...”

You are absolutely right !

As an Iranian student living in Iran now (that's why i don't put my name here) I wanted to thank you for this post. Here for the first time I see the correct view of all the tragedy that has been going on in Iran, expressed in a western blog.

The way Khomeini (senior) was endorsed and made to a prophet like figure by western media, especially the lefties, the French government and the Democrats in the US, not to mention the BBC Farsi Radio that acted as his mouthpiece during the months before the revolution, and comparing it with all the crimes he and his followers committed after coming to power, all the executions, mass graves, murders and torture chambers you haven't even heard of going on to this very day, and its consequences for the region and the world, presents a truly horrifying picture.

It is a fact that Islamic fundamentalism couldn't have grown in to such a monster if it wasn't for the success of that dark revolution 25 years ago-this is one of the responsibilities Iranian people must accept and help amend in the future , after the liberation of Iran. (By the way, I propose giving Mr. Carter another Nobel prize for his accomplishments as well!)

The fact that Khomeini's grandson is not getting much attention is worsened by the kind of attention the so-called reformist(!) president Khatami is getting from the west.

As one who unfortunately voted for him in 1997 under the illusion that he was a new Gorbachev, I can say with utmost certainty that he is nothing but a political prostitute of this regime, breaking more and more business deals with the west and giving the mullas a false respectable face they do not have (and the EU an excuse for their plunderings of Iranian wealth)

Many Iranian youth are in prisons facing torture at this moment for shouting death to Khamenei and asking Khatami to resign more than a month ago, and yet still in many western media the demonstration are presented as pro-reform. What can one say to this?

Actually we in Iran might be the only people who understand Israelis frustrations with this attention paid to Arafat, because we have one here ourselves.

By the way, after reading your excellent history of Israel and as a very pro-Israeli Iranian (though I am officially a Moslem!) there is a question that bothers me and I wish to ask you:

I have read a lot of reports, including in the Iranian resistance groups publications abroad, about Israel's alleged 4 billion dollars arms deal with the Iranian regime.

Is that true? What was really going on?

This is very disturbing news for me.

Thanks again for this excellent post.

An Iranian Student

by a reader on Mon, 08/11/2003 - 09:57 | [reply](#)

Wow

If the previous post is legitimate, then it's very heartening that there are Iranian students with internet access and such a great political perspective.

Even if it isn't, those who are battling the current regime are very brave and I wish them the best. It's a shame that the vast majority of people in Iran don't join them and topple the government. There are a lot of American forces nearby that I suspect would be mobilized to help if it appeared that a vast, popular, uprising in Iran was being brutally repressed.

Gil

by **Gil** on Mon, 08/11/2003 - 18:33 | [reply](#)

It is a legitimate post!

As far as I can tell, I am legitimately real! :)

But I have to explain a few things perhaps, about the situation inside Iran:

My position towards Israel constitutes, unfortunately, a small minority (as far as I can tell).

American ideals however have a much wider appeal, especially for my generation. But still many of the philosophical foundations of democratic thinking is widely missing.

There exist also a lot of paranoia, mostly among our parents, like elsewhere in the middle east. (It is especially directed towards Britain for some historical reasons and it's quite funny sometimes!)

However what *is* heartening about Iran is the fact that for the first time, the vast majority of people have really understood what a religious system means and are *looking* for something new.

They know what they don't want, but not still what they want.

So there is a great *potential* here, whether it can lead to something concrete is the big challenge, and here the West can help a lot if it wanted to.

The case of Israel is a good example.

Unlike Arabs, Iranians have nothing personal against Israel, and actually Palestinians are even more disliked, especially after the revolution.

The real reason for anathema is simply ignorance. Most people still think that since the land was named Palestine and the Arabs in it are called Palestinians, they were the true owners and Israelis are outsiders. They simply don't know much about the real history.

On the other hand, there has always been vicious conflict between Iran and the Arabic world. Arabic countries call the Persian Gulf, Arabic Gulf- they call Iranians 'Ajam' which means something like goat (for the way they pronounced Arabic words) - Iranians also have very bitter memories of Arabs, they conquered Iran, killed, burnt and took Iranians as slaves and treated Iranians as second class citizens, together with Jews and Christians...

That is also why Iranians actually invented Shiitism (though I wished they hadn't), actually to separate themselves from the rest of the

Arabic world. (Many Sunni fundamentalists consider Shiites as

heretics)

There are also historical ties with Israel , dating back to the time of Cyrus, and the more Iranians are turning towards their historical heritage and moving away from Islamic identity, the more such historical ties could gain importance.

Before Israel , Iran was the only land in the middle east that kept its ancient identity and refused to become Arabic. Now there are two such countries! :)

Saddam once expressed the situation very clearly: "Two people shouldn't have been born, the Ajams and the Zionists".

So here is natural potential for future allegiance. What would come of it depends on us all.

We in Iran also have seen the result of idealistic left and vellepinist intellectualism and policies: the 1979 revolution.

We see how demonstration after demonstration is held in Europe in support of Palestinians , but no one even bothers about all that is happening in Iran. We see human shields going to Iraq to prevent *American Crimes* but this regime inside Iran is portrayed as moving towards democracy, even though it stones women, takes out eye bulbs and cuts hand and feet to this day. We see how Bush is portrayed as a villain but Khatami is given a PhD by a Belgian University...And that makes many of us here to think and to rethink popular and fashionable political trends, and some of us understand something. :)

That's why you see people here light candles after 9/11. That's why I hear people in taxis support American invasion of Iraq....

As for a popular uprising, there are a lot of difficulties. Iran is a country with more than 16 centuries of religious tyranny. There are simply not much culture of cooperation left after all these years. People learn that if they don't care for themselves no one will. A lot of damage has been done to this culture during centuries, the fact that it still exists at all is really quite remarkable.

The regime is also *very* brutal. Yet you see demonstrations every once in a while-it shows the degree of desperation- but it is unfortunately not very organized.

This is Iran now: a mainly muslim land whose majority are ,for the first time, looking for something new, for something that makes more sense, who are not satisfied with what they have been told, who want change...but they are just at the beginning of this road.

An Iranian Student

by a reader on Tue, 08/12/2003 - 08:13 | [reply](#)

Wow

It saddens my heart to read how things are going in Iran. I personally never truly understood how bad things are there, and I suspect that I still don't. It has been very good to hear about how things are going in there - one cannot hear much about Iran in the main media, and what one hears is usually so faulty that it isn't worth listening to.

Have you considered blogging more about how things are going in

Iran? I'm sure there are lots of people who would want to know how things are there, and how they might be able to help. I'm sure there are ways we can help you make Iran a better place, I just don't quite know how.

by [id](#) on Tue, 08/12/2003 - 11:27 | [reply](#)

Iranian Blogs

Id,

[Jeff Jarvis](#) has been doing a good job of publicizing the situation in Iran and referencing Iranian weblogs and other sources. Check out some of the Middle East links on his sidebar, and some of those will lead you to even more.

Iranian blogging exists, and it's a great thing.

[Gil](#)

by [Gil](#) on Tue, 08/12/2003 - 16:36 | [reply](#)

Reply to 'An Iranian Student'

"Israel's alleged 4 billion dollars arms deal with the Iranian regime."

In the early years of the regime, Israel did try to build bridges to it by selling weapons, rather as the US did (with Israel's help) in the Iran-Contra affair. Remember that at that time even many of those in the West who most despised and feared the Iranian regime did not want it to be overthrown *by Saddam*. However, any talk of an arms deal under present-day circumstances, and such a massive one at that, can only be a crazy conspiracy theory. It's not one we've heard of though. Can you provide a hyperlink?

by [Editor](#) on Wed, 08/13/2003 - 22:45 | [reply](#)

Iranian anti-semitism

I have to say I don't agree with "Iranian Student" about the potential of Iran-Israel cultural future alligence. Besides the Islamic anti-semitism, which has much diminished after 25 years of theocracy, there are the usual conspiracy theories of how the zioninst control the world, lead american policies and the like.

There abounds also the view of jews as moineylenders and materialists full of greed.

Besides all of this, Iran has its own brand of anti-semitism, even before the revolution, which is now increasing as its islamic counterpart is losing ground. According to it, both Chrsitianity and Islam, being semitic religions, are offsprings of Judaism from whome they inherit their violance and inhumanity. Then this is usually contrasted with the iranian (sometimes even called the 'aryan') religions and mentalities such as Zoroastrianism and

Mithraism which are portrayed as very moral, non violent and humanistic.

I appreciate the goodwill in his comments above, but it is more wishfull thinking than an analysis of the facts.

by a reader on Thu, 08/14/2003 - 07:49 | [reply](#)

some links

I also meant during the Iran-Iraq war.

Here is a good article about the economical side of Mulla mafia:
http://www.forbes.com/free_forbes/2003/0721/056.html

Here are some other links about Iran's struggles for freedom:

<http://www.krsi.net/us-en/>
read especially this article:
<http://krsi.net/news/detail.asp?NewsID=316>

<http://www.daneshjoo.org>
<http://www.mehr.org>

AIS

by a reader on Fri, 08/15/2003 - 10:12 | [reply](#)

Re: Iranian anti-semitism

I have come across that brand of anti-semitism, but it is not yet prevalent among ordinary poeple. However after the experience of the 20th century, I agree that ignoring or taking lightley anything of this sort no matter how stupid or small and unimportant it might seem at the time could be dangerous.

AIS

by a reader on Fri, 08/15/2003 - 10:37 | [reply](#)