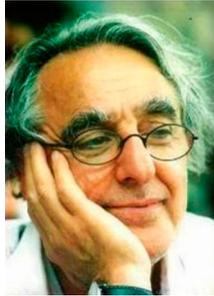


Obituary

In Memoriam: Khosrow Shakeri (1938-2015), Historian of Modern Iran



On 29 June 2015 Khosrow Shakeri (Zand) died of a cerebral hemorrhage in Paris. Born in 1938 into a middle-class family in Tehran, he attended Alborz High School and upon graduating in 1956 went to the United States to study at San Francisco State University. He graduated in 1961 with a BA in economics, and obtained an MA in the same field two years later from Indiana University at Bloomington. After that he took a course on the economic situation in the Soviet Union at the London School of Economics, and in 1964 moved to Europe permanently. He lived in Switzerland, Germany (Munich and Heidelberg), and Italy (Florence), using his sojourns to learn the local languages. In 1982, he defended a doctoral dissertation in history at the Sorbonne in Paris.

Shakeri began his academic career in 1979–80 in Tehran, teaching labor history at the Faculty of Economics, Tehran University. From 1982 to 1985 he taught at L'École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales in Paris as a lecturer and subsequently associate professor of history. He returned to this institution in 1998 and worked there until his retirement. In the meantime, he spent the academic year 1986–87 at UCLA as a visiting associate professor of history and visiting scholar at the Center for Near Eastern Studies. He then moved to Washington, DC, where he spent the academic year 1987–88 at the Kennan Institute for Advanced Russian Studies of the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars. Between 1988 and 1991 he was affiliated with Harvard University's Center for Middle Eastern Studies. In 1991 he moved to Chicago, where he was first a visiting scholar at the Center for Middle Eastern Studies, University of Chicago, and then a visiting associate professor of history at DePaul University. In 1992 he returned to Harvard's Center for Middle Eastern Studies, and from 1994 to 1996 he held the position of an assistant editor at the *Encyclopaedia Iranica* project in New York City.

As a student in the United States and Europe, Shakeri devoted himself to the active struggle against the shah's regime. In 1961 he participated in the founding of the external branch of the National Front, and assumed a number of leadership positions in the organization. In the same year, he attempted to go to Cuba, but was arrested en route

in Mexico. In 1962 he attempted to persuade the Egyptian government to allow the establishment of an oppositional Iranian radio station, but failed. In 1964 he visited Algeria, where he attended the party congress of the FLN and met with then President Ahmed Ben Bella to request support for the Iranian opposition.

In addition to being a leading member of the National Front in exile, Shakeri was also much involved with the Confederation of Iranian Students. In 1965 and 1968 he was elected to the organization's central committee. In connection with the Confederation's activities, he attempted to secure the support of internationally renowned personalities such as the philosopher Bertrand Russell and the UN General Secretary U-Thant for the struggle of Iranian students against repression in Iran.

True to his convictions, he participated in the failed attempts to create a democratic-socialist opposition in Iran after the revolution. In parallel to these efforts, he took part in the activities of the National Democratic Front, which was founded soon after the revolution but proved to be as short-lived as all other critical opposition in the Islamic Republic. The cautious support he lent to the National Republican Organization outside Iran, established in 1981, can be seen as a continuation of these activities. The same is true of his membership on the editorial board of *Ketāb-e Jom'eh*, a publication founded by the poet Ahmad Shāmlu whose first issue appeared in July 1979 and which was closed down after its 36th issue in May 1980. By then, however, Shakeri had already ceased his collaboration in protest against the, as he saw it, growing influence of the Tudeh party within the editorial staff.

In Paris, Shakeri continued publishing the journal under the slightly altered name of *Ketāb-e Jom'ehā* between 1963 and 1966, after his attempt at publishing a journal by the name of *Zamān* failed after the first issue. As a political activist, Shakeri sympathized with the Left, alongside the overwhelming majority of the members of the National Front in exile and the Confederation, and was heavily influenced by political developments in Cuba, China, and Vietnam, as well as the European student movements of the 1960s. In spite of these proclivities, he remained true to the political heritage of Mohammad Mosaddeq, as interpreted by himself, until the very end.

Shakeri's published contributions to Iranian studies are of two kinds. The first was his collection and publication of voluminous series of documents concerning Iranian history since the Constitutional Revolution, particularly those relating to the Iranian left. To collect these materials, he visited many relevant archives, such as the ones in Baku, London, and Moscow. The series began with the publication in 1970 of the first number of his "Historic Documents of the Workers' Social Democratic, and Communist Movement" in Florence. Over the following years he published a total of twenty-three compendia of documents in Persian; of these nine came out in English, French, and German as well. To disseminate them, Shakeri founded a publishing company by the name of Mazdak, although some volumes were brought out under the publisher's name, Pādzhahr.

Some of these collections are: Mostafā Sho'ā'iyān, *Negāhi be Ravābet-e Showravi va Nehzat-e Enqelābi-ye Jangal* (1970); Sho'ā'iyān et al., *Tahlili az Khatt-e Mashy-e Siyāsi-ye Hezb-e Tudeh-ye Iran: Hezb va Mas'aleh-ye Mellī*, two vols. (1975 and 1977). Shakeri provided no information about the author(s) of these books. Also

noteworthy is Arsalān Puriyā, *Kārnameh-ye Mosaddeq va Hezb-e Tudeh*, two vols. (1982). Shakeri also wrote a commentary on Sho'ā'iyān's book *Hasht Nāmeḥ beh Cherik-hā-ye Fadā'i-ye Khalq: Naqd-e yek Mashy-e Fekri*, which was published by Nashr-e Ney in Tehran.

Many scholars have made extensive use of the collections published by Shakeri, which confirms the significant service rendered by him to Iranian studies. His own research, published under the transliteration *Cosroe Chaqueri* in European languages, is contained in a number of monographs:

The Soviet Socialist Republic of Iran, 1920-1921: Birth of the Trauma (Pittsburgh: Pittsburgh University Press, 1995), 650 pp.

Beginning Politics: The Reproductive Cycle of Children's Tales and Games in Iran (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen Press, 1992, new edition, 1996), 263 pp.

The Russo-Caucasian Origins of the Iranian Left: Social Democracy in Modern Iran (Richmond: Curzon Press, 2001).

Origins of Social Democracy in Modern Iran (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2001).

Taqi Arāni dar Āineh-ye Tārikh (Tehran: Akhtāran, 2008).

Estālin va Truman: Ghorub-e Showkat-e "Jenāb-e Ashraf" Ahmad Qavām al-Saltaneh: Naqdi bar Tārikh-negāri-ye Idē olozhik, two vols. (Florence: Mazdak, 2013).

His edited volumes include:

Armenians of Iran: The Paradoxical Role of a Minority in a Dominant Culture (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Center for Middle East Studies Monograph Series, distributed by Harvard University Press, 1998), 410 pp.

Un Prince iranien rouge en France: vie et œuvres du communiste Iradj Eskandari (Florence: Mazdak, 2002).

Some of Shakeri's English books were published in Persian translation. In the foreword to the Persian edition of *The Russo-Caucasian Origins of the Iranian Left*, published in 2005, we learn of seven unpublished book manuscripts, none of which has so far appeared in print. According to information provided by himself and by his brother Ali Shakeri, these include a two-volume work on the Tudeh party, a two-volume work titled *Kārnameh-ye Mosaddeq*, a book on Abd al-Samad Kāmbakhsh, a companion volume to his edited book on Armenians in Iran, as well as a monograph on the precursors and origins of the name Turāndokht in Giacomo Puccini's opera of the same name. One should further mention his numerous articles, which appeared in such journals as *Ketāb-e Jom'eh*, *Ketāb-e Jom'ehā*, and *Revolutionary History*.

Shakeri's scholarly works are heavily influenced by his political orientation, both in terms of the subjects he chose to study and in his writing style. This is evident not only

in his concentration on leftist currents in Iranian history, but also in the highly emotional and often polemical tone that characterizes much of his writings.

Asghar Schirazi, Berlin
Translated from German by H. E. Chehabi