



# Traitors – Khaenin

By: Rosemary Cohen, Ph.D.  
Part 2

We could discuss and exchange ideas about literature, religion, music and many other subjects. I was surprised when I learned that his room number was 110, exactly nine floors below the same number as my room but on the first floor. Two years later, beginning of summer, we married and on the third and the last year of our residency at Maison d'Iran, we lived on the fifth floor in one of the couple's apartment.

It did not take long that the graffiti of outside, entered our Maison. The clean white walls of the lobby were covered with papers written with large characters in black and red inks in Farsi and French, "Marg bar Shah," death to Shah, and to other government members, in addition to all kinds of critics.

It was shocking and even disturbing to see them around. I had never experienced or seen such things in Iran, in addition most of these students were the sons and daughters of privileged Iranian families, their fathers were members of high-ranking military generals, parliament members and wealthy families who were probably invited to Shah's Palace for dinners or meetings. Most of these students were receiving additional government scholarships and aides. Soon a few of our residents with other friends

who were not even residents of our Maison started "Grève de la faim - hunger- strike" in the entrance lobby. They had all kinds of demands and requests from Iranian government. They were asking to free the prisoners, abolishing, insulting SAVAK and government and etc... They took their blankets and pillows and slept in the lobby day and nights, some of them seemed serious and engaged and others were just having the fun of freedom!

• Actually, one of the first critics against the Shah and the government was about the Maison d'Iran. Starting from its construction, architectural look, to wasting the money and space in creating a building that offered only one hundred rooms. Their argument was: "Why couldn't they build a house where they could have rooms for few hundred residents instead of only one hundred. The Shah did it this way because he did not want many students to live and get together!"

Probably if at the first general meeting or later, the director had posted an exhibit of the plans with the official letters and pictures of the construction and had explained the reason of why they did not have a larger Maison or even better invited the architect to present his plan and answer the questions of the concerned

students. Probably, by doing so, many of the gossips that became loud in time and took force among Iranian students would have been calmed down easily and the conflict would have been solved at its roots!

From the first design of Foroughi to the construction of the building of Maison d'Iran, it almost took nine years. But three years, after its inauguration, the existence of Masion d'Iran was terminated in 1972. Maison d'Iran at the Cité International Universitaire de Paris was eventually abandoned under the Shah's regime, seeking to rid itself of a hotbed of opposition. The building has since become home to the Avicenna Foundation and later it was added to the French Supplementary Historic Monument List in 2008.

We were the luckiest students ever to live in Maison d'Iran for the only first three years of its existence.

• One day the director of the house invited me for a lunch to her apartment. When I entered the room, I realized that she had invited other guests that I had never met them before. As the custom in France, we shook hands, and introduced ourselves. Among the guest there was a young tall girl, with beautiful large black eyes and long hair. She was

dressed up very simply, but the other guests were older and nicely dressed. After lunch they all decided to go to a movie and invited me to join them. We went to Gaumont Champs Elysée on Metro and watched a movie. We had a nice time together that ended up with laughter and a gaufrette-wafer cone ice cream. When I returned to my room, it was already dark. After a few days, the director wanted to see me. I learned that the lunch and movie were all arranged in advance between her and the guests. The beautiful young girl was Princess Azadeh Shafigh, the daughter of princess Ashraf Pahlavi, the twin sister of the Shah of Iran.

She told me that the princess was studying at Faculté de Science - Paris University. She lived alone near Avenue Foch in a private house. They were looking to find a trustworthy and suitable student to live with her. They had asked the director, and she had suggested me, so they had organized the lunch and movie meeting the other day to see if the princess and the others approved and liked me. Then she added that I did not need to keep and pay for my room, as I would live with the princess and will have a comfortable life. Only a Spanish couple with their young son lived at the house. The wife cooked and took care of the house, and her husband did the errands and was the driver.

He drove the princess to the university and would do the same to me.

I was flattered but at the same time not very excited as I wanted to be close to my unofficial boyfriend. The distance between metro Porte Maillot and CIUP was probably over an hour, between walking and changing the metros.

I asked for a day to decide, she was surprised of my hesitation and assured me that I would have much comfortable life to live there, and told me; "Who can resist living close to Avenue Foch?" I did not tell her that when you love someone, he becomes your Avenue Foch!

The next day I told her that I was ready to give a try without promising for a long-term. I would pay my rent and keep the room and will try to see how it will work out in practice, at least if we changed our minds, I had my room to return to.

I moved to live with the princess in the house that was a three-story building at 30, Villa Dupont, in an iron gated alley. The upper floor was ready to receive Princess Ashraf at any time that she arrived Paris. The second floor was Princess Azadeh's quarter. There was a living and a dining room, and we each had our bedrooms. I never went upstairs and do not remember of any furniture or objects present in the rooms not even the bed that I slept in. Because objects never interested me unless I was visiting a museum! the Spanish couple lived in the lower level where there was a dining room that we usually ate our dinners together.

Soon Princess Azadeh and I became close friends. From the first day she asked me to call her by her nickname "Dodi". She was a very simple



From Left::Azadeh and Shahbanou Farah

and highly intelligent girl for her age. She loved Iran and respected and loved her uncle, the Shah, and Shahbanu. She was a very good student, and always talked of her younger brother Prince Shahyar who was serving in the Iranian navy and was a dedicated officer. Dodi was very proud of her brother and said that he told her that so many untouched precious mines and natural resources exist in Iran. When they are sailing on the ship near Iranian southern borders, the antenna of their radar on the top of the ship circles like crazy, indicating of the existence and presence of so many natural resources. Dodi was planning and hoping that by studying science she could be helpful for her country in the future.

As the days passed, I



appreciated and loved knowing and living with Dodi.

There were three things that bothered me, and I believe that Dodi also shared the same feelings without admitting it verbally. First it was the sense of invisible freedom and loneliness. Although we were just four of us with the baby living in the house, I always had this odd feeling that we were being watched at all times. Probably it was just the empty rooms that gave me those feelings as I never searched or saw any evidence or proof to my feelings. May be the service of breakfast ceremony was another reason for losing my freedom. Normally I used to wake up in the mornings, wash and dress up for the day, eat my breakfast at the table and start my day. But there, the Spanish lady (that I forgot her name), entered my room at a special hour every morning by saying bonjour mademoiselle, then she opened the shades and placed my breakfasts that was in a silver tray on my bed. Probably she did the same to Dodi. when we were ready, her husband drove us to university by crossing Alma tunnel every morning. As we had different schedules, we met each other in the evenings, had an early

dinner and studied. When we were tired, we talked and told stories of our lives to each other.

The second thing that I did not appreciate was the emptiness of the house. We had no visitors, the living room looked cold and sad. I was used to have the presence and love of my grandmother in our house. My parents always had visitors, there was movement in our house. My grandmother moved around the house, did some work, cooked and even sometimes spoiled me by giving little massages if I complained of a pain, even if she was aware that it was an imaginary pain. I still remember her delicate fingers touching my shoulders, neck or hair. Our house was not very big, we did not have huge crystal chandeliers hanging from the ceilings, but the rooms were warm and lively! The princess was lonely, almost no visitors came to see us, she only received phone calls from her family members.

One evening the princess seemed sad and upset, she opened up her heart and told me: "Why should I care that my mother is praised by some important personalities or Stalin who have said, that she is a very smart and knowledgeable woman, if she was born a man, she could have occupied very high positions anywhere in the world with success! I never received anything from her. I grew up with peasant nannies around me.

They did not have my mother's knowledge or talked like her. At least my father was present to raise and educate us, and he taught us to be true and humble and have the military discipline in our everyday life. I was not present with my



mother when she spoke at the United Nations or in different interesting meetings. I never lived long enough with her.”

## Traitor

Obtaining a degree should not be the main goal of a student when looking for higher education. One should also take the opportunity to learn the philosophy and find out the true meaning of life while studying academics. Somehow Paris has always been the right place for this purpose, probably because of its language, freedom, culture, traditions, history and its rich environment. I had grown up in a more protected family circle. Although my grandmother and mother were the survivors of the Armenian Genocide, who had experienced the hell and seen the evil face to face, they had been able to keep a positive attitude in life. They never cultivated hate around themselves. They helped and loved everyone. They gave us a loving home and education. I trusted everyone and saw the goodness in them unless the contrary was proved. Unfortunately, the first lesson that I learned in Paris was the existent of the traitors among friends and family members. On another occasion Dodi told me about an incident when she was very young. It happened in a big party that was given by the Shah at his palace. “Whenever there were parties in the palace given by the Shah or my mother, I and some of the more curious younger children of the family, would sneak in the party without being noticed, just for fun and curiosity in order to see people and run around.

I was probably thirteen years old; on that special day, the Shah had invited many guests to the palace, I sneaked in



Shahbanou and Azadeh

as usual, it was a beautiful party the hall was decorated with colorful flowers and the smell of delicious food and flowers filled the air. The ladies looked like models in their last fashionable dresses and makeups. My mother looked beautiful, dressed up nicely greeting the guests with her usual smile. I was watching her from a distance and sometimes I would go very close in order to see and hear her talking to the people. As my mother passed a small group of men and women they immediately tried to stop and talk to her, they bended half a circle down to salute my mother and like the story of ‘The crow and the fox’ written by La Fontaine, the charming mouths of the foxes started flattering my mother. {Oh! your Highness Princess, you look so beautiful. We heard your speech yesterday, Oh! it was amazing, you are full of wisdom and.....} My mother thanked them kindly, exchanged a few polite words and walked away. I was still standing next to them, trying to absorb their fake complements. None of the guest knew who I was, and probably they did not even remark my presence there. My mother had not walked even six feet away, that I heard one of the men who had bended more than the others and had uttered all those complements

to their beloved princess, turned to the rest of the group and in a low voice said; awful gossips and insults and bad words against my mother and the rest of the group shook their heads as signs of approval and agreement with mocking laughter. A few moment ago, I heard their flattery words that I did not care much about them, I was just happy to see my mother from distance and hear her voice, and now this awful man was insulting her with all the bad adjectives and the others were laughing. Suddenly I got very upset and angry, not because he was disrespectful towards my mother, but because of his dishonesty. She had not asked for all those slimy words; they were the ones who had stopped and pulled her attention towards themselves and used all those flattery words why now, less than a minute later they had changed their minds! I grasped the man’s tie and yield in a very loud voice: “Guard throw this man out of this place! Guard, throw this man out!” The man and his companions were so surprised that they were not able to react. They did not know who I was, for them I was a little girl, a nobody! But I continued calling the Royal Guard, I was so upset and loud that my mother and then the Shah came to me and asked; ‘Dodi, what has happened?’

Why are you acting like this? What has he done?’ I did not answer their questions, I just said that he was a very awful man, and he should be thrown out. Finally, the man left! I believe no one learned of the real reason why I reacted like that but at least the man himself knew the reason! I told Dodi that she should have told them the truth and explained the reason of her action at least to her mother. Then I added that she had betrayed her mother and the Shah by not letting them learn the truth. She said that she believed probably they had an idea that some people were not honest towards them! Later, I learned that probably many people do not even want to learn the truth! Sometimes we can guess but if the truth is told to us, the guess becomes a reality and then we have to deal with its consequences!

•Normally Nowrouz, the Iranian new year corresponds to the first day of the spring. It usually falls on 20 or 21st of March every year. Because of the school schedule Dodi was not able to celebrate Nowrouz with her family and travel to Iran but she was planning to leave as soon as the spring vacations started. One of the Shahbanou’s confidant invited Dodi for an afternoon. When Dodi came back home, she looked very happy. She pulled out a beautiful dark green velvet jacket with its matching pants from the shopping bag. She told me that it was a gift from Shahbanou for Nowrouz. his quality of heavier velvet was the latest fashion in Paris, and it was very expensive. Dodi said that the host took her to the store and asked Dodi to choose the color that she liked and paid \$750 francs for the set and she added that Shahbanou had paid the money to the lady to buy her a gift for the new

year. Dodi had thanked and later wore it many times. After the spring vacation when Dodi came back from Iran, she told me that in one of the family gatherings Shahbanou had asked Dodi if she had been able to buy the gift that she desired. Dodi understood that the queen had given to her confidant 1500 francs for Dodi so that she could buy a gift for herself. But the lady had spent half of the amount for Dodi and another half had remained in her pocket! Dodi said she was shocked to learn the truth, but she had immediately controlled her emotions and had answered back to Shahbanou: “Yes, thank you very much for your generosity!”

I asked her why she didn’t tell her the truth, how did she expect that the queen learn the truth? It was a betrayal not to let her know the truth. She answered that she did not want to hurt the Queen.. My boyfriend and I were just friends at the time, but I felt that I wanted to return and live in my studio at Maison d’Iran. It was more practical, we liked going to theaters and concerts. Dodi had met him, so she joined us sometimes to see some theatres. I truly loved Dodi, but at the same time, I also loved to be able to see him more. Finally, I made up my mind and informed Dodi of my decision of returning to my place. She got very upset and in a sad voice told me: “You do this intentionally, like everyone else, you want to hurt me!” I swore and told her that she was aware that I loved her, but I also wanted to return and see the young man that I was in love with. I was hoping that she would understand that I had no intentions of hurting her, but unfortunately and probably I did it unconsciously. She was brave, proud and reasonable,

not to insist anymore, and I finally returned to my studio. I missed Dodi but felt free and light to return to my normal life that I was used to live. I remembered the fairy tale of “The Nightingale” that the emperor put him in the golden cage.

We kept our friendship and I often called to see how she was doing. I had read many history books about the kings and queens of France. They were surrounded with flatteries and traitors. I always wondered if they knew the truth about their friends and ignored it, or they did not have the occasion to learn about the true essence of their friends and family members. I always admired king Kurosh-Cyrus of Persia who had special forces that told him the truth. They were called the eyes and ears of the king. Dodi was our princess, such an innocent and pure spirit. She was aware of the people who surrounded them but at the same time she had to play with the existing rules and the protocol. Who could imagine the existence of such a brave and intelligent princess, for sure not the students who were demonstrating against her uncle and the government at Maison d’Iran that the queen had built it for them? They only believed in destruction and revolution. Sometimes as a sociologist I discussed with a few of the more reasonable revolutionary students and suggested that if they returned to Iran and imposed their new ideas for betterment and change for their country, the government would eventually listen to them especially that they were coming from the families who had access to meet the Shah. But if they destroyed the country completely, rebuilding was very risky and needed a much longer time in addition during

the period of reconstruction many things could derail out of their control and prediction. I was taking classes and was working on my research, I believed in certain demography theories. When in a country 50% of the population are under 25 years old, chaos and revolution is inevitable. In 1956 the population of Iran was 18,954,704 and in 1976 it almost doubled to 33,708,744. There were many elements that created unhappiness among the youth, although everyone’s life seemed more comfortable than their grandfathers and fathers in the past 15 years, but naturally humans are never satisfied.

The demonstrations and political activities at Maison d’Iran were a sign of warning for the future. I was feeling the danger approaching and was not in a position to stop but I thought that at least I could do something positive for Dodi. In French revolutionary story books, I remember reading about one of the “dame de companies of Marie



Antoinette,” that touched me very much. The story was about a young innocent girl who helped Marie Antoinette to dress up and kept her company. When the revolution happened and they attacked the palaces, she was the first person who was killed by guillotine because they found

her in the queen’s chamber. Somehow this idea bothered me. In case if something was going to happen, I wanted Dodi to stay safe. I thought of introducing her to some of the moderate revolutionaries so that they could see that not everyone was guilty and evil around the Shah.

I invited Dodi to spend a day at Maison d’Iran and I warned her about the graffiti on the walls and the opposition students present there but nothing about my inner feelings. Actually, she was eager to meet and learn about them. Dodi was very happy, we had dinner at RestoU, she chose her dinner and carried her tray, we sat and talked to the students who were present at our table. As we entered Maison d’Iran, she quietly looked around and read the signs on the walls. The lobby was full of strange students. I spotted the group that I trusted them, they were moderate and had kept some of their Persian behavior. I only introduced



and I had the sleeping bag set for me on the floor. Dodi refused to sleep in my bed and insisted to sleep in the sleeping bag on the floor. We both insisted and finally I was not able to convince her, so she slept in the sleeping bag on the floor. Late at night we received a call that was for Dodi, they informed her that her father had just arrived Paris and wanted to meet her at that late time of night! She was surprised but I think she understood the message and did not insist, she was not happy to leave but was asked to do so. We again dressed up and the driver picked her up after a short time. I believe someone had spotted and informed about her presence at Maison d'Iran, and they did not want her to stay there. I do not think that there was any danger present for her in 1969. If I had felt even the slightest danger, I would have never invited her to put her life in danger. I actually think that some people did not want that the Shah and his family learn about the real situation outside of their cocoon. It was a glorious period in Iran's history that envied many and actually it was a time when they used the technique of flattering against the Shah, while his enemies and traitors, like Ceasar's friends, were sharpening their daggers at the same time.

After this incident Dodi went back to Iran for summer vacation. We each were busy with our everyday life and did not contact each other anymore. Much later I learned that Dodi had married and later given birth to a son. I always wanted to call her but never did.

After the revolution I learned that Prince Shahyar who used to live with his sister at Villa Dupont. On December 7th, 1979, while he was returning

home from a meeting, two men riding a motorcycle had sped down the Rue Pergolèse and turned sharply into Villa Dupont, the man next to the driver had pulled out his gun and shut the prince and killed him. I am sure that Princess Azadeh was devastated because I was aware how much she loved her brother. I read in the papers that she became very active in politics, she published Iran Azad, and even distributed and handed flyers in Champs Elysée. Later Princess Azadeh cut off all relations with the political groups and devoted her time and resources to humanitarian work and helping needy Iranians and refugees. Eventually Villa Dupont was sold. Princess Azadeh died of leukemia in Paris on 23 February 2011.

May her memory be for a blessing.  
*To be continued on next issue.*

# Chaharshanbeh Souri

## At Montreux, Switzerland

The last Wednesday of the Iranian year is called "Chaharshanbeh Souri." Traditionally, on the preceding evening, families from all walks of life jump over a fire, singing a rhyme in Persian: "My yellow hue to you, your red hue to me."

Like every year, this custom was observed at Ambassador Ardeshir Zahedi's residence in Montreux, with merrymaking by old and young.

An elegant and suave lady,  
Madame Pouran Vakili-

Zahedi, the most senior Zahedi family member, made the lead, by jumping over little fires lit in the garden, supported affectionately by HHH Princess Shahnaz's son Key-Khosrow Djahanbani. Cheered on by his sibling and the princess's grandchildren, as well as friends and their children, also invited over.

Madame Pouran Vakili-Zahedi, known by her nickname "Totot" to family and friends, is profusely adored and admired by *continued on next page...*



Mrs. Anne-Rose Smithuis  
Princess Fawzia Pahlavi Djahandani



Prince Keykhosro Pahlavi Djahandani is helping Mrs. Pouran (Toto) Zahedi to jump on fire