



MARYAM RAJAVI

Her Life,
Her Thoughts

Her Life

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The beginning

Maryam Rajavi was born in 1953 to a middle class family in Tehran. She has a 13-year-old daughter and a degree in metallurgical engineering. Mrs. Rajavi became acquainted with the anti-shah movement in 1970. After entering the Sharif University of Technology in Tehran to pursue her education, she became a leader of the student movement and joined the People's Mojahedin of Iran, the Muslim, democratic and nationalist movement that espouses the establishment of a secular government in Iran. The shah's regime executed one of her sisters and the Khomeini regime murdered another, pregnant at the time, along with the sister's husband.



The post-shah era

Mrs. Rajavi was active in the social department of the Mojahedin, and played an instrumental role in attracting and recruiting university and high school students to the movement in the post-shah Iran, when the Mojahedin emerged as the principal opposition movement to the Khomeini regime. She was a candidate for parliamentary elections in Tehran in 1980. Despite widespread rigging, she received more than a quarter of a million votes.

Mrs. Rajavi played a decisive role in organizing two major non-violent demonstrations in Tehran in April and June of 1981 against the new dictatorship. Following June 20, 1981, Khomeini unleashed his pervasive terror on Iranians. Tens of thousands were arbitrarily arrested or executed. During this period, the Pasdaran (the Guards Corps) raided her places of residence several times, but she managed to survive these encounters.

The most capable woman member of the Mojahedin, Mrs. Rajavi went to Paris, the political headquarters of the movement, in 1982. She held various responsibilities and due to her qualifications she was eventually elected as the Mojahedin's joint leader in 1985 and four years later, in 1989, became the Secretary General of the organization.

Following the formation of the Resistance's military arm, the National Liberation Army (NLA), in 1987, she was appointed the

army's Deputy Commander in Chief, playing a profound role in transforming the NLA into a well-trained, modern and mechanized military force.

The President-elect

In August 1993, the 235-member National Council of Resistance, the Iranian Resistance's Parliament, elected Mrs. Rajavi as Iran's future President for the transitional period following the mullahs' overthrow.

Subsequently, she resigned her posts in the Mojahedin and the NLA in September 1993, to devote all her time and energy to her new responsibilities. In her new role as the President, she quickly presented a formidable and serious political, social, cultural and ideological challenge to the ruling clerics. "In this new capacity," she said, "my most important responsibility is to create and promote national solidarity. My first task is to give the Iranian people back their hope... I want to give them the hope that, with our solidarity, they can overcome the darkness, despondency and death that has enveloped our country."

Under her leadership, women have attained crucial positions within the ranks of the Resistance. Women comprise half the members in the NCR. They occupy the most senior positions of responsibility in political, international and military arenas in the Resistance. One-third of the NLA's combatants and the majority of its commanders are women, as is the entire Leadership Council of the Mojahedin.

Mrs. Rajavi's election as the President for the transitional period dramatically changed the domestic political scene in Iran, where the helpless and demoralized citizenry, especially women, were given new hopes for a better future. Equally profound and inspiring was the impact of her election among Iranians living abroad. Mrs. Rajavi's message of compassion, love and fraternity offered a remedy to heal the deep wounds and scars inflicted on those in and out of the country during the clerics' 16-year vengeful reign.

The misogynous mullahs immediately realized that the election of a Muslim woman as the President of Iran was directly undermining the cultural and ideological foundations of their regime. They reacted by unleashing their fury and wrath on France, where Mrs. Rajavi set up her base in 1993. Government agents hurled grenades

at the French embassy and other French institutions in Tehran, but to no avail.

A new hope

Many delegations from the four-million-strong Iranian exile community, consisting of the most educated and skilled sectors of the society, rushed to meet Mrs. Rajavi in Paris. Her message to them was simple and to the point. “For the Iranian Resistance national solidarity is not a slogan, it is an ideal whose realization requires a deep commitment and the willingness to pay the price, whatever that may be.”

On July 22, 1994, some 50,000 Iranians in 16 cities the world over participated in demonstrations against the Tehran regime, in support of the National Council of Resistance and its President-elect. The events marked the 42nd anniversary of the public uprising that brought Prime Minister Dr. Mohammad Mossadeq to power in Iran, thwarting efforts by the shah to oust him. In the fall of 1994, she urged the Iranian students to celebrate *Mehregan*, a popular traditional Iranian Autumn celebration banned by the mullahs. The Resistance’s sympathizers engaged in different activities in more than 50 Iranian cities.

Her calls to Iranians to defy the clerics gave the citizenry the heart to resist. Eight major uprisings and many smaller protest actions, demonstrations and strikes erupted throughout the country since the beginning of 1995.

The Mojahedin’s Command Headquarters in Iran, which directs an extensive network inside the country, recruited thousands of new activists in various cities. This network distributed millions of brochures and leaflets, as well as tens of thousands of video tapes containing Mrs. Rajavi’s messages. Despite life-threatening risks, the Resistance’s cells also posted thousands of banners with pictures and messages of Mrs. Rajavi in major public areas.

Reviving the arts

Mrs. Rajavi also paid special attention to Iranian art and culture, two rich and deeply invaluable features of the Iranian history, which the mullahs have adamantly tried to pervert.

Under her direction, Iranian artists and musicians, forced into exile, came forward and began performing to revive Iran’s arts and culture. On July 21, 1994, Mrs. Rajavi attended a memorable

concert at Paris's Palais des Congrès, where nine of Iran's most acclaimed music stars performed before an audience of 3,000.

In summer 1994, Marzieh, the *grande dame* of Iranian music for the last 50 years, left Iran after 15 years of silence in defiance to the mullahs and came to meet Maryam Rajavi and join the ranks of the Resistance. She became a member of the National Council of Resistance and was appointed as the Cultural Advisor to the President-elect.

She performed her first concert at London's Royal Albert Hall in March 1995 and followed with two other successful outings before capacity crowds in Dusseldorf and Stockholm.

Charter of fundamental freedoms

In a speech broadcast live via satellite to the Iranian gathering in Dortmund's giant Westfalenhallen on June 16, 1995, Mrs. Rajavi presented her 16-point "Charter of Fundamental Freedoms" for future Iran after the mullahs' overthrow. The event, the largest gathering ever by Iranians abroad, commemorated June 20, designated as the Day of Martyrs and Political Prisoners and marking the start of the just Resistance against the mullahs' rule 14 years ago in Iran. Mrs. Rajavi's remarks were also broadcast live via satellite to Iran on television and radio.

The audience of 15,000, as the media reported, had come to Dortmund to express their support for the Iranian Resistance and Mrs. Rajavi. The Iranians also called on the industrial nations to impose a comprehensive trade embargo against the Tehran regime.

In addition, scores of international political, academic and cultural dignitaries from 10 countries, including a number of parliamentarians from the United States, Germany, Great Britain, Italy, Jordan and the European Parliament, attended the meeting. Many members of the NCR, including a number of its committee chairs, also attended the Dortmund meeting.

In the weeks preceding the meeting, besides 10 different radio transmitters and the Resistance's television network, the Resistance's cells and sympathizers in the country disseminated the news of the event all over Iran, urging the people to watch and listen to Mrs. Rajavi's speech. According to detailed reports by the Mojahedin's Command Headquarters inside Iran, millions of Iranians did so. The Resistance's network was active in more than 60 cities and towns throughout the country.

In the two-hour speech, Mrs. Rajavi provided a brief record of the mullahs' abysmal rule in Iran and said that love of freedom was the driving force of Resistance movement. Without it, she said, "we could not have stood firm against the ruling dictatorship. Our nation has paid the price of freedom with 100,000 martyrs." "I call upon you to help and support this Resistance, in its demands and ideals, in its triumph over this evil enemy, and in bringing freedom and prosperity to our nation. I extend my hand to take the hands of all those who have come to the aid of Iran and Iran's freedom. With all my might and to my last breath, I will defend every single right and democratic demand of the Iranian people. Nothing can keep me from this task. For our generation is a generation committed to the ideal of freedom."

The President-elect reaffirmed her support for the sanctions imposed on the ruling clerics, declaring: "We remain adamant on our nationalist demand for an international boycott. For this reason, I call on the international community and free countries of the world to boycott the terrorist dictatorship ruling our homeland... An embargo of this regime is the demand of the Iranian people, who do not wish to see their national wealth and natural resources plundered by the mullahs and the revenues used for suppression and export of backwardness and terrorism."

In concluding her speech, Mrs. Rajavi detailed the main platform of the Resistance for the future of Iran, listing 16 items. She emphasized the Resistance's commitment to the freedom of speech, opinion, the press, parties and political associations, and said that the ballot box will be the only criterion for the legitimacy of the government.

She reaffirmed the absolute equality of women's political, social, cultural and economic rights with men. She reiterated women's rights to elect and be elected, freedom to choose their occupations and obtain any government position, the right to be a judge, the freedom to choose their husbands, equal rights in divorce and the right to freely choose their form of dress.

Her platform also stipulated that in the future of Iran, a free market, private ownership, and investment to expand the national economy will be guaranteed. The foreign policy of a democratic Iran, Mrs. Rajavi affirmed, will advocate peace, coexistence, regional and international cooperation.

Challenging Islamic Fundamentalism

Islamic fundamentalism emanating from Tehran is the biggest threat to world peace and stability, giving rise to a pressing need for a concerted international effort to tame this international menace. While the solution is indigenous, in the hands of the resistance, the international community has more than a moral responsibility and should act in unison to completely boycott this medieval regime. The longer it is ignored, the graver the consequences.

Religious fanatics offer a completely inaccurate and dark portrait of Islam. Khomeini's thinking and ideas do not represent the beliefs of one billion Muslims. Islam is not the religion of hatred and oppression. It is imperative that we fight against religious fanaticism, because Khomeinism is a serious threat against world stability in general and Islamic countries in particular.

One can not confront fundamentalism with an anti-Islamic culture; it requires a tolerant and modern Islam as the antidote. With her message, offering a modern and tolerant interpretation of Islam and rejecting the mullahs' savagery cloaked in religion, Maryam Rajavi has launched an international campaign against the mullahs. "Our Resistance against the ruling religious, terrorist dictatorship will not only herald freedom and prosperity to Iran, but will uproot Khomeini's fanaticism in the Muslim World and its Tehran inspired terrorism the world over," emphasized Mrs. Rajavi. From the onset, in her meetings with scores of international dignitaries, politicians, academicians, parliamentarians and journalists from Europe and the U.S., she underscored this reality, evoking a new international awareness on this issue.

International support

Under such circumstances, many in the international community have begun to take note of this alternative approach. The statement by 425 members of the British Parliament on Iran on June 13, 1995, reaffirms this point: "Support for the NCR and its President-elect, who reflects the aspirations of the wide spectrum of the Iranian people, will expedite the establishment of democracy in Iran and contribute to the restoration of stability in the region."

In announcing a statement of support by 202 congressmen for the Iranian Resistance at a June 8, 1995, Capitol Hill press conference, Robert Torricelli, a senior member of the U.S. House of Representatives' Committee on International Relations, noted: "... Members of this institution have now spoken in support of the recognition of the National Council of Resistance and in particular, Mrs. Rajavi's leadership."

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ideal of freedom.”*



*Mrs. Rajavi pays homage to the Iranian flag,
August 28, 1993.*



A unanimous vote: In its first parliamentary session in August 1993, NCR elects Mrs. Rajavi as future Iran President.



With Marzieh, the nightingale of Persia, August 1994.



Mrs. Rajavi chairing an NCR session in Auvers-sur-Oise, France, May 1995.

Iranian women's delegation with the President-elect, June 1994.



Among Iran's future generation, September 1994.



With NCR's Athletics Committee chair (to her left) and a number of Iran's ex-sports champions, May 1994.



15,000 cheering in Dortmund on June 16, 1995, as Mrs. Rajavi announces Charter of Fundamental Freedoms for future Iran.



A token of gratitude: Roses for members of the symphony orchestra in Paris's Palais des Congrès in summer 1994.



Jubilant crowd on its feet to state approval for Charter of Fundamental Freedoms.

**Abbe Pierre,
Founder,
International
Emmaüs
Movement,
July 1994.**



**Claude Cheysson,
Former Foreign
Minister of
France,
December 1993.**

**Lord Avebury,
Chairman,
British
Parliamentary
Human Rights
Group,
March 1994.**





French
parliamentary
delegation
January 1994.



Italian
parliamentary
delegation,
December 1994.



Beacons of hope: Banners carrying Mrs. Rajavi's name, pictures posted by the Resistance's supporters on walls of streets across Iran.



Her Thoughts

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On her future mandate:

“I have devoted my life to bring hope for a better future to the people of Iran... And to also prove to the world that Islam as a social and democratic religion is not belligerent and can be productive for women. This is the mandate that gives me inner satisfaction and a sense of true freedom... After the overthrow of the mullahs, we should, more than anything else, try to cure the sense of revenge and hatred amongst our people. We should create unity and expand the spirit of tolerance and patience in the society. It is our mandate to revive the identity and value of Iranian people.”

On democracy:

“Freedom is the most precious of all jewels... Freedom is the essence of progress... For us, freedom is an ideal and a belief. It is the spirit that guides our Resistance. Freedom is the *raison d'être* of our movement, it is the reason for its growth and development...”

“...The reason Khomeini so interferes in all the minute details of the people's lives and leaves them no room to breathe is because the world of this demon and his heirs is comprised of vengeance, obsession, and hatred.... In contrast, we must go among our people with a spirit of compassion and openness. Let them be free. Let them step forward to vote and elect freely. Let a spirit of mutual understanding, forgiveness, love of construction, and national unity take the place of spite and vengeance. Let the scars left by Khomeini on the body of this nation be healed.”

On women's emancipation:

“Iranian women must free themselves. Freedom does not come free and no one will ever deliver it to us in a silver platter. We must build relationships that are unimpeded by gender-based distinctions and discrimination. The path to liberation begins the moment you believe that no one can prevent the liberation of a woman who has chosen to be free of all fetters we all know too well...”

“Parallel to the liberation of women, men are also liberated and become even more responsible. This is because men who reject gender-based distinctions and discrimination and recognize women's freedom of choice, first of all liberate themselves.”

On mullahs & Islam:

“These demagogues commit their crimes in the name of Islam, a despicable and horrendous act, and itself one of their most heinous crimes. As a Muslim woman, let me proclaim that the peddlers of religion who rule Iran in the name of Islam, but shed blood, suppress the people and advocate export of fundamentalism and terrorism, are themselves the worst enemy of Islam and Muslims. The day will come when they will be forced to let go of the name of Islam.”

On mullahs’ misogyny:

“Allow me as a woman to tell the wicked and misogynist mullahs: With all of your reactionary and medieval savagery, misogyny and oppression, you have done all you could do to Iranian women, but I warn you to beware of the day when this tremendous historic force is set free...

“You will see how you and your backwardness will be uprooted by these free women. You mullahs have chosen, with your unspeakable crimes against women, and you cannot avoid being swept away from Iran’s history by these same liberated women.”

On arts:

“Whereas Khomeini espouses the culture of sorrow, despair, and disappointment..., the Iranian Resistance advocates the culture of love, jubilation, affection, life and happiness. So, it is the task of the Resistance at this juncture and in future Iran to prepare the ground for artists to flourish their ingenuity in an open, free and healthy environment. We hope that our genuine culture and art can take the spirit of life and hope, light and brightness, prosperity and abundance throughout the country and deep into heart of every Iranian, fueling the flames of hope for a better life and a brighter future.”

Platform

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Maryam Rajavi's Charter of Fundamental Freedoms for Future Iran

1 - There will be complete freedom of belief, expression and the press. Any form of censorship or scrutiny of beliefs will be forbidden.

2 - Parties, assemblies, political groups, unions, associations, councils and syndicates - except those factions loyal to the dictatorships of the shah and Khomeini - are totally free. There will be no limits to this freedom, up to the point of armed uprising against the legitimate government and law of the land.

3 - General elections and suffrage will be the basis for the legitimacy of the government. Laws not enacted by the elected legislators of the country are not official and lack credibility.

4 - The judicial and professional security of all citizens, as well as individual and social rights, as stipulated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, will be guaranteed.

5 - All repressive organs remaining from the Khomeini regime, and all extraordinary courts and tribunals will be abolished. Freedom to defend oneself, the right of associations of jurists to carry on activities, and public trials in the presence of a jury will be guaranteed.

6 - Women will enjoy social, political, and cultural rights absolutely equal to those of men, including those outlined below:

- The right to elect and be elected in all elections, and the
 - * right to suffrage in all referendums.
- The right to employment and freedom of choice in
 - * profession, and the right to hold any public or government position, office, or profession, and judgeship in all judicial bodies.

- The right to free political and social activity, social
- * intercourse and travel without the permission of another person.
 - * The right to freely choose the spouse, to marry, equal rights to divorce. Polygamy is banned.
 - * The right to freely choose clothing and covering.
 - * The right to use, without discrimination, all instructional, educational, athletic, and artistic resources, and the right to participate in all athletic competitions and artistic activities.

7 - All privileges based on gender, ethnic background, or beliefs will be abolished, and all citizens shall enjoy equal political and social rights.

8 - All forms of discrimination against the followers of various religions and denominations in the enjoyment of their individual and social rights will be prohibited. No citizen shall enjoy any privileges or be subject to any deprivations with respect to nomination for election, suffrage, employment, education, judgeship or any other individual or social right, for reason of belief or non-belief in a particular religion or denomination. The qualifications of judicial officials will not be determined by their religious or ideological position.

9 - Any form of compulsory religious or ideological teaching, and any compulsion to practice or non-practice of religious rituals and customs will be forbidden. The rights of all religions and denominations to teach, proselytize and freely perform their rituals and traditions, and the respect for and security of all places belonging to them, shall be guaranteed.

10 - To secure and strengthen as much as possible the popular sovereignty, territorial integrity, and the national consolidation and unity of the country, the people of Iranian Kurdistan's just right to autonomy is recognized in accordance with the Plan adopted by the National Council of Resistance.

11 - Any form of dual oppression shall be abolished against

any ethnic or national minority, whether Kurds, Balouchis, Arabs, or Turkmen. All rights, and cultural, social and political freedoms will be guaranteed for them within the framework of national unity and Iran's territorial integrity.

12 - The workers, farmers, and multitude of toiling masses of the cities and villages are the driving force for progress, reconstruction and prosperity. Thus, all anti-labor and anti-peasant laws and regulations, and all debts owed by peasants and workers to the Khomeini regime, will be abolished. New laws will be ratified in consultation with them, as the true owners of the fruits of their labor.

13 - In tomorrow's Iran, all nationalist and patriotic specialists, scholars, and artists, anywhere in the world, will be welcome to take part in the reconstruction, prosperity, progress and independence of the country and in the service of the public. Their ideas, expertise, and efforts will be valued as our most precious human and national resource. In addition, all those forced to live in exile due to participation in the Resistance or to the Khomeini regime's pressures, will be warmly welcomed to return to Iran.

14 - The free market, national capitalism, individual and private ownership, and investment to develop the country's national economy and boost production will be guaranteed.

15 - Provision of basic necessities, such as jobs, housing, health care and education to the poor and low income families, including workers, farmers, and government employees, in particular teachers, administrators and retirees, will be a priority.

16 - Iran will base its relations with the international community and its ties with other countries on independence, equality, and the safeguarding of its national interests and territories. It will refrain from interference in the affairs of others, and will prevent others from interfering in Iran's internal affairs. It will defend the interests of peace, peaceful co-existence, and regional and international cooperation.

With their resistance and resolve, the Iranian people have shown that Iran rightly deserves to be free. They have proven that the children of Iran will never submit, never surrender to gloom and despair. This united nation will shatter Khomeini's ominous spell to kill hope and the spirit of life.

Maryam Rajavi

The National Council of Resistance of Iran
Foreign Affairs Committee - July 1995