

IN MEMORIAM

Homa Nategh (1934-2016)

By Touraj Atabaki and Nasser Mohajer

Homa Nategh, an eminent historian of Iran's Qajar period and Constitutional Revolution, passed away on 1 January 2016 in the village of Arrou south of Paris. With her death Iranian studies has lost a renowned pioneer of political and social history. Nategh was born in the town of Urmia in Iran's West Azarbaijan Province in 1934 to a highly cultivated family. She attended primary school and high school in Tehran. In 1957 Nategh left for Paris to study literature at Sorbonne University, but soon took up the discipline of history instead. She finished her PhD in 1967 under the supervision of Marcel Colombe on Jamal Djamal-ed-Din Assad Abadi dit Afghani (*Ses séjour, son action et son influence en Perse*). The young scholar dedicated her thesis to her grandfather Mirza Javad Nategh 'who was an advocate of the Constitutional Movement, and to all those who fought for Iran's democracy and progress'. Two years after its completion, the thesis was published in 1969 by the French National Centre for Scientific Research with a foreword by the famous Marxist scholar of Islam and the Middle East, Maxime Rodinson. In 1968 Nategh returned to Iran, joining the Faculty of Literature at the University of Tehran, where she began to teach history. Her first research following her return to Iran produced articles for contemporary literary journals. A number of these were collated and published in a book entitled "Az mast keh bar mast" (We Reap What We Sow). Moreover, in 1976 Nategh wrote an introduction for a new edition of the famous newspaper Qanun, published by the modernist intellectual Malkum Khan. Her other research, a product of her first decade of teaching and research inside Iran, covered the social history of the Qajar period and was published in 1979. Also noteworthy are Nategh's translation into Persian of Albert Memmi's "The Colonise and the Colonised" (1970) and "The Last Days of Lotf Ali Khan Zand" with John Gurney of Oxford University published in 1977. It was during this decade that Nategh's decisive encounter with the British-educated historian, Fereyduun Adamiyat, took place. It was an acquaintance that would result in longstanding friendship and collaboration until 1982. The volume that resulted from this intellectual partnership was the important, "Afkar-e Ejtema'i, Siyasi va Eqtesadi dar Asar-e Montasher-Nashodeh-e Doran-e Qajar" (Social, Political and Economic Thought in Unpublished Works of the Qajar Period, 1977). Nategh's social and political activism began when she was a student in Paris. She was one of the first women to join the Confederation of Iranian Students. She was also active in the Iranian Writers Association on the cusp of the Revolution. Later she became associated with the People's Fada'i Guerrillas of Iran, and she played an important role in the establishment of the National Union of Iranian Women. Following the Revolution of 1979, when the Fada'is split, Nategh continued her association with the 'minority' faction of the Organisation that adopted an uncompromising stand against the newly-established hierocratic regime. During the 'Cultural Revolution' years she was removed from her teaching position and was subsequently persecuted because of her political ideals. This was followed by her inevitable exile to France, where her political activism began to gradually fade. In exile, Nategh continued her profession by joining the Sorbonne nouvelle. During her teaching and later the retirement period, she published her most seminal research including: "Karnameh va zamaneh-e Mirza Reza Kermani" (The Life and Times of Mirza Reza Kermani, 1984), "Bazarganan dar dad va setad ba Bank-e Shahi va Rezhi Tanbakou" (The Merchants in Trade With the Imperial Bank and Tobacco Regime, 1992), "Karnameh-e farhangi-ye farangi dar Iran" (The Record of European Culture in Iran, 1996), as well as two books on the great medieval poet Hafiz. Her final work was "Rohaniyat-e Shi'eh-e Iran, az parakandegi ta qodrat, 1828-1909" (The Iranian

Shi'ite Clergy: From Dispersion to Power, 1828-1909). Although completed, the latter was regrettably not published in her lifetime.

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